HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

THIRD SESSION—THIRTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

40 Elizabeth II

VOLUME I, 1991

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF MAY, 1991
TO THE SIXTH DAY OF JUNE, 1991

INDEX ISSUED IN A SEPARATE VOLUME

Published under authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons by the Queen's Printer for Canada

Available from Canadian Communication Group — Publishing, Supply and Services Canada, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0S9.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 13, 1991

The House met at 4 p.m.

Prayers

OPENING OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE THIRTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

[*Translation*]

The Parliament, which had been prorogued on the twelfth day of May, 1991, met this day at Ottawa for the dispatch of business.

The House met at four o'clock, the Speaker in the Chair.

Mr. Speaker read a communication from the Secretary to the Governor General announcing that His Excellency the Governor General would arrive at the Main Entrance of the Parliament Buildings at 3.35 p.m. on this day the 13th May, 1991, and that when it had been signified that all was in readiness, His Excellency the Governor General would proceed to the Senate Chamber to open formally the third session of the Thirty-fourth Parliament of Canada.

[*English*]

A message was delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

> Mr. Speaker, His Excellency the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the Senate.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

• (1710)

And the House being returned to the Commons Chamber:

OATHS OF OFFICE

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-1 respecting the administration of oaths of office.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

* * *

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that when the House did attend His Excellency this day in the Senate chamber, His Excellency was pleased to make a speech to both Houses of Parliament. To prevent mistakes I have obtained a copy which is as follows:

Ladies and Gentlemen, Honourable Members of the Senate,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the House of Commons.

It is my great pleasure to greet you as you begin the third session of the Thirty- Fourth Parliament.

In the past fifteen months, my wife and I have had the wonderful privilege of meeting thousands of Canadians at Rideau Hall, La Citadelle and in our visits to all of Canada's provinces and territories.

Whatever our background and wherever we live, Canadians share the same basic hopes and aspirations. We are proud of the great country we have inherited. Above all, we are determined to leave it a better and stronger place for our children.

As Gerda and I meet Canadians, we are moved by the special regard they have for the Queen and for the role she has played in our history. In the nearly forty years since she ascended the throne, she has been served by all seven Canadian Governors General—and she remains a living example of the continuity and stability that are fundamental to our system of government.

Therefore, it was a genuine pleasure this year, on your behalf, to congratulate Her Majesty and wish her well on the occasion of her 65th birthday.

This session will be a turning point in Canadian history. Let no one doubt the seriousness of the challenges we face as a country. You will have the responsibility and the opportunity to forge an historic accommodation that embraces all Canadians, overcomes division and discord and charts a course for prosperity for generations to come.

Speech From the Throne

Last July 1st, when Her Majesty came to celebrate Canada Day with us, she said that the unity of the Canadian people is the paramount issue we face, just as it was at the time of Confederation. And, she went on, "There is no force, except the force of will, to keep Canadians together." I believe that Canadians have that will.

I am confident that, as long as we adhere to the values on which this country was founded—belief in human dignity, respect for differences, civility in our dealings with each other—we cannot fail.

Canada's history is the history of builders and achievers. Together, Canadian men and women have created a society that is as free and fair as any on earth; ours is one of the oldest functioning democracies, a beacon of freedom to people everywhere. Around the world, Canada is respected for the constructive role we play in global affairs, for the protection we accord human rights, for our tolerance of diversity, for our environmental sensitivity, and for our cultural accomplishments.

Canada is also envied for our economic prosperity; we rank only thirty-first in population but we have built the world's eighth largest economy. That economic strength allows us to maintain some of the most advanced social programs in the world.

Millions of people around the world would gladly give up everything they have for the privilege of living in Canada.That is a reality and a response to those who would question the value of Canadian citizenship.

Canada will celebrate its 125th birthday during this session. Let us ensure this celebration will be looked back upon as a milestone on the road to a united and prosperous future. Let us mark the occasion with the same spirit of confidence and the sense of accomplishment with which we all commemorated Canada's Centennial and Expo 67. We believed then that the potential of Canada was unparalleled. It remains so now.

To realize our great promise, we must rebuild Canadian unity and overcome the acrimony, apathy and incomprehension that currently undermine it. In light of the global economic revolution of the past quarter century, we must make the reforms necessary to earn the prosperity that until recently seemed our birthright. And we must address urgently the doubts that have been expressed about the capability of our institutions and processes to achieve these goals.

Proposals will be put before you, therefore, that address these three major concerns of the Canadian people and of my government—unity, prosperity and government responsiveness. I am confident that the importance of these issues will persuade all Parliamentarians to put Canada first, set partisan motives and calculations aside and work together for a stronger country.

Canadian Unity

We have been confided the stewardship of this great nation, constructed across an entire continent by generations of men and women determined to make a home for themselves and a future for their children. They were inspired in their sacrifice by the conviction that tolerance and fairness, courage and compassion, and individual enterprise and neighbourly cooperation could overcome all obstacles and erase all doubts.

Now it is the turn of our generation to overcome obstacles, erase doubts and strengthen Canada to meet the challenges of the 21st century. In doing so, we must safeguard the rights of all Canadians and maintain those standards of citizenship that distinguish the Canadian way of life.

Some reforms can be achieved through legislation or policy; others require changes to our attitudes; and still others require changes to our constitution.

A constitution should unite a nation. Canadians across this country should be able to see themselves and their hopes and aspirations mirrored in their constitution. It is the one document that all Canadians should refer to with pride. That is not presently the case in Canada. And no task is more important than making the constitution a more faithful reflection of who we are, what we represent as a country and what we aspire to be as a people.

The Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future was constituted to give Canadians an opportunity to express their hopes and views on the kind of country Canada should be, so we can continue to prosper as we cross the threshold together into a new century. The Special Joint Committee on the Process for Amending the Constitution was established to allow Canadians to be involved in finding a better way of making constitutional changes. Both have increased understanding among Canadians of how much we have in common—as well as awareness of what we stand to lose. Canadians are moving beyond focusing on problems to suggesting solutions.

My government looks forward to receiving the recommendations of the two committees by Canada Day, July 1st. The committee reports, together with the work of similar commissions in several provinces and the soundings you have all taken of the views of your own constituents, will give you the understanding you need of what Canadians want done.

My government will formulate new proposals to focus public discussion on the goal of a more united and prosperous Canada. The proposals will suggest changes in federal and provincial powers and responsibilities and in national institutions. My government will be guided by a number of basic principles:

—that Canada has already proven its worth; we seek change in order to improve Canada, not to discard what we have accomplished together;

—that the Government of Canada represents all Canadianst; and that change can be achieved only through reasonable compromise and enlightened accommodation of the interests of all Canadians;

—that Quebec's unique character must be affirmed and that the particular interests of the West, the Atlantic provinces, Ontario, the North and aboriginal Canadians must be recognized, as well; and

—that the tests of constitutional reform will be fairness, effectiveness, efficiency and the protection afforded to the rights of all Canadians.

In September, my government will refer its proposals to a joint parliamentary committee that will be established to consult with Canadians. The committee will be asked to travel in order to hear the views of men and women across Canada. In each jurisdiction it visits, the committee will be mandated to meet in public session with its counterpart provincial or territorial legislative committee or, where no such committee exists, with counterpart legislators. It will, also, meet with aboriginal groups. The committee will be asked to report back to the government within five months.

After receipt and consideration of the committee's report, my government will propose a plan for a renewed Canada for consideration by the people of Canada. You will be asked to approve enabling legislation to provide for greater participation of Canadian men and women in constitutional change.

My government will work to create a climate in which Canadians can deepen their understanding of their history and traditions and their appreciation of their country's rich diversity. Events planned for 1992, the 125th anniversary of Confederation, will contribute to this greater understanding.

The ability of Canadians to live together in harmony and the ability of Canada to make a major contribution to world affairs depend upon our understanding of who we are as a people. To reduce Canada's vulnerability in an age of rapid, even turbulent, change and of growing interdependence, it is more important than ever that we speak to the world with one, clear and united voice. My government will conduct an active foreign policy in support of the full range of Canadian interests around the world—economic and security, environmental and social. My government will continue to promote democratic values and to defend human rights in the conduct of its foreign and development assistance policies as the best means to ensure progress and stability in a changing world environment and to safeguard Canadian security and prosperity.

Participating in Prosperity

My government will invite Canadians to participate in fashioning a new agenda for prosperity. The goal is to build a prosperous society in which all men and women have an equal opportunity to participate, in which benefits and responsibilities are fairly shared and in which the most vulnerable among us are protected.

There is much more to Canadian unity than amending the constitution. Our unity is strengthened by a strong economy. And prosperity is enhanced by a united country. But disunity in the face of the global economic challenge invites decline.

Economic recovery depends on reducing interest rates. To bring interest rates down, government finances have been put on a sound base. My government is controlling its spending and has established low but achievable inflation targets. That is the way to restore the confidence of Canadians in their future.

Restored confidence means new investment and new investment means meaningful jobs and a better life for all Canadians. With this fiscally disciplined approach, the economy will recover in the second half of this year and will grow strongly in 1992.

Looking to the longer term, Canadians are asking themselves what the future holds for themselves and for their families in a world that is changing so rapidly and profoundly. Deficit reduction, tax reform, free trade and productivity growth are all part of my government's plan to secure the future of Canadians.

Canada is inescapably part of the global economy. As citizens of a country that depends for its prosperity on the sale abroad of almost thirty percent of all it produces, the importance to Canadians of being able to compete effectively in international trade can scarcely be overstated. We guarantee our future, not by running from global competition, but by meeting it head-on, by equipping ourselves to compete with the best, by giving ourselves the economic conditions we need to be competitive and by making world markets accessible to our products.

The Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement has helped to secure the Canadian economy in difficult times. Private, non-residential investment in Canada, as a share of our gross domestic product, has been taking place at record levels. For the first time in sixteen years, Canada has been attracting more direct investment—the key to job creation and job opportunities—has been going abroad.

My government believes North America-wide free trade is a logical next step—and one that would increase the prosperity of all Canadians—if an acceptable agreement can be negotiated with Mexico and the United States. My government will, also, cooperate with Canadian business to take advantage of the growing opportunities for sales and investment abroad as a result of the integration of Europe and of the extraordinary economic growth in Asia. A successful outcome to the multilateral trade negotiations in Geneva would be the best means to guarantee access for Canadian products in markets around the world; achieving that goal will be a high priority for my government.

At home, my government will work with provincial governments to ensure that Canada becomes a single, integrated market from coast to coast to coast. We need to eliminate:

—policies that favour a province's suppliers over lower cost producers from other provinces;

—regulations that often make it simpler for producers to ship their products abroad than to sell them in neighbouring provinces;

—hiring policies that give preference to provincial residents over those from other provinces; and

—occupational standards that restrict the work opportunities of residents of other provinces.

By one recent estimate, there are approximately five hundred barriers to interprovincial trade in Canada. My government's goal is to see barriers to interprovincial trade, services and investment come down by 1995, so that Canada becomes a single, integrated market. The savings to taxpayers and consumers of creating such a market could be as high as six billion dollars—about one thousand dollars a

year for a household of four. And a larger home market would allow more Canadian companies to achieve the size and competitive edge to launch themselves successfully into world markets.

Today, investment and technology flow with ease across international boundaries, markets for goods and services are specialized and decisions on production are made on a world-wide basis. In the interdependent world we live in, prosperity is more and more a factor of knowledge, skills and innovation. The nations and firms that are succeeding and will continue to succeed in this environment are those whose people are educated, productive and able to adjust to rapidly changing circumstances. The risk for Canada is not so much to be undercut by developing countries with low-wage economies but to be outperformed by technologically advanced countries with highly paid, highly skilled workers.

Increasing our productivity across the full range of Canadian industry—resources, and services—is the only way to secure and enhance our prosperity over the longer term. Productivity is the difference between prosperity and decline. The prosperity of all Canadians and our ability to maintain social programs depend on the productivity of Canadians. Increasing productivity requires the collaborative efforts of governments, business, labour and individual Canadians, in all regions. To focus this effort, specific targets will be set.

Canadian business, workers and governments will be asked to work together to generate at least two and a half million new jobs by the year 2000 and to raise the real incomes of Canadians by at least twenty-five percent, by the same year. These targets are realistic and achievable in a united Canada, whose population will approach thirty million people by the end of the century and whose gross domestic product will approach one trillion dollars.

My government believes that building Canadian prosperity and securing Canada's natural environment are fully compatible goals. International experience demonstrates conclusively that the most economically prosperous nations are also the most environmentally conscious nations. To safeguard our natural heritage, my government introduced this country's first comprehensive environment plan—the Green Plan—during the last session.

Over the coming months my Minister of the Environment will be implementing a wide range of Green Plan initiatives. These initiatives, in concert with action on the part of the provinces and the private sector, will ensure that Canadians, today and tomorrow, have the clean air, water and land essential to sustaining human health and enhancing our quality of life. They will also encourage the development of "environmentally friendly" products for which there are growing markets abroad.

We must, all of us, come to grips with the fundamental issues involved in integrating environmental and economic considerations into our decision-making. My government will, over the coming months, consult with provincial governments, industry and environmental leaders to explore means of complementing current regulatory approaches with innovative instruments that would achieve positive environmental results without prejudicing economic prosperity.

Increasing economic prosperity is first and foremost an issue of people. Canada's ability to prosper in a global economy will be determined by the level of Canadians' educational achievement, by the sophistication of our management skills and by our attitudes to work and to change. In the dawning knowledge age, how well we live will depend on how well we learn.

Canadian men and women must have access to both the skills and the lifelong learning opportunities necessary to improve their job prospects and ensure their own prosperity. But Canadians are questioning whether this country's approach to learning, despite the great dedication of so many talented educators and administrators, is adequate for the times.

The issue is not exclusively, or even primarily, money.Canada already spends more money per capita on education than almost any other industrialized nation does. Every year the federal government alone spends about eleven billion dollars, directly and indirectly, on education and training. The issue is results.

—Three out of ten students drop-out of high school before graduating.

—Four out of ten adults cannot read or do math well enough to perform everyday tasks.

—Canadian industry spends less than half as much on training its employees as American industry does, a fifth as much as the Japanese and an eighth as much as the Germans.

This is not the kind of performance that will guarantee increasing prosperity for our children; in fact, it has given rise to concerns whether the next generation of Canadian men and women will be the first to have a lower standard of living than their parents.

The time has come to reach a national consensus on performance, goals, partnerships and priorities for learning. As part of my government's new agenda for prosperity, a discussion paper on learning will be published to stimulate and focus discussion on education and training.

My government recognizes that education is a provincial responsibility under the constitution and respects that fact. My government also recognizes that Canadians are concerned about education, and would like to see Canada-wide goals established, with provincial endorsement and cooperation, for the year 2000. These goals could include:

—cutting illiteracy rates in half;

—ensuring that ninety percent of Canadians attain high school diplomas or the equivalent by age twenty-five;

—doubling the number of post-secondary graduates in mathematics, the sciences and engineering; and

—quadrupling the training provided by employers to their employees.

Students and parents, employers and employees, educators and governments will be asked to work together to develop a "learning culture," just as we have developed an environmental culture. My government will, also, ask the newly created Labour Force Development Board to present proposals in this area. The objective is to equip Canadian men and women to participate fully in creating and sharing Canadian prosperity.

The full participation of Canada's aboriginal peoples in Canada's economic prosperity and political life is a goal shared across the country. To put itself in a position to respond more effectively to the needs of the aboriginal peoples of Canada, my government will appoint the Right Honourable Brian Dickson, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, to serve as a special representative of the Prime Minister in order to consult widely on the terms of reference and membership of the Royal Commission announced recently and report back to my government.

Particular care will be taken to ensure that the Commission neither delays nor negates constitutional, legislative or other reforms already under way. These reforms include land claim settlements, community development initiatives, education and other activities launched during the second session of the Thirty-Fourth Parliament. In cooperation with Indian people themselves, my government will explore alternatives to the Indian Act, especially concerning land, monies and self-government. Finally, my government will consult aboriginal Canadians on changes in the system of administering justice. The goal is to work with Canada's aboriginal peoples so that they control their own lives, can contribute to Canadian prosperity and can share fully in it.

Our children are the most important yet most vulnerable members of our society. Last September, at the Children's Summit in New York, the attention of people everywhere was focused on children at risk. Seventy-one leaders pledged that that moment would last a decade. My government will bring forward a plan to implement the commitments it made that day; the objective is to see Canadian girls and boys better educated, better protected and better nurtured so that they can make their own contributions to Canada's future. In addition, my government will review its policies in relation to the family, the most fundamental building block of Canadian society. And my government will appoint a blue ribbon panel of concerned Canadian men and women to inquire into the serious problem of violence against women in our society.

My government will lay before you proposals for programs and policies to remove the barriers still faced by disabled Canadians to full participation in Canada's political life and economic prosperity. The government plans to implement a five-year strategy that will resolve issues such as access to employment, training, housing and transportation, public sensitivity and community integration.

You will be asked to approve a number of other important legislative initiatives to advance the economic, social and international interests of Canadians. You will, also, be asked to appropriate the funds required to carry on services and expenditures authorized by Parliament.

Changing the Way Ottawa Works

Change is the hallmark of our age; in Europe, in Asia, in Latin America, old assumptions are being discarded and new principles are being adopted. In Canada, too, new problems require new solutions.There is a need for change in the way Parliament does business and in the way governments conduct their affairs. The goal is to ensure that Canadians' agenda is Parliament's agenda.

In the Thirty-Third Parliament, a committee of the House of Commons proposed far- reaching reforms to enhance the role of private members. During that Parliament, you implemented more than eighty-five percent of the committee's recommendations. And, at the end of the last session of this Parliament, further changes were passed to make it possible for members to spend more time at home with their constituents so that they can be more effective in representing the wishes of their constituents and more efficient in the conduct of House business.

Canadians exercise their democratic freedom by electing their representatives through secret ballot. During this session, you will receive the report of the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform established by my government. Canadians want to know that their elected representatives have the power and authority to represent them. My government will propose further reforms so that all Members of Parliament can fulfil better their obligations to their constituents.

The respect of the people for Parliament and Parliamentarians is essential for a healthy democracy. But the appearance, and sometimes the reality, of excessive party discipline and over-zealous partisanship, of empty posturing and feigned outrage have eroded that respect in Canada. Members will be asked, therefore, to consider new procedures for assessing legislation, for raising grievances on behalf of constituents and for questioning government. This will further enhance the role of individual members and afford them greater independence.

Change is also necessary in the ways governments conduct their affairs. Governments must be both effective and efficient, implementing necessary programs at the lowest cost to taxpayers. Canadians understand that their governments simply cannot afford to do everything that is demanded of them. In the past six and a half years, through prudent management, the growth of government operations has been curtailed. My government has privatized and eliminated twenty-four Crown corporations and streamlined virtually all government departments and agencies. Since 1984, ninety thousand employees have been removed from the payroll of the federal government and its agencies. During this session, my government will take that process further. A draft spending control bill to cap federal program spending will be referred to a parliamentary committee for consultations with Canadians. Legislation will also be introduced to create a debt servicing and reduction fund so that GST revenues, as well as monies from further privatization of Crown corporations and from voluntary contributions, will be used to service the national debt. Streamlining of government structures and operations to serve Canadians better and to save taxpayers' money will continue to be a priority of my government. Better ways to conduct the business of government are being examined. Improvements in the management of the public service, started under the Public Service 2000 initiative, will continue. A public service reform bill will be introduced into Parliament in support of this renewal program. Additional special operating agencies will be created to provide better service to Canadians through more autonomy and a sharper focus on objectives.

My government will, also, continue to privatize those government activities best done by the private sector, as well as wind up and consolidate other agencies in order to provide Canadians better value for their tax dollars.

Conclusion

You are meeting at a pivotal period in the life of Canada, a time to reinvigorate our country and to bring Canadians together in a renewed accommodation. My government will work with Canadians to achieve its goals of unity, prosperity and responsive government so that all Canadians feel themselves a part of this country, so that all Canadians have an equal opportunity to share in its bounty, so that all can see themselves reflected in its constitution and so that all will find the fulfilment of their aspirations in its future.

Honourable Members of the Senate, Members of the House of Commons, Ladies and Gentlemen, you will play a decisive role in the strengthening of Canada. History will be the judge of the decisions you make on these critical issues.

May Divine Providence be your guide.

[*Translation*]

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister) moved:

That the speech of His Excellency delivered this days from the Throne to the two Houses of Parliament be taken into consideration later today.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSE MANAGEMENT

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

That pursuant to Standing Order 104, the Standing Committee on House Management be appointed to prepare and report lists of members to compose the standing, legislative and standing joint committees of this House; and

That the membership of this committee shall be as follows: Messrs Angus, Cole, Cooper, Mrs. Dobbie, Messrs Gagliano, Hawkes, James, Langlois, Mrs. Marleau, Messrs MacDougall (Timiskaming), Milliken, Prud'homme, Riis and Tremblay (Québec-Est).

Motion agreed to.

[*English*]

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That Mr. Steven Eugene Paproski, member for the Electoral District of Edmonton North, be appointed Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole House.

Motion agreed to.

[*Translation*]

APPOINTMENTS OF ASSISTANT CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES OF THE WHOLE

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That Mr. Charles DeBlois, member for the electoral district of Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, be appointed Assistant Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole House.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 81, I move:

That consideration of the business of supply be deferred to the next sitting of the House.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

ADDRESS IN REPLY MOVED BY MR. DENIS PRONOVOST AND SECONDED BY MR. LARRY SCHNEIDER

The House proceeded to the consideration of the speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor General at the opening of the session.

Mr. Denis Pronovost (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I am deeply honoured by this opportunity I am given today to move, seconded by the hon. member for Regina—Wascana, the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. On behalf of my constituency, I wish to thank the Right Hon. Prime Minister and the government for the honour thus conferred on the electoral district of Saint-Maurice.

The challenges mentioned today in the speech from the Throne are certainly not new to the riding of Saint-Maurice.

The first challenge, that of national unity, takes me back to the 1980 referendum campaign in Quebec. In Shawinigan, the referendum on Quebec separation was a very painful experience. At the time, the debate became so heated, Mr. Speaker, that some families were split forever. Lasting friendships disappeared as a result of a single political debate. I personally lost friends because of this referendum. It left scars that have yet to heal today, after eleven years.

We must learn from history. On the basis of my own modest experience in 1980 in Quebec, I feel I must urge this House today to do everything it possibly can to avoid exposing Quebecers and Canadians a second time to a needlessly cruel exercise.

Another challenge mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, the challenge of prosperity and economic effectiveness, is one that the people of my riding will appreciate.

During the past thirty years, I have seen my riding lose its industrial base, experience an economic slump, seen its youth leave for more prosperous urban centres, inherit serious environmental problems, including the rapidly escalating pollution of the Saint-Maurice River, and there is also the phenomenon of a rapidly aging population.

I am convinced that the measures undertaken and proposed by this government will help rebuild the economy and correct the mistakes made during the sixties and the seventies.

• (1720)

First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, we must find a solution to this existential crisis which has too many Canadians believing we can no longer live together.

In the Speech from the Throne, the Government set forth a number of important challenges and spelled out how it plans to respond to this time of decision.

All of us here today have a fiduciary responsibility to safeguard and build upon what has been entrusted to us by past generations.

Members of this House have very heavy responsibilities. As far as I know, Mr. Speaker, no member of this House was elected by his or her constituents to specifically work towards the destruction of Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pronovost: Quite the contrary, Mr. Speaker. Canadians expect each and every member, with absolutely no exception, to help find real solutions to improve the situation in our country.

No one in this House was elected to sell off Canada. To make Canada work would benefit Quebecers as all the other Canadians. If our country is to become more efficient once again, members of this House will have to find positive solutions during the present debate.

A constitution should mirror the nation. Unfortunately too many people look in that mirror and do not see themselves. This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. The fact that there may be some cracks in the edifice of Confederation is not enough reason to forsake Canada and all it means.

When we look past the sometimes harsh criticism and strong emotions, we can see that Canadians understand and appreciate that we have so much. We, as a people, dare not risk shattering it all, because of our emotions and some grievance.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pronovost: Mr. Speaker, as noted in the Speech from the Throne, the government's work will be guided by certain key principles: seeking changes to improve Canada; achieving change through compromise and accommodation; affirming Quebec's unique characteristics, as well as the interests of all Canadians, wherever they live; making fairness, effectiveness, efficiency and the protection of all Canadians' rights the tests of constitutional reform.

But institutions can only do so much. Without the commitment of the members of this House and of every citizen, they are only fine intentions. Trust and generosity, fairness and tolerance, these come from within the hearts of men and women of goodwill.

[*English*]

We must also assist Canadians to better appreciate their history and tradition, and that undertaking is given in the Throne Speech.

If Canadians are to live together as a peaceful society and contribute as citizens of the world, they must begin by understanding who they are as a people.

Our country has endured difficult times of late. But while passion may have been strained, it must not be allowed to break our bonds of affection. Let us hope and pray now that we will listen to the better angels of our nature.

I would like to close with the following quotation:

> I believe in Canada. I have faith in its future, and I am dedicated to its destiny. I believe that this country has potential for greatness, not only in material terms, but in the things of the mind and the spirit.

The Canadian who spoke those words was Tommy Douglas.

[*Translation*]

> Today, when the greatest need of free men and free nations is to come together—and act on the compulsions and opportunities of interdependance; at this time of all times it would be a tragic thing for Canadians to have to admit their failure to unify their own country—unity without sacrificing special and separate values. No Canadian, surely, could contemplate with anything but bitter regret the weakening, let alone the failure, of Confederation, especially when Canada has grown so much in stature and won so much respect in the world.

The Canadian who spoke those words was Mike Pearson.

[*English*]

Finally, Mr. Speaker:

> Federation was a prerequisite to the national development of Canada and the maintenance of national unity remains the key to its destiny. I know there are some who feel a sense of embarrassment in expressing pride to their nation, perhaps because of the fear that they might be considered old-fashioned or parochial—a healthy life and devotion to one's country constitutes a most fruitful inspiration in life.

The Canadian who spoke those words was John Diefenbaker.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pronovost: I think you will agree, Mr. Speaker and fellow members, that we would do well to ponder these words, and that they guide us in the weeks and months ahead.

The hour is great with change—so let us begin. I am proud to reaffirm my support to this government and I am proud to present today the Address in Reply to the speech from the Throne.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pronovost: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honorable member for Regina—Wascana, that the following Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor General of Canada:

> To His Excellency the Right Honourable Ramon Hnatyshyn, a Member of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Chancellor and Principal Companion of the Order of Canada, Chancellor and Commander of the Order of Military Merit, upon whom has been conferred the Canadian Forces' Decoration, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada.
>
> MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:
>
> We, Her Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects, the House of Commons of Canada, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to your Excellency for the gracious Speech which Your Excellency has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity.

I must say that when I was asked to second the Speech from the Throne, the full impact of this honour did not immediately occur to me. However, this changed rather dramatically when I read the following passage in a book written by John Henderson entitled *Great Men of Canada* and printed in 1929. In the book, Mr. Henderson makes reference to Sir Wilfrid Laurier in the following fashion. He says: "In seeking federal office, he was elected by a majority 238 and took his seat in the first Liberal Parliament returned after Confederation. Immediately Laurier became a success. He seconded the Speech from the Throne."

• (1730)

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Schneider: Mr. Speaker, it was at this time that I was struck with the honour of this opportunity. I only hope that I can be nearly so eloquent as I imagine Sir Wilfrid Laurier was, and become half as successful as he went on to be, of course.

Canadians enjoy the second highest standard of living in the world and a quality of life second to none. We have achieved this as a united country. Indeed, in large measure we have achieved this because we are a united country.

Unity and prosperity, the two go hand in hand. Our prosperity is enhanced by working together in a united country, just as our unity is strengthened by a strong economy.

We can be very proud of what we have achieved, but we cannot be complacent. Simply relying on the things that have helped us succeed in the past will not be enough for us to continue to succeed in the future.

Success means greater prosperity for individual Canadians and, the key to prosperity is to increase our productivity.

Productivity depends on the extent of our investment, the quality of our skills, our natural resources and the efficiency with which we use them to produce the goods and services that we consume at home and those we sell abroad.

Greater productivity means many things. It means higher wages. It means greater rewards for Canadians who save and invest. It also means better pensions, better health care and better income support for the unemployed and the working poor. It means that we can afford more, both as individuals and as a country.

Greater productivity is not an end in itself, it is a means—a means to a higher standard of living and to more opportunities for people to share in the benefits of prosperity.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Schneider: Today, when Canadians look abroad, they see our competitors taking the steps needed to increase their productivity. They see them removing trade barriers, investing in innovative technology and excelling in mathematics and science.

When Canadians look at our performance here at home, they see trade barriers from province to province which make us less efficient than we should be.

They see an inadequate level of research and development. They see that Canadian employers spend one-fifth as much on training as Japanese industry, and one-eighth as much as German industry. Canadians know that we must keep pace or pay the price.

They see that four out of ten adult Canadians cannot read or do math well enough to perform everyday tasks. They see that three out of ten high school students drop out of school. They know that we must do better.

Since 1984, the federal government has pursued a strategy designed to strengthen Canada's ability to compete. Through successive budgets, the government has taken measures to restore a fiscal balance to help create a stable, non-inflationary macroeconomic environment that is conducive to investment and job creation.

This strategy has worked. In the past six years, Canada has had the best job creation record among all major industrial countries. Private, non-residential investment has been at record levels for the past three years.

The government has also introduced a number of structural reforms to make us more efficient and more productive.

Through the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, we have gained new opportunities and greater security of markets for Canada's products. Through regulatory reforms and privatization, we have made our domestic market more competitive and more productive. Through tax reform and the goods and services tax, we have made our tax system fairer, more reliable and more supportive of economic growth.

These structural reforms will raise our annual rate of productivity growth by 0.6 per cent in the next five years.

The free trade agreement and the goods and services tax alone will raise Canada's real Gross Domestic Product by 5 per cent once fully in place. That is more than $900 for every Canadian man, woman and child in this country.

Trading opportunities do not just happen; we must make them happen. Manufacturing and business sectors are promoted at various times by government, as it relocates the country's economic resources.

I am referring to such initiatives as the Western Economic Diversification Program, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and the FEDNOR agency of Northern Ontario. are, as we all know, regional economic development initiatives that are designed to focus atten-

tion on the regions of our country that from time to time need some government assistance.

My home province, as an example, has initiated a rather dramatic and positive method of assisting or kick-starting economic diversification in Saskatchewan.

The community bond program is a program that is designed not only to bond communities together, but also to assist community economic developments. It is a means of encouraging residents to invest in their own communities. This is done by generating the principle of community investment. Therefore, the program assists in "bonding communities".

During the years immediately following Confederation it was fashionable to criticize the central government for disregarding regional needs.

Today populist movements spring up to voice their objections and offer a new or reformed approach. These populist movements are as new as time itself. I believe that their claim today is as equally invalid.

Research I have currently undertaken demonstrates an acknowledgement of the interests of our regions by the federal government, particularly recently in the area of the Department of Supply and Services. During the two years prior to 1989, approximately $3.5 million of federal procurements occurred in my constituency. In the two years that followed, approximately $5.5 million were spent, and just last week in my constituency Westbridge Computer Corporation won a Department of Supply and Services contract for $12.6 million.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Schneider: This was not simply handed to Westbridge Computer Corporation. Westbridge is a world-class organization, and I am proud to have Westbridge as part of Regina's high-tech community.

The federal government has in the past and continues to make its procurement policies regionally effective. As I have shown it is working in Saskatchewan.

We have already accomplished a great deal since 1984, but we need to do more to ensure Canada's future prosperity.

Taking the steps we need to strengthen our prosperity for the future is far more than a job just for government. There is no quick and easy fix to the challenge we face.

As many private companies have learned, improving competitiveness often involves doing many little things a little better rather than trying to change one major thing and ignoring the rest.

We need to work together, to rethink the way we do things, and to redefine the role of government, labour and industry. We need to examine the quality of our investments in education and training and in public infrastructure, in machinery and equipment, and as well in research and technology.

We also need to examine how we can promote competitiveness in our domestic market. We need to review how we can enhance our market opportunities abroad and how we can develop better methods of management whether in the boardroom or on the shop floor.

For these reasons, the government is launching a new prosperity agenda. We are asking Canadians to work together to generate at least 2.5 million new jobs by the year 2000 and to raise the level of real income in this country by at least 25 per cent.

These are ambitious targets for Canadians to strive for, but they are achievable in a united Canada. We are calling on provincial governments to work with us to eliminate interprovincial barriers to trade in Canada and to take the action needed to accomplish this by 1995. That step alone could result in the equivalent of $250 a year for every Canadian, in lower costs for the goods and services they buy. That is a $6 billion saving to the entire country.

At the same time, we are proposing that we work together with provincial governments, educators and industry to set Canada-wide goals for our educational system, goals for the year 2000 that could cut illiteracy rates in half, ensuring that 95 per cent of Canadians complete high school, and quadrupling the training provided by employers for their employees.

Objectives such as these will only be met through consultations and consensus. For that reason, this spring the government will issue two major discussion papers on its prosperity agenda: one on education and training and the other on industry, innovation and trade. Together they will provide a framework for national discussion on the steps we need to take together to secure our prosperity as a nation and to ensure that all Canadians share in its benefits.

To this end, I would encourage members of this House to work together as one, as one united Parliament, to ensure that we attain these goals so that the Canadian population in a united Canada will benefit from efforts

from all members of Parliament working together for the betterment of Canadians.

• (1740)

As individuals of Parliament, I encourage this action of all members on both sides of the House. I pledge my support for every positive action that is suggested by members of Parliament in order that it provide for a more prosperous and united Canada.

I suggest that we get serious about Canada. Let us work together to demonstrate leadership for this country, the kind of leadership that it takes to give us the good things this country has. For it is leadership that is welcomed with prosperity, and it is turmoil that is rewarded with disdain.

The Speech from the Throne has provided Canadians with a direction, focusing on working together. This country that touches three oceans can develop into an economic power that is the envy of the world's industrialized nations.

Mr. Speaker, we have the resources. We have the energy. We have the technology. We have the leadership and, by God, we have each other.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Schneider: There is truly so much more Canada can be. We need only apply that with which we are blessed. I am, therefore, truly honoured to second the motion by my hon. colleague from Saint-Maurice.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Chretien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, just before I move adjournment, I would like to indicate that the business of the House tomorrow will be the resumption of debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at ten o'clock a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 17.42 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 14, 1991

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

HOUSE OF COMMONS

TABLING OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table a copy of the Standing Orders of this House dated May, 1991.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government responses to 37 petitions.

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

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour and privilege to present a petition on behalf of a number of people from the Shuswap Lake area of British Columbia who point out that the government has cut back $19.3 million to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police services throughout Canada in the last fiscal year, resulting in a loss of $4.1 million for the British Columbia division alone. The consequence of these cuts, the petitioners say, has been the closure of detachments in smaller communities, resulting in an erosion of service and effectiveness of these communities' only viable police force. They point out a number of other concerns regarding the decreased ability of the RCMP to do its job and so are asking Parliament to urge the government to consider restoring proper funding to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police so it can fulfil its mandate and role as the only visible police force for communities across British Columbia and to re-examine the government's decision to force the provinces either to increase funding for the RCMP, in many cases far more than they can afford, or decrease services and close detachments, leaving communities without an effective and visible police force.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and present a number of petitions from literally hundreds of British Columbia citizens throughout the province. These citizens are concerned about the current application by Unitel and B.C. Rail and Light Rail regarding the long distance competition in the telephone-telecommunications market. These citizens are urging the Minister of Communications to oppose Unitel's bid to compete with Canada's telephone companies in long distance service. They are urging the Minister of Communications to consult with all affected parties, particularly those citizens living outside of Canada's urban areas who will be most severely impacted by this deregulation. They are also urging the minister to hold local hearings throughout our communities before deciding the fate of Canada's telecommunications system.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I also rise to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36. This is a petition which notes that the government as far back as 1986 accepted a report calling for an amendment to the Canadian Human Rights Act to ensure that sexual orientation is a prohibited ground of discrimination. It is from citizens right across Canada and calls on the government and this Parliament to bring forth an amendment immediately to add sexual orientation to the Canadian Human Rights Act.

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour of tabling petitions by Canadians from the metropolitan Toronto area who believe that a great woman, Marie Sklodowska Curie, must be honoured for her scientific

contributions to humanity. They believe that the gift of the discovery of radium to heal the sick deserves to be recognized by Canada and they call upon Parliament to honour Marie Sklodowska Curie by issuing a commemorative stamp on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of her birth which takes place November 7, 1992.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

• (1010)

THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

DEBATE ON ADDRESS RESUMED

The House resumed from Monday, May 13, consideration of the motion of Mr. Pronovost for an Address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his Speech at the opening of the session.

Hon. Jean Chretien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start my comments by congratulating the mover and the seconder of the motion before the House today.

I am delighted to see my successor in Saint-Maurice in the role it was my privilege to have in 1964, when I was quite a bit younger than I am today. I congratulate him, and I also wish to congratulate the hon. member for Regina—Wascana for seconding this motion. Quoting a passage from our history, he said that if a rural member who had the privilege of moving the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne happened to come from Quebec and followed Laurier's example, he would become prime minister.

I can inform the hon. member that I had the honour to do so in 1964, and I want to thank—

[*English*]

I am very happy that the member for Regina—Wascana has predicted that I will be forming the government. The people of Canada will be very happy with the wisdom he displayed yesterday.

Yesterday I was involved in an incident that was very, very interesting. While I was listening to the Speech from the Throne in the Senate there was a person there who, like many Canadians, could not stand it any more. She could not take it any more and she fainted. She was next to me and out of a sense of duty, I took her out of the chamber to give her some fresh air. It was the right thing to do. I will do the same thing for the Canadian people; I will take this government out of this Chamber, I will put this team on the other side of the House and fresh air will come back. Happiness and joy will come back to this nation. It is the call of duty. This is what was predicted by the member for Regina—Wascana and so I would like to thank him again.

I would like to start my speech by quoting one well known Canadian who not long ago said:

> The problem with the Government of Canada as presently constituted is that it has lost the confidence of the people. Confidence is very fragile and difficult to define. Once you have lost it, you can never recapture it. Once you have betrayed your word and you have let the people down, you have an enormous problem ahead of you.

Those are tough words. They speak of betrayal and lost confidence. They speak of letting people down. The words I have quoted were spoken more than eight years ago in this House by the right hon. member opposite, the Prime Minister himself.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Chrétien: The problem with the Government of Canada as presently constituted is that it has lost the confidence of the people. Those are the words the Prime Minister used in December, 1983 when he stood where I am now standing. In all honesty, I could not find a more fitting epitaph for this tired Conservative government, now drifting in its eighth year.

There is no doubt the government has lost the confidence of the Canadian people. To paraphrase the words of the Prime Minister himself, when you have lost the confidence of people, you are in deep trouble.

The Speech from the Throne yesterday is obviously the last will and testament of this government. Like any last will and testament, it is filled with some good

intentions and some sober words. It is even filled with one or two ideas borrowed from this side of the House. In the end, however, it is a document written by a government which lacks the moral authority to carry the program.

[*Translation*]

The Conservative government has practically written its own epitaph, Mr. Speaker, but it is not Canada's epitaph. This government's utter failure to manage the economy and deal with problems relating to the Constitution does not mean the people of Canada have failed.

Granted, the country's morale has rarely been as low as it has been during the past few years. Buffeted alternately by sarcasm and despair, we felt confused, as though we were lost in a dense fog. People are angry, people feel hurt and they are afraid. Canadians are right to be angry, just as they are right to feel betrayed. I use here the word used by the Prime Minister in 1983.

[*English*]

It is not difficult to see why people feel angry and betrayed. Since this government made its debut seven years ago, not so much filled with promise as filled with promises, we have been hit with scandal after scandal, promise after promise broken and minister after minister has resigned in disgrace.

We have been hit by a made-in-Canada recession, a recession the Prime Minister has admitted the government induced. We have been hit with a GST that has pushed inflation up and sales down. We have been hit with cutbacks to medicare and post-secondary education.

We have been hit with shutdowns of Canadian forces bases, shutdowns at our rural post offices and we have seen shutdowns in our factories, fisheries and farms. We have seen shutdowns at CBC stations across the country. VIA Rail has almost disappeared.

The litany of despair does not end there. As the Speech from the Throne proves to anyone interested in reading it, not all of Canada's recent troubles have concerned economic matters.

Recently, we have seen region pitted against region. We have heard angry words exchanged about language and culture. We have seen our national institutions cast in disrepute.

This is the government that got us into this constitutional mess. This is the government that rolled the dice. This is the government that brought us to the brink.

When we Liberals say we will work to bring the nation together once more, let us be clear: we will be working for the good of the country: we will be working for the nation's interests: we will be working to clean up the mess created by this government.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: We, and the people of Canada, will not forget that this government is the author of our misfortune. At the end of the day, this government will be held accountable for having rolled the dice with the future of Canada.

• (1020)

In every region of the country—in the towns, the cities, the rural communities—Canadians have grown weary of our seemingly endless constitutional debates. They are just fed up with this debate. They are tired of the bickering and the cynicism. They want us, their political leaders, to get to work. They want us to get to work at finding solutions to the serious problems this nation now faces, such as the problems in the economy, such as the problem of competitiveness, such as the problems of the environment and social justice.

We in Canada are blessed with so much: beautiful land, prosperous lives, a proud history. What must the Kurds think of us when they see us devote years and years to this constitutional question? What must the people of Ethiopia and Bangladesh think of us when we spend millions of dollars on constitutional commissions and studies?

Beyond our borders, who could imagine that anyone would want to break up a nation that is the envy of the world?

[*Translation*]

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, we must deal with this problem and we must do so quickly. We must deal with our constitutional problems as soon as possible so that

we can concentrate on the nation's real problem I mentioned a few moments ago: the economy, unemployment, the environment, social security—all those problems facing us now. Otherwise, we will still be talking about the Constitution. That is why, I repeat, we must deal with these problems quickly, fairly and effectively.

Our party is not afraid to take a stand. Three weeks ago, it presented a method and a program. We wanted the government to be able to put these proposale before Canadians on June 1, because we must realize the situation is precarious and that this has a negative impact on the economy. We must take the situation in the province of Quebec seriously. We may be faced with a referendum there as early as next year, in the spring.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: Why wait until September 1? We will lose three months. It will be 1992 before we know it, and we only have five months of public hearings. Of course, that is the government's decision, the real reason being that, once again, it doesn't really know what to do. It is too afraid to offend. Oh, we cannot afford to provoke Mr. Bouchard. We can't afford to provoke Mr. Manning. I say it is high time we got this over with!

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: We must speak candidly to Canadians. The government agreed with the idea of having a committee of the House of Commons and the Senate study a constitutional proposal, and it is to be commended for its decision. However, this means it will no longer be possible to have a constituent assembly, because we will then have a concrete proposal, already put before Canadians after consultations across the country. Why this ambiguity? Time is of the essence. I agree, the provinces must be consulted and we have to consult with native groups, but we must start now, otherwise we will once again be caught with our backs against the wall.

What is the Prime Minister waiting for? We say, let the people decide. Last year and the years before that, the people did not have a chance to decide. After the Accord, we had committees travelling across the country, and part of their mandate was that they could not accept a single amendment. Why appoint a committee if no amendments can be made? We had one here in the House, a committee appointed at the last minute, which did excellent work, a committee chaired by the present Minister of the Environment, a committee that managed to obtain the unamimous approval of this House. Not a single member rose in the House to speak against the committee.

It was a compromise which respected the five conditions set by Quebec. However, the Prime Minister, I'm not sure under pressure from whom, decided to set it aside, to ignore the work done by the House, for reasons as yet unknown. As a result, we had this disaster last June.

We say: Let's have a referendum early in 1992. Why a referendum? Because the time has come for people to speak. They will be asked to consider a proposal.

[*English*]

This project has to be the Canada round. We cannot try to solve the constitutional problem by dealing with the problems of one part of Canada before the others.

I say that in my own province when I am there. What would the reaction have been last year, or three years ago, if they had said: We will solve the problems of western Canada. We will come back here after that. It would have led to a lot of suspicion.

Let's have a Canada round. The Prime Minister and his ministers who are here are using that expression now and I am happy. We have a Canada round where everybody will feel comfortable. We do not have to have commissions to know that westerners want to have an elected Senate.

They want to participate, because the nature of Canada put the majority of the people in Ontario and Quebec. They feel rejected by a parliamentary system which, unfortunately, when your members are with the government, you feel that you are not well represented. So often they speak out in the caucus and they have to vote with the government in the House.

Having an effective Senate, they will have the feeling that they have been heard. Even if the decision is not according to what they wish, they will be comfortable because at least they will have been heard. They made their case and their elected people spoke openly about their problems.

We have to have the Canada round. Everyone knows that. When we have the package, the contents of which I will describe to you, there will be a referendum. Why do I want a referendum? Because this Prime Minister last year, in a very irresponsible way, for weeks and weeks and weeks created the impression that if the agreement

were not to pass, English Canada was saying "no" to Quebec.

That was not true. Having created that impression in order to put pressure on everybody, it was no wonder the people of Quebec felt rejected.

If we have a referendum where we address all the problems of Canadians, what will happen? The very day that we have this referendum where we will say to the people of Canada that we need the majority of western Canadians, of Ontarians, of Quebecers and of the people from Atlantic Canada and it is acceptable, it will be a great day, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: That day, the Canadian people who are not from Quebec will say: "No, we have been together for 200 years. We started as a small colony and have become a great country. We understand that it is possible and needed to be different and equal at the same time."

That day, everybody will be happy to say that to the people of Quebec. It will give an opportunity to the million francophones outside Quebec to vote on that issue. It will be the day when the francophones of Quebec will say: "We want to stay in Canada." It will be the day when the anglophones of Quebec will be able to say: "We are anglophones. We are Quebecers and we are Canadians at the same time."

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: That very day, the francophones outside Quebec—

[*Translation*]

—the constituents in the riding of Beauséjour, those one million francophones across the country who have a lot more trouble staying French than any fellow citizen born in Quebec. One million francophones will be able to say: I am an Acadian, I am from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island. This is my home; I am a francophone and I am proud of it! I am proud to be from New Brunswick and I am also proud to be a Canadian!

• (1030)

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: If we look at our country's history, we made some very important decisions. At the very heart of the decisions that built this country was the will of francophones to keep and build this country. We refused to join the American Revolution. If we had, perhaps Canada would never have existed.

[*English*]

I hope the people in English Canada know that. If we had decided to join the American revolution, this country might not exist today. If in 1812 de Salaberry had not been at Châteauguay to push them back, we would not be in Canada today. They should know that. The people of western Canada should know who opened the west. It was the voyageurs who left Trois Rivieres—La Vérendrye, Radisson, Des Groseilliers—who went there to open the west. Otherwise that part of this country would not be part of Canada. These were Quebecers who did that. In a referendum were all the people who believe in Canada, and I know that the people on the other side believe in Canada.

I was happy to hear my successor in Saint-Maurice talk about Canada the way he did yesterday. I congratulate him for that. With all the federalists and all the people who believe that we have built a country here that is the envy of the world will shake hands the day of the referendum. We want to give Canadians a new constitution so that we have the instrument we need to face the 21st century as a proud and independent country.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: We will be united. It will be a great day when the myth that Quebec had been rejected is gone forever. It will be a great day.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: We have to let the people speak. But we cannot let the people speak without giving them a program. We, in our party, after a lot of discussion, have put the proposition forward.

[*Translation*]

I would like to thank the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel who worked very hard last fall as our

party's representative and the voice of this Parliament before the Bélanger–Campeau Commission.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: He represented us before the commission but, at the same time, he had many long sessions with members on this side of the House, resulting in the presentation we made before the Bélanger–Campeau Commission on December 18. This presentation already contained elements of the proposal we submitted in Montreal three weeks ago. I would like to take this opportunity to explain them today.

First, we should make a statement on the nature of Canada. This statement would indicate the will of all Canadians to live in this country, in the federal State that is ours. It would also set forth the values we share, including our attachment to both official languages and our commitment to our multicultural heritage. It would recognize the crucial role played by the aboriginal nations in our society and the distinct identity of Quebec society.

[*English*]

It will also be a good occasion to again recognize our unwavering commitment to equality of men and women in our Constitution because there are some doubts in the minds of a lot of Canadians.

Second, we will make sure the Charter of Rights and Freedoms continues to be the cornerstone of our Constitution. Why? Because we look forward to the next century. In the next century, the majority of Canadians will not be from either French or English backgrounds. What can we guarantee the people who have a different colour, a different language or a different religion? What better can we guarantee to them than their individual rights in their Constitution? It will be clear.

The third element of our proposition is the economic union in Canada. By 1992 there will be more mobility in Europe than we have in Canada. We recognize, and we want it to be in the Constitution, that we have a common market in Canada. We are starting to have a common market with the United States and Mexico, and yet we cannot sell products among Canadians. There is a producer in Dorchester in Beauséjour, two miles from the border of Nova Scotia. He who cannot sell his product to the Government of Nova Scotia because he lives two miles from the border. We do not have the mobility of people like they have in Europe. The time has come to have mobility of people, goods, services and capital in Canada.

The government in the Speech from the Throne talks about it, but it says in the Allaire report it will not happen until 1995. Even those who virtually do not want any link with Canada recognize the need to have a real common market in Canada, so why wait until 1995? Put it in the Constitution right away.

As I said before, and repeat, reform of the Senate is extremely important. I believe in it. I was on the other side long enough to know that sometimes we are driven by the heat of the moment, the push of bureaucrats and so on, and reassured by the support of our troops, quite often saying: "Try that, minister. You are a good guy, try that, show you are strong". However they do not think enough at times about the reaction of the people. The members of the caucus have virtually no choice. If they shut you down, it could cause an election.

On the other hand, if in the Upper House there would be another vote—it might be veto, a suspension of veto and in come cases an absolute veto—the politicians of this House and the minister would have to reflect twice. They would have to compromise when they go there, they do not want to compromise in this House. That would give a lot of satisfaction to the people of western Canada and Atlantic Canada who think they do not have the numbers of their side. This system works in Australia, Germany and in many other nations. Why not have it in Canada, and quickly?

The other point I want to make concerns the natives of Canada. I was Minister of Indian Affairs for more than six years. I have always felt terrible about this social problem. We have to deal with it quickly. We have to do something that they have asked for, in my judgment, for a long time. In 1981 we started to put aboriginal rights in the Constitution. We have to make progress. Whenever I talk with aboriginal people in Canada, they tell me they want aboriginal self-government in the Constitution.

I think it should be done. Progress will be made. We have made enough mistakes concerning natives. We should let them make a few mistakes. They have the sense of dignity that they need. They were here before

we arrived. Unfortunately, we have not given them the place that they should have in our society.

I have met people from outside of Canada who watched the international news last summer. I tell you, that on the channels in Europe, the next item after the war news was the fate of natives in Canada. It was not a good story for Canadians.

• (1040)

This has to be corrected, and quickly.

I am happy that Mr. Justice Dickson is going to be working on this problem, but what puzzles me is that this seems to be a royal commission to draft the terms of a royal commission. I do not know why we have a government. He might be able to deal with the whole problem, but this is a royal commission to establish the terms of reference of a royal commission. What kind of government is that? I am happy with the choice of Mr. Justice Dickson and I know he will do his best. I hope this process is not being used by the government to allow it to drag its feet because it does not know what to do. We do not want a repetition of the problems we had last year in Canada, action is needed now, urgently.

I would now like to talk about the six points of our proposal.

[*Translation*]

The sixth point is the distribution of power. As I told the Bélanger–Campeau Commission last year, there is nothing sacrosanct about the present division of powers.

We must look for a division of powers that best serves the interests of the people, all the Canadian people. This is an important point, and I would have specific recommendations to make on this subject.

The Fathers of Confederation did a good job when they drafted the Constitution. They drafted it however in the context of 1867, based on the realities of 1867. Now, the time has come for us to review how the powers are divided, but we must do so with the interest of the people in mind. The basic premise should be this: who can do the best job, the federal government or the provincial governments? It should not be done in the interest of ministers who want bigger and larger departments or bureaucrats who want to be in charge of a greater number of civil servants. We must ask ourselves what, in the interest of the people, is the most efficient way of ensuring this country will be competitive in the years to come. That is what the key consideration should be in this negotiation. It should not be a question of who is going to win or loose.

The winners should be neither the federal government nor the provincial governments, but the people. That is how it should be done!

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: Therefore, we recommend a functional approach, because it is possible, as I explained in my speeches of the past couple of days, to solve problems, possibly with additional legislation.

In the case of the environment, for instance, there could be national standards and we need such standards, otherwise a provincial government could offer a manufacturer to set up shop in the province, with the privilege of polluting, which is an enormous advantage.

So, if we had national standards, pollution could not be used to attract nor to reject investors. We do not need two separate groups of civil servants to enforce these standards. The provinces could very well administer them based on local priorities and needs. No administrative duplication is necessary. The same could be done for manpower training.

The Prime Minister mentioned manpower training in the speech from the Throne yesterday. It is an important issue. If nowadays four out of ten Canadian citizens are hindered by a lack of education and training, that is a problem indeed. We must not forget, however, that education is a provincial jurisdiction according to the Constitution.

So, what should we do? The needs of the people can easily be recognized by this Parliament. These are objective standards, including manpower training, but they do not have to be administered by Ottawa, so long as the national objectives are met.

The same is true of regional development. In that case, national standards are needed to take money from the central government and apply it to the regions as well as to account for taxpayers money from across Canada being used just for Northern Manitoba, the

Gaspesian Peninsula, the riding of Charlevoix or the St-Maurice Valley instead of Toronto or Hamilton. We must have national criteria but, once those criteria have been clearly established, we don't need this bureaucratic duplication of services to implement the program. We can let the regions take care of regional priorities, instead of having the central government manage the day-to-day implementation of the program.

[*English*]

Certain principles have to prevail because this is a very important element. Specifically, any change in the distribution of powers should guarantee the rights and freedoms of citizens.

[*Translation*]

Any review would have to ensure that our two main linguistic communities are maintained and strengthened. This principle is fundamental to Canada's existence and should be generously endorsed by all levels of government. Furthermore, Quebec must be recognized as the linchpin of the French fact in this country.

[*English*]

Any change in the distribution of powers must guarantee respect for and the growth of aboriginal peoples. Any change to promote the rights and growth of cultural communities, any change in the distribution of powers should maximize the quality and standard of living of all Canadians. Any change should facilitate the working of the Canadian economic union. Any change in the distribution of power should ensure, on a national scale, the pursuit of social justice through the sharing of resources between regions and citizens.

[*Translation*]

Any review must ensure that governments remain sovereign within their respective jurisdictions. We must try and clarify the situation and ensure there is less duplication than was the case in the past.

Any review should consider the diversity of this country's regions, including the distinct identity of Quebec society.

[*English*]

I have said many times that the Cullen-Couture agreement between the federal government and the province of Quebec, concerning the problem of population in Quebec, should be constitutionalized. It has worked well for a long time and now should be given a constitutional guarantee.

We have to talk about sharing the spending power. We all agree that there is a great temptation to sometimes abuse the spending power in this Parliament and everyone has agreed for a long time that there should be limits. It would be simpler to have a more functional division of powers, while ensuring that the national objective can be met. Otherwise how can we compete in the world of tomorrow? We should not abuse our spending power. We need to have limits. This issue has been on the table for a long time. It was there 20 years ago and it has to be resolved. It is not complicated. All the taxes have existed for generations. We only have to put them together to have a package.

Take the Supreme Court. It is a request of the provinces, particularly Quebec, that they be able to recommend people to sit on the Supreme Court. As the Supreme Court is more and more a constitutional court, I agree that we should have more input from the provinces. As Minister of Justice, I know what any Minister of Justice is looking for when he appoints a judge to the Supreme Court. He wants to appoint the best person he can find. This is how he eventually will be judged by his peers. Any Minister of Justices takes pride in being instrumental in the appointments to the Supreme Court.

When I was Minister of Justice there were two appointments, Madam Justice Wilson—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: —whom I can talk about because she is not there anymore. I take a lot of pride in being instrumental in the appointment of that lady as the first woman on the Supreme Court. Not only that, she was a fantastic judge. And I did not even know for whom she voted before I asked her to be a judge. That is the way it should be.

We need a deadlock-breaking mechanism. We need it. Otherwise there would be a paralysis of the court if there is a conflict between provinces and the federal government on appointments.

• (1050)

We should have objective criteria but we should have a deadlock breaking mechanism. There is nothing worse than if we were to start using the Supreme Court to play

political games, or to put the operation of the country at a standstill with that.

It is easy to do. There are dozens of mechanisms proposed in documents that I saw when I was in the job of the hon. member, the minister of constitutional affairs. That is a package that is easy.

I am convinced and we on this side of the House are all convinced that not everybody will be happy. However, it will meet a lot of the preoccupations of the people of the north. It will meet the preoccupations of the first citizens of Canada, the native Canadians. It will meet the aspirations of the people of western Canada who feel very strongly about an elected Senate.

It is the same for the people of Atlantic Canada who feel that with the small number of people they have, it is not the way it should be. They will be happy with that.

Most of the conditions that were the traditional conditions of Quebec, plus the mobility that was in the Allaire report and the principle of the sharing of powers, should receive very large support from the people of Quebec.

We are proposing an amending formula, that is the Victoria formula, which was agreed upon in 1971. Unfortunately the Quebec government walked away from it for the wrong reasons, and it should now come back. The policy of this party since 1971 has been that we have always accepted that it was the best amending formula, giving a veto to the regions.

This country is made of four big regions, and we have to respect that reality. In contrast, the unanimity rule that the Prime Minister offered last year was no amending formula at all.

In 1931 that was the debate: Should we have an amending formula or not? At that time the Prime Minister and premier refused unanimity. This proposition came back last year. That made no sense because the people of Quebec feel that they are one of the four parts of Canada. It is a reality.

We should have a formula that in the long run foresees what Canada should be 100 years from now. I urge the government to look at the possibility of defining what is a region.

I am willing to offer a suggestion. It might be that Quebec should be the base. If one province 100 years from now is bigger than Quebec, it could be the fifth region. I do not know if it is a very good idea, but we have to make sure that this country is more balanced than is seen today.

An amending formula like the one I proposed, the Victoria formula, will give a great sense of security to the people of my native province. For me, it will be the package that we will be proposing to Canadians.

I am sure that if it is done with good will, if everyone in Canada wants to resolve that problem and to accept some compromise—life is made of compromises—we could have a new Constitution within a year. That would be a real reconciliation because it would not be a reconciliation based on political motivation to win an election.

It would be a reconciliation to build a country that would be a great, independent and proud country with which to enter into the 21st century. That should be the goal of this government.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: I am telling the Prime Minister that one thing which is very important is that the debate on the Constitution should not be a program to try to win an election. A government should be judged on its activity as a government. It should not play tricks or try to divide the people in an election.

There is a limit where we will not go as a party, because we believe that we need a country that works. This country needs a strong federal government. If there is to be a devolution of powers, we might as well separate right away.

We have to have principles and stand by those principles. We will help the government if it does the same thing. If the government starts to play politics, we can do politicking too. We will tell the Canadian people that we will not accept the dice being rolled a second time with the future of this country.

When we have resolved that, as quickly as possible, we will be able to deal with the economic problems of this nation. This is why we say we need to act quickly: there is nothing worse than political instability. One million dollars does not speak English or French but it walks very fast. Political stability is extremely important for investment and jobs.

What is needed today is for 1.5 million Canadians to get jobs, but this political instability is not helping. The Prime Minister must know a lot of stories of political instability causing problems in Quebec and elsewhere.

We feel that it is very important to solve this problem because these people need jobs.

There are 186,000 children in Canada who go to bed hungry every night. Can we accept that in a country like Canada?

Some hon. members: No, no.

Mr. Chrétien: There are 19,000 Canadians who in the first three months of this year have lost their assets through bankruptcy. What about their dignity when they go home at night? Do you not think that we have to do something? We have to move on this problem quickly.

We see the former Minister of Finance coming to his seat. We heard brave words on the debt of Canada. The government was elected to reduce the deficit. It was another great promise. The government blamed everybody. In seven years it has accumulated more debt than in the previous 117 years of this Confederation. It is because the Minister of Finance made a lot of mistakes by always believing his own predictions. The first mistake he made was when he went abroad to borrow because he could get a better interest rate. A big part of the debt is now in the hands of foreigners. That is why he has very little flexibility.

After that, because he had predicted that interest rates would go down, he shifted the long-term debt to short-term debt. A big part of the debt is in treasury bills which are coming on the table every day and every week. With that error, it is no wonder that he has to maintain high interest rates and a high dollar. He does not want people who have invested in Canada in short-term money to run away with the money.

When I was Minister of Finance I could have borrowed money at 2 per cent in Switzerland. We could have if I had rolled the dice with the economy. I would have looked good in the short term. Who would have paid the capital 10 years later—perhaps three times the capital? No, we were responsible.

When I read the phrase in the Speech from the Throne "Finances have been put on a sound base", who are they kidding? What a joke.

[*Translation*]

There is 13 per cent unemployment in the riding of Charlevoix. The Prime Minister told them: I am going to create jobs, jobs, jobs. Thirteen percent unemployment in his own riding!

[*English*]

In Windsor last month, almost 13 per cent of the people were out of work. This is the Prime Minister who promised jobs, jobs and jobs. Where are the jobs for those 17,000 people in Windsor today?

[*Translation*]

In Montreal, again 13 per cent. Today, more than 200,000 people in the Montreal area are jobless. Where are the jobs the Prime Minister promised them during the election campaigns in 1984 and in 1988?

• (1100)

[*English*]

In Saskatoon almost 13 per cent of the people are out of work. This is the Prime Minister who promised jobs, jobs, jobs. Where are the jobs for those 12,000 people in Saskatoon?

In the city of St. John's, Newfoundland, 13 per cent of the people are unemployed. This is the Prime Minister who promised jobs, jobs, jobs. Where are the jobs for those 11,000 people in St. John's, Newfoundland today? It is always more bad news: decline in output in January by 1.2 per cent; inflation 6 per cent; retail is down by 4 per cent; automobile sales are down by 7 per cent.

We can talk about problems of this nature for hours. Some of my colleagues will get up in this debate and give a lot of these problems to the government to solve.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the facts are quite clear. If you are a person living on a low income, you cannot rely on this government. If you are a young person, you cannot rely on this government. If you are an elderly person, you cannot rely on this government. If you are sick, you cannot rely on this government.

[*English*]

If you own or work on a farm, do not count on this government. If you work in fisheries, it is the same

problem. Small factories across the land are closing every day. Nobody can count on this government. This government has turned its back on all the people who are having problems in Canada.

These days the only people who can find work are Tories who work for committees and royal commissions.

We know what has to be done. We have to make sure we have an interest rate policy that makes some sense. We might have to accept a lower Canadian dollar.

What is the problem with the business community today? Look at its situation. Five years ago the dollar was at a more competitive level according to the reality of Canada. That means that today 20 per cent have lack of competitiveness because of the high dollar. The interest rate is 4 points higher on average than the United States. If it is 10 per cent it means that on the item of interest rate for any business the Canadian businessman and producer have to pay 40 per cent more than an American in interest rates. No wonder they cannot compete.

I was in northern Ontario last weekend. In the lumber business sawmills are closing down one after the other. It is the same in Quebec and New Brunswick. Why? Because now we have an export tax imposed on Canada by the American government of 15 per cent. So when you add the 15 per cent plus the 40 per cent for interest costs plus the high Canadian dollar it is no wonder factories and sawmills are closing by the dozen.

I see the minister is now in his seat. He has changed jobs. In research and development we are now 17 out of 23 in the OECD.

The Prime Minister said to Canadians in 1984: "I will double research and development". We went down from 1.42 per cent of GDP in 1984 to 1.28 today, a decline of more than 10 per cent, and the Prime Minister said he was going to double that.

An hon. member: Shame, shame.

Mr. Chrétien: I can go on and on. The former Minister of Finance, the one who caused all these problems, is coming to clear the air. He is the one who created the problem. How can he make Canadian industry competitive when he is the one who caused the decline in research and development? How can he make Canadian workers able to compete in the world when he is the one who cut education year after year after year?

How can we be the best in the world when they have made cuts in training year after year after year. The Prime Minister has put the fox in charge of the chicken coop. No wonder this government is now fourth in the polls.

I said at the beginning of this speech, and I repeat, we are at a crossroads in this land. We want to help the government to solve the national problems and quickly. I am very disappointed that it is waiting three months, because by the end of January there will be a lot of pressure on it to postpone and postpone. I have been there before. I remember very well one time we were to solve a problem and we had from September to December 1980 in which to do it. It took longer than that. We listened to the people. We accepted many amendments to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms because we listened to the people and to the parliamentarians and to the groups. It took longer.

The problem is that if the Prime Minister does not act quickly, we will again have our back to the wall. The problem of the economy will not be solved in that time. Political instability will grow in Canada and investment will dry up because the government is not accepting its responsibilities. We are willing to help. We are willing to help because we believe that, as Canadians, we are very privileged people, including the people who sit there. When you are a Canadian, the best asset you have in your pocket is that little piece of paper that says you are a Canadian citizen. It is the greatest asset we all have.

If Canada had not existed, Quebec would not exist anymore. Look at what happened to the francophones in Louisiana and in New England. Here in Canada, at the time of Confederation, we were one million francophones.

[*Translation*]

There were one million francophones in Canada at the time. Now there are 6.5 million of us.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: There are more francophones outside Quebec than there were in the Canada of 1867. In Quebec, 84 per cent of the people are francophones, Mr. Speaker, and 94 per cent of Quebecers speak French. All

this is possible because Canada existed. Those are the facts!

When I see people in this House ignore those one million francophones outside Quebec, and when I hear people over there saying they are as good as dead, except for the death certificate, I think they should go and visit some of the counties in New Brunswick and see the Acadians who were deported and came back, and who will never lose their language because they believe Canada is the answer.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: It is our duty to keep this country together. Thanks to this country, we are proud to be francophones, and thanks to this country, we are where we are today. Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that if the Prime Minister acts now, he will have our co-operation, because in my many trips across the country, I have found a fantastic reservoir of good will and tolerance.

[*English*]

There are some people who complain about the corn flakes boxes. There are some people like that. If they do not like it, they should turn the box around or pretend to read it if they do not want to talk to their wives during breakfast.

We have to fight for this country. We are unique. Very soon in Europe, everybody will speak three languages.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rocard, the French Prime Minister, said in an interview with *Le Devoir* not long ago that he was looking for ways to ensure that every European spoke at least three languages. This means that if you are French, Italian, Spanish or Portuguese, you would have to learn either English or German, or a germanic language, and of course the opposite would apply to people who speak English, Danish or German. Here, we already have two languages.

• (1110)

I think that pretty soon, it will be possible for every Canadian in this country who graduates from university to speak not just two but three languages. This would mean that we as North Americans would be able to compete, to travel throughout the world and show that we are just as good as the Europeans, especially with the added benefit of two official languages. This is a heritage our country may be proud of.

Hundreds of thousands of young anglophone Canadians will learn French today because they know we have two official languages, and that because we have two languages, we are different. This is one of the most important things that differentiate us from Americans.

I therefore urge the Prime Minister to act quickly, because Canada is far too great and noble a country to be allowed to fall apart. All of us are going to work on this together, and Canada will survive!

[*English*]

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: I move, seconded by the hon. member for Hamilton East, that the following be added to the address:

> This House regrets to inform Your Excellency that your government is incapable of providing leadership and direction in the constitutional and economic affairs of the nation, and that it has lost the confidence of this House and of the Canadian people.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, a point of order. It is my understanding that since 1957, the Leader of the Official Opposition has always been the first speaker following the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I believe that on each and every one of those occasions, with the exception of 1989, the right hon. Prime Minister was the individual who would take his place and respond on behalf of the government.

As I stated, I think the exception was in 1989 when the right hon. Prime Minister, either for lacking courage or political will, did not—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond rises on an alleged point of order. I think the comments of the hon. member are observations. Of course, there is no order binding the government, or for that matter other members, in a particular order that ministers will respond to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, may I just take a moment to comment because I think it is very important as we begin this debate?

This is the purpose of the throne speech. Some of the discussions on the throne speech have been to call on this House, as much as possible, to rise to the occasion and be non-partisan. I am disappointed this has not happened.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask hon. members to co-operate with the Chair. I have said that it is not a point of order. I listened to see whether there could possibly be a point of order from the hon. parliamentary secretary's point of view, and it is not a point of order.

I recognize the minister.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to support the Speech from the Throne as presented yesterday by the Governor General.

I listened carefully to the comments of the Leader of the Opposition as well as the House leader just now, and I regret to say that one important element of the Speech from the Throne has been totally missed by the opposition parties. We are trying to gain a greater degree of non-partisanship and a common approach towards some of the very key problems that we are facing as a country. Two of these I propose to discuss today; unity and prosperity, particularly prosperity.

The Speech from the Throne does present two over-arching themes, two over-arching concerns of Canadians today, one of these being national unity, the other being economic prosperity. National unity, at a time when Canadians are re-examining some of the fundamental institutions and approaches that have served us for generations. Economic prosperity, at a time when Canadians enjoy great benefits but face tremendous challenges to maintain and improve their way of life.

We stand at a crossroads, Mr. Speaker. One road leads to the creation of a new Canada; a Canada whose prosperity has a firm foundation in our ability to meet the demands of the international marketplace; a united Canada whose institutions, revitalized and renewed, will provide a legacy for generations to come. The other road leads towards disunity and economic decline, toward a fading power, a Canada no longer able to take its place at the table of leading economic nations, a nation whose balkanized parts have neither the influence nor the strength to provide an environment for prosperity.

Future generations are going to look back to this Parliament as a time when Canadians faced squarely their problems and challenges and built confidently for the future.

But we do have a choice, Mr. Speaker. Do we turn up the road towards prosperity and unity, or down the road to decline and division? Each of the paths that we can choose from has two tracks. Our economic program and our progress in constitutional renewal are linked as if they were two wheels on one vehicle. Our desire for unity grows from our pride in Canada. But it is nurtured by our desire to prosper. Our social safety net, our standard of living, and our ability to seek fulfilling employment anywhere in one of the world's most envied economies provide powerful reasons for the country to remain united.

A united Canada has economic potential that a balkanized Canada will inevitably lose. This is a powerful argument against those who would pull this country apart. It is an argument against which the separatists have offered no reply. The shared desire to build upon our prosperity helps us see beyond any differences in language, race or partisan affiliation. Both keystone issues of the government's agenda, unity and prosperity, transcend the partisan barriers that regularly divide this House. We cannot afford to let our partisan differences interfere with our drive towards shared prosperity, any more than we can let political affiliation stand in the way of our efforts to unite this country.

• (1120)

We will debate about how we will get there, but both sides of this House agree on the final destination: a prosperous and united Canada.

[*Translation*]

Let there be no misunderstanding. Choices have to be made. We have gone beyond the point of no return. In our quest for prosperity and unity, there is no room for the past and its less complicated realities.

The choice cannot be between a bold approach and one that is easy and familiar. The past is the past. Old approaches would not be suited to the present situation, both as regards national unity and the economy.

However, some basic truths have remained unchanged since Confederation and even since the Colonial days. The prosperity of our nation has always been linked to trade.

[*English*]

Trade built this country, whether the export was fish or furs, timber or wheat, autos or engineering services and telecommunications. Trade has kept food on our tables, clothes on our backs for over 300 years. Trade has helped build the high standard of living and the enviable social safety net we enjoy today.

Trade with the world must be the foundation of our prosperity for generations to come. And the removal of our inter-provincial trade barriers within Canada must be a feature of our initiatives towards a new unity. We will work with the provinces to achieve this by 1995. This is not an overly ambitious agenda, because with the work that is being done in the European Community to achieve the same objective by 1992, an objective they have been working on for a few years now, but one that is accepted by 12 countries with 10 different languages. Surely, we in Canada, as one country with two languages, 10 provinces that should be working together in a more aggressive and more effective way, can achieve this by 1995.

Today, the whole world is trading. Competition is tough. We did not make it that way and we cannot wish it away. A failure to trade is a failure to compete and the inability to compete would mean failure to trade. That is a circle that cannot be broken. It is a reality that we cannot ignore. But the environment in which we trade has changed as dramatically as the world has changed since the age of Cartier and Cabot, or Borden and King.

We can no longer rely upon the abundance of our natural resources to provide our standard of living. Nor on the buoyance of our automotive industry. These have been great strengths for us as a country. They have been the source of our prosperity and the build of our trade, and they will continue to be important components of our trade. But now there are new challenges. We must reach further to provide the high quality, high value-added products and services that will support a continued improvement in our standard of living and our quality of life.

We cannot and should not compete in products that are produced by low-wage countries where the level of education, of training and of technology is much lower than ours. That is not our market niche. That would not support our current standard of living.

[*Translation*]

The challenges of the global economy are impressive. The Canadian people are aware of that fact which was further reinforced by the recession.

It is more difficult to make ends meet, to buy a house and to carry out both personal and family plans.

The same is true for the Canadian economy. Our productivity has increased very marginally over the past decade. We have been outranked by our main competitors.

To meet our needs, we have asked for wage increases which our country could not afford.

[*English*]

This government recognized these developments when it came to power in 1984.

We set upon a course of helping the Canadian economy respond to the demands of the global marketplace. An agenda for economic renewal was introduced in my first economic statement as finance minister and has provided the broad plan that we have followed consistently ever since.

We have introduced new policies to encourage investment, reform the tax system and lessen the burden of government on the economy. Much progress has been made. We eased the regulations that had hampered the ability of businesses to provide for economic growth. We privatized over 20 Crown corporations that no longer serve a public function. We eliminated the taxes on manufacturing products which impeded our ability to sell abroad. Now we must reach further. We must become more competitive as a nation.

I know that some believe that greater competitiveness means lost jobs and lower wages, but in fact the reverse is true. Greater competitiveness means more jobs and higher incomes. Being competitive means smarter jobs, more skilled jobs and greater investment in technology to give people better tools to work with.

Being competitive lets us trade. Trade also makes us more competitive. Competitiveness and trade are not optional extras for the Canadian economy. They are at the core of any modern economy. They make an economy modern. They make it succeed. That is not argument or ideology. It is reality.

I doubt whether there is anyone in this House who would dispute that. Nor can anyone deny that the Canadian market is small, larger than many, but small compared to our main competitors. Twenty-six million people cannot sustain a prosperous economy in the modern world by selling only to themselves.

That simple fact of life has made us one of the world's great trading nations. Many of our companies have been great success stories internationally. They know they must compete abroad to be successful at home. This trade generates revenue. This revenue is spent on research and development, technology acquisition, growth and training.

The success of these companies shows how Canadian industry can meet the challenges of the international economy. But in order for Canada to prosper in international trade we need to expand our access to new markets and secure our access to traditional ones.

Through the growing global initiative Canada will penetrate new markets in Europe and the Pacific Rim and take advantage of market opportunities in the U.S.A. The free trade agreement with the United States was a quantum leap in securing and enhancing trade with our largest trading partner.

In 1988 just prior to the FTA implementation, the net direct investment outflow, that is outflow from Canada, was $2.5 billion. In 1990 Canada had a record net direct investment inflow of $4.3 billion from all countries. That was the first time in 16 years that there was a positive inflow of net direct investment.

Our trade surplus with the United States has grown from $14 billion in 1988 to $17 billion in 1990. Since the FTA was implemented exports to the United States rose by approximately 7 per cent in spite of the recession.

What kind of exports? Commodities like cereals and zinc, manufactured goods such as electrical equipment and railway rolling stock, and high-tech equipment such as aerospace equipment, and scientific and professional instruments. In many sectors we are undergoing an export boom since the FTA. But we cannot rest on our laurels.

Our ability to compete in the global marketplace continues to be severely tested. There are disturbing signs that Canada is losing its competitive edge. We must respond to this.

According to the World Economic Forum 1990 World Competitiveness Report our over-all competitiveness ranking is fifth, but we rank only thirteenth in industrial efficiency, fifteenth in international orientation, and sixteenth in future orientation.

The world is not going to wait for us to dither and deliberate over the various options to improve our productivity any more than it will wait for us to solve our constitutional issues.

We must act quickly. We must rethink our old ways of doing things. We must adjust our business attitudes and practices to fit the new trading environment.

• (1130)

A number of key factors contribute to the construction of a vigorous, competitive Canadian economy that can thrive in the global market.

First, we must improve our science and technology capabilities and apply best practice technologies in the work place. The level of research and development performed by private industry in Canada is significantly lower than the industrial R and D of our competitors. We are about the same in the level of R and D performed by governments, but we are lagging in the private sector.

We must build networks and alliances among the research communities in industry, the universities and government. We must help industry adapt and adopt new technologies that will sharpen its competitive edge.

The second building block of competitiveness is a highly skilled, quality labour force. Not only does this mean helping the educational system provide the skills that are essential for a modern industrial economy. It also means helping business to sponsor continuing training for its employees. This is all part of the continuous learning experience that is referred to in the Speech from the Throne.

The third factor necessary for international competitiveness is capital markets that are responsive to the needs of our entrepreneurs and our inventors. Lower cost of capital investment means that companies can

afford a longer time horizon for pay-back on their investments, including investment in research and development.

The fourth factor is that competitiveness requires a business climate that supports enterprise and an efficient domestic market. This climate includes such measures, as I have already mentioned, as deregulation, privatization and tax reform, measures that flowed from the agenda for economic renewal. We have also streamlined and modernized our intellectual property laws and our patent laws and have brought our competition policy into line with the demands of a modern industrial economy.

Fifth, business needs better access to foreign markets and better information about market opportunities wherever in the world they are to be found. We have made historic initiatives in multilateral, trilateral and bilateral trade. We are following up these initiatives by providing services to businesses that will help them tap markets in the United States, Europe and the Pacific Rim, as well as in the Middle East where I had the opportunity to lead a trade mission of some top business people, gaining some new business in the Arabian Gulf area.

Sixth, Canada must reinforce the values, beliefs and attitudes that affect the way we do business. We need to build a business culture that encourages initiative, entrepreneurship and stakeholder partnerships. These are things that cannot be decreed by governments. They must be built through a change in attitude and a change in the environment in which business works today.

Finally, we must continue the course that we have set in maintaining a strong and positive economic environment through lower deficits, low inflation and lower interest rates. This combination of policies will bring real benefits. Our objective, as set out in the Speech from the Throne, is to work with business, labour and provincial governments to generate 2.5 million new jobs by the year 2000 and raise real incomes by 25 per cent.

I list these factors only briefly, but our government will invite Canadians to consider them in detail. In a few weeks, we will release a paper to promote a national discussion on the factors essential for Canadians' prosperity.

[*Translation*]

I hope that Canadians across the country, from all sectors of the economy and all walks of life, will be receptive to this working paper. After all, it is the Canadian people as individuals that will ensure our success. It is the workers and managers of the industry who run the economy, along with the contractors who take advantage of an opportunity when it comes their way and the scientists who achieve scientific and technological developments in their laboratories to give us a competitive edge.

Teachers, from elementary school to university, play a role in developing the skills and the culture needed to foster growth and prosperity.

Our success, as a nation, depends on our will to succeed as individuals. That is why we must improve our potential.

[*English*]

I speak of individuals, but individual efforts have much more impact when in concert. Working together, individuals can overcome the fragmentation that results when so few people are scattered across a country so immense.

Overcoming that fragmentation has made Canadians masters of the technology of communications and transportation. It has made us masters of conciliation and consensus.

It has led us to create partnerships, joint ventures, alliances and networks that help span the country in interconnected grids.

It has given us some of the tools we need to take on the global marketplace. It has given us the ability to keep a transcontinental economy moving. It has given us the ability to preserve and revitalize a transcontinental nation.

In conclusion, we must continue to work together to build and strengthen our economy and to renew and strengthen our unity as a country.

It is a strong economy that will give us as individuals the confidence necessary to succeed. This renewed confidence in ourselves will give us greater tolerance and vision to bridge the differences that will always be a part of such a diverse country as Canada.

We all share the vision of the Speech from the Throne for a prosperous and united Canada. I invite hon. members from both sides to join us in implementing the measures that will keep that vision alive, and make it a reality.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, through you, I would like to say to the new minister that I listened to his words carefully.

There was hardly a sentence that I did not disagree with. How does the minister expect this competitiveness, this globalization and all the things that he described in his speech to happen? How does he expect them to happen when we have a dollar that is inflated, when we have interest rates that are crippling us and when we have a tax system that most businessmen in the world think is the most complicated?

How does he expect fairness, conciliation and action to come about in our economy when we are faced with underpinnings that are so difficult to work with?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I am delighted to hear that the hon. member does agree.

I know from the discussions that he and I have had on a number of occasions that there is a lot of common ground between us.

He has raised issues about the Canadian dollar and about interest rates. He knows that the policies we are following of decreasing the deficit and controlling inflation are key to lowering interest rates.

We have to ensure that Canadians can look forward to lower deficits. The Leader of the Opposition talked earlier about the problem of debt. He and I agree on the problem of debt.

The only way to decrease the debt is to decrease deficits. That requires some tough decisions, but decreasing those deficits will help us lower interest rates and place Canadian businesses in a position where they can compete.

The key point that must be remembered here is that we cannot only focus on some of the issues that the hon. member has mentioned and forget about the issues that I stressed in my remarks such as science and technology, education, training—the continuous learning experience—the environment, the relationship between business and labour, incentives for investment, and all of these things which are very important elements in the competitive position of a country.

• (1140)

If we only focus on some of these high profile issues and forget about the others, then we are going to lose the game. That is going to be the essence of the discussion paper and the consultation process that flows from that: how we as Canadians working together can improve our performance in that regard.

It is not just governments that can do that. It is business, labour, educators, provincial governments, municipal governments all working together with one common objective of improving our competitive position.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the minister's comments in terms of making a case for the need for increased competitiveness for the Canadian economy and his reference particularly to support for retraining and education and research and development.

I thought back a few weeks to when we had lobbyists on Parliament Hill from universities, particularly in terms of educational funding for universities and research in a whole variety of areas. Their comments were that over the years the government had actually cut back on the traditional support that it provided for post-secondary education in terms of limiting transfer payments and so on.

I suppose the minister is serious, but does he not think there is a certain hollowness in his comments when he stands and says that this government now is concerned with doing all of these things? Yet would he not have to admit that its record shows that this government has not followed through in supporting research and development, that this government has not followed through with support for post-secondary education and retraining programs.

I know that in my own constituency we have a long list of people who want to get retraining programs launched and there is simply no money there.

While I say the minister is not necessarily being insincere, it must be recognized that there is a certain amount of hypocrisy in what he is saying.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am sure my hon. friend would agree that we have to get interest rates down. Interest rates have come down about five percentage points since this time last year, but we have to get interest rates down further. One of those ways is

getting the deficit down and getting inflation down as well. There has to be a balance. We cannot get deficits down without making some pretty tough decisions on spending.

I acknowledge that there are people in the community who would like us to be spending more money on a number of policy areas, some of which he has referred to just now. I also say to him that the amount of moneys that the federal government is spending as a percentage of our national income compares favourably with Japan, with the United States, with Germany, with France. It is a question of encouraging the private sector to also match that performance in investing research and development moneys.

We have a tax system that is being judged by objective outside observers, not the Government of Canada, as being the best of the major industrialized countries in support of research and development.

My friend talks about training and says that some people in his constituency are having difficulty in getting access to training moneys. I ask him to think back to 1984. There was practically no money available for training, no money at all. We have built that up through the Canadian Jobs Strategy to $1.7 billion prior to the changes in the unemployment insurance system. Through the changes there, we are redirecting some of those unemployment insurance system moneys into training, which will add another $550 million this year, growing to $750 million in a couple of years' time.

While there are people who want more training moneys—and I fully support that as a point of view—we have made a good deal of progress backing up the commitments and the priorities that we have established as a government since 1984.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne and the minister's speech are full of good words, soft, soothing, positive words. The rhetoric is spectacular but it is a fraud because the action is to the contrary. Just a few weeks ago, in a budget that he brought down as Minister of Finance, he cut by millions of dollars the training programs in Canada. The training moneys in Canada now are less than they were in 1984 in real dollars. They cut them by 32 per cent between 1984 and 1988 and then they changed the unemployment insurance program to recuperate some of those dollars. In the recent budget they have cut them again, and they have cut moneys to post-secondary education.

The minister says they are doing that to get interest rates down, but you do not get interest rates down and you do not cut a deficit on the backs of education and training dollars. You never do that. There are other places to cut.

The minister and the Speech from the Throne speak with a forked tongue, in favour of education and training, and then they cut them back in the very next action they took just a few months ago.

I want to ask him how can any Canadian sincerely believe what he says in his speech this morning. How can they believe what is in the Speech from the Throne? We are getting double-talk from this government all the time.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, this type of rhetoric used by the hon. member does not help anybody develop a better understanding of the issue. If my hon. friend would go to OECD papers, the Organization of Economic Co-operation Development papers, he would see what has happened over the course of the last six and a half years. We had practically no active job-training moneys at that time. We had one of the largest passive income support programs of the OECD countries, but we were not putting nearly enough of it into training and education.

We have made a significant degree of progress in that, as I outlined in response to my friend from Kamloops, but more can be done, more should be done. What we are trying to do in the course of the consultations that will flow from the agenda for prosperity paper that I referred to in my speech is seek out the ideas of Canadians as to how we can do this working together. It is not just government training moneys. It is also getting a changed attitude on the part of business so that we have businesses themselves spending more money on training of their own employees.

There are some very powerful numbers which show that Canadian businesses do not spend nearly as much as their competitors in the United States, Germany, or Japan, and we must change this. It is a change in attitude, that continuous learning experience that was referred to in the Speech from the Throne, that is the

essence of what we are trying to achieve as a government, but much broader than that, as a people.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, all of us who have been in politics a while have learned to have modest expectations about throne speeches. Throne speeches are almost inevitably vague. They usually lack focus because they cover such a wide range of subjects.

In judging any throne speech, you start with modest expectations and you look for those fresh and creative ideas, those bright and sensitive responses to our many problems that make a good speech stand out from a disappointment.

I have to say, despite the efforts of the previous minister to dress up this speech, there were no fresh and creative ideas in this throne speech. There were no sensitive responses to the hundreds of thousands of people across this country who are hurting because of the government's policies, policies which have been in effect and policies which will continue to be in effect, as expressed by this throne speech.

This speech was not just uninspiring, it was full of bland ideas recycled from the past. As a banner to unite this country the speech is a disaster. As a hope for our economy and the people in our economy, it really is a shameful disappointment to Canadians. If we look around at the reality of our economy, it is a reality which is grim and tough for many, many people.

• (1150)

I have here the report of Statistics Canada which came out last week, May 10, 1991. It shows that over the past year in our country, we have lost 418,000 full-time jobs. The government talks bravely about creating 2.5 million new jobs by the year 2000. It does not recognize at all, in what was said in the speech, that it has devastated this country with these kinds of figures: 418,000 full-time jobs lost in just a year. That kind of devastation is something that a country cannot take. With that number of full time jobs eliminated, one cannot expect people in this country to keep faith in their government and in their political system.

That is why across this country, and I have been travelling across it, one hears so much in the way of cynicism and despair about our government, about our political system.

It is not because people have come to distrust politicians in general, as this government would have us believe. It is because this government has lost the trust and the faith of Canadians across this country in policy area after policy area, whether we talk about the environment and the fact that the much heralded green plan was actually cut back in the last budget, or we talk about social services, so crucial to many people in this country in the middle of a recession. This government has lost the faith of people because it has refused to pay its previously agreed share of the Canada Assistance Plan benefits going to British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario.

Then this government has the nerve to say to a government like that in Ontario, when it keeps faith with the promises to give people health: "Terrible, you are spending more money". The reason more money is being spent is because the people across this aisle, the people who now come to us and ask for a non-partisan attitude, have destroyed the sense of trust that people in this country can have in their federal government. It has broken not just election promises made before an election but signed agreements with the provinces on which people throughout this country counted and as a result of which they are now suffering.

I say "suffering" not to exaggerate, but because it is an honest reflection of what we have heard in communities across this country. Our economic recovery tour has crossed Canada, has visited community after community, has heard from poverty groups, has heard from community development groups and has heard from city social services groups. It has heard of the way in which the unemployment changes that this government put into effect have forced people on to welfare, have forced municipalities to pay for that welfare, often devastating the tax base of those municipalities and destroying the dignity of the people who are forced to experience such welfare, very often for the first time in their lives.

We can talk about bankruptcies. Again we can look at the latest figures which have come out for March of this year. They show a record. This government has not given

us record growth. It has given us record bankruptcies of small businesses and of people across this country: 6,258 in March of this past year. That is up 52 per cent from a year ago. Ontario has suffered an increase of 78 per cent.

We all know that for every single bankruptcy of a small business there are at least two other small businesses that simply shut their doors and lay their people off. The jobs and the hopes those small businesses had disappear.

The Conference Board of Canada, usually a friend of this government, came out this past week with a relatively unbiased source of information, indicating that this government and this country will have the worst growth record of any industrialized country in the entire western world; another record for this government to think about.

Did you see, Mr. Speaker, any of this harsh reality in the throne speech? Did you see any statement which recognized that we are in a recession? Did you see anything which indicated that we have lost 418,000 full-time jobs in the past year, that we have lost 6,000 in the past month? Not a thing, just brave words about prosperity.

This economic disaster is a tremendous challenge to our unity as a country. It is a challenge which this government is not meeting and will not meet with the empty words in this throne speech. It talks about a paper on learning with absolutely no detail, a suggestion that of course it does not take money to do anything about learning. There is no recognition that it is the government's very own cutbacks in financial support for the provinces, through Established Programs Funding, money which goes to education, which is creating the educational crisis across this land.

The government talks again about free trade and how wonderful free trade has been. I would have thought that the government would at least not have had the effrontery, the gall to stand up in this Parliament and talk about how free trade has helped this country in the face of 418,000 permanent job losses in the past year.

• (1200)

Mr. McCreath: Where did you get that figure?

Mr. Langdon: Right out of Statistics Canada.

Mr. McCreath: And how many new jobs?

Mr. Langdon: How many new jobs? There have been 109,000 new jobs, all of them part-time, in the past year. The total loss of employment in this past year has been well over 300,000, even if you include part-time jobs, which most people in this country are not looking for. They are looking for full-time jobs.

I suggest to members across the way that if they are not prepared to believe me, they should look the statistics up in the daily Statistics Canada, May 10, 1991. It states that full-time employment decreased by 418,000.

There is a great deal of talk in this throne speech about the need to be flexible and the need to be able to adjust in this country. The previous minister talked about this need. Yet this government's promise of the very best adjustment policies ever to be seen in any western country disappeared the day the election ended in 1988 and we have not seen any of it in the House of Commons since.

[*Translation*]

I have never heard such an empty Throne Speech! There is simply nothing in it. Lower interest rates are mentioned, but the job is left entirely to the private sector without any kind of assistance. To help and reassure the people, the government has promised some more major economic restructuring, this time with a free-trade deal between Canada, the United States and also Mexico. That is supposed to make us more competitive on global markets. The government also talks about improving education opportunities and promoting job training. But how can we trust a government that keeps on cutting funding in that field?

[*English*]

What should this speech have said? There should have been action in it for small business especially. There should have been serious hope of a government loans program that would help small business across this country. There should have been bankruptcy reform which small business has been pushing for for years and which this government still has not delivered. There should have been responses to farmers across this country.

I have just returned from a trip across western Canada in which farmers talked to me about their unhappiness with GRIP. They see the Gross Revenue Insurance Program as something that would simply not respond to

their immediate needs and would not give them any serious long-term hopes for the future because there was no reflection of cost of production in the formula that was used to set the basis for support in GRIP.

We have the previous minister talking about competitiveness. We believe in a competitive economy. It is our only hope for the future as a country. However, the question is how do we build competitiveness. Do we build competitiveness by destroying factories and jobs with a free trade deal? Do we build competitiveness by cutting back $100 million in training in the last budget? Do we build competitiveness by reducing support for the National Research Council? Surely not.

What we should do to achieve competitiveness as a country in the future is build a country based on the abilities of its people. To do that, we must end poverty in this country. We must do something to give us more equality in Canada. We must change financial support to give people a sense of security in their health and educational support.

What else? There should have been a commitment to reduce the value of the dollar, a commitment to establish an economic recovery fund which would respond to local community-based initiatives, a commitment to investment in the future of our country.

The speech talks about setting partisan motives aside. This government has not set aside a single one of the partisan commitments which it has forced down the throats of Canadians in this past seven years. It has not rejected the free trade agreement. It has not questioned the GST. It has not questioned the tax changes it has made to benefit the rich. It has not questioned the cutbacks in VIA, the cutbacks in the CBC, the cutbacks in institution after institution that are crucial for our country's future.

Yet it says: "Come on guys, be non-partisan, give us a break". This country has no business giving this government a break. What this country should do is give this government the boot, not give it any kind of break, because it has jammed partisan objectives down the throats of Canadians which can simply not be accepted.

I therefore move a subamendment to the previous amendment as follows. I move, seconded by the member for Skeena:

> That the amendment be amended by adding the following words after "economic affairs of the nation" in the previous amendment: "as demonstrated by the absence of any new initiatives to respond to widespread human distress caused by your government's economic policies and by the reliance on yet another parliamentary committee in the next round of constitutional discussions".

• (1210)

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. friend from Windsor. There is something in his remarks that leaves me a little confused and I would like to put a question to him with respect to this.

He frequently speaks of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and seems to feel that this has had a negative impact on the Canadian economy, something which I have some difficulty understanding. It is my understanding that possibly my hon. friend feels that, in fact, the Canadian market within itself is large enough to meet all the needs of Canadian manufacturers such that we need never sell anything outside of Canada.

It is my understanding that the way trade opportunities go is through mutual accords of one sort or another. Therefore, if the means to the growth in the Canadian economy, if the means to the creation of substantive employment possibilities is in having access to markets that will allow our businesses and industries to grow, the logical means is to set up trade accords that give us access to those markets. They reasonably are going to want access back to ours.

Therefore, my question to the hon. member is this. If it is his intent that Canada should not open up trade with other countries of the world, if Canada should not access the opportunities for growth and expansion in competitive Canadian industries, how does he propose to have the Canadian economy grow, if we are going to confine ourselves to having higher and higher and higher walls put around our country?

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, I must say that is a remarkable question for somebody to put, given the debate which has taken place in this country over the trade deal for many years. It has been our position

throughout that debate that by locking ourselves into an accord with the United States, we were, in fact, making it more difficult for us to deal with trade opportunities in other parts of the world.

For ourselves, we certainly see the goal of economic policy as, of course, trying to create as prosperous a country as possible, while trying to see to it that environmental goals are met within that framework. In that context we are also trying to expand our trade with not just the United States but the Asian Pacific countries which are growing so fast. The European countries, in particular eastern Europe, is changing dramatically and offers a great many trade opportunities to countries that are prepared to get in there.

I think that where this government made its mistake was to set up a special set of trade rules with the United States which gave every incentive to companies to locate in the United States and export into Canada, instead of locating here and exporting into the United States. In our particular community, for instance, we have seen in the past year 40 factories which have shut up shop and shifted to the United States or to Mexico.

That, Mr. Speaker, is not what prosperity for this country is about. Prosperity is about those plants staying here, exporting to the United States but also exporting to other parts of the world.

I want to suggest too that the member's part of Canada from which I have just returned is going to feel much of this damage now that the doors have been opened to wheat exports from the United States into Canada.

Many farmers who I have talked to in western Canada said that this was going to be just as serious a disaster for the west as the free trade in manufactured goods has been for Ontario.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to look at the throne speech very carefully. There are some excerpts in it that I would like to read:

> —that the Government of Canada represents all Canadians; and that change can be achieved only through reasonable compromise and enlightened accommodation of the interest of all Canadians;

As we are talking right now, 37 per cent of our Canadian population is made up of Canadians who, if we want to call them ethno-Canadians, are people who have come to this country since 1947. Statistics Canada states that by the year 2000, 58 per cent of the Canadian population will be other than an anglophone or a francophone.

If we were to look at what constitutes a francophone or an anglophone, an anglophone could be somebody from the British Isles, an Irishman or a Scotsman. Nowhere in this throne speech do we see precisely and clearly something addressing the needs of the people of this country who have come here in the last 50 years.

Nowhere in the speech are we inviting people who have come to this country in the past 50 years to sit at the negotiating table to look at Canada's future.

My question, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member is: Does he not agree with me that if we do not invite the ethno-Canadians to sit at the negotiating table to talk about Canadian unity, we could run in the year 2010 with small interest groups all over different parts of our country saying that they were not invited. Therefore, we would like to sit down and negotiate out future in Canada now. We could be in the midst of renegotiating the Constitution 20 years from now. Why are we not looking 20 years into the future and inviting those groups now?

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, I think that it is a very important question which has been put.

Next week the Canadian Ethno-Cultural Council is meeting with all parties. I am never quite sure which category I fall into. I suppose as somebody from the Celtic fringes of Ireland, it makes me either British or anti-British, I am never quite sure.

It certainly makes it important for us as parliamentarians to recognize that our country is changing. In my view, it is changing very much in a positive way in bringing together within our country a wider and wider variety of people.

In my constituency, there is a very large Chinese population. There is a large Sikh population. There is a large Hindu population. We have many different European countries represented. We are seeing an increasing number of people from the Middle East; from Lebanon, from Iran and from other countries in my constituency. I think this is something which is a tremendous boost to us as a community and to us as a country.

What disappoints me most about the constitutional elements in this throne speech is that the parliamentary committee which was made the centrepiece of the new constitutional moves within this document is not going to permit such diversity to be reflected in the decision-making process about our constitutional future.

• (1220)

If we could start to look seriously at a constituent assembly and see it as something that needs to be built for the future, it would be a mechanism which could bring in a wide number of the different groups within this country which are not as fully represented in this Parliament as they should be and, hopefully, as they will be after the next election campaign.

Certainly in our legislature, the New Democratic legislature in Ontario, there is very strong representation of such groups and I hope that will also turn out to be the case in this Parliament after the next election.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, the government, in presenting its Speech from the Throne and in dealing, in particular, with Canada's recent economic performance and economic prospects, offers, briefly, five points as the foundation for its further leadership in the economy. First, the government, in the Speech from the Throne, says quite flatly that economic recovery depends on reducing interest rates. The other four nostrums that the government presents are deficit reduction, tax reform, free trade, and productivity growth. I want to deal with each of those five points in order. I want then to turn to the prospects that Canadians face when they ask themselves what is this government's real commitment to create the circumstances in which our economy can flourish.

As I have just noted, the government has stated flatly that economic recovery depends on reducing interest rates. This is a new-found goal for the government. It is not many months ago, indeed it is only a matter of two months or so ago, when the Prime Minister and his colleagues extolled higher interest rates as the most effective public policy instrument for combating inflation. The government told Canadians that inflation was the worst possible threat that could face them. The harsh medicine of high interest rates was the only possible solution to that problem facing all Canadians.

But what have we seen since then? What has happened? In the last budget the government suddenly decided that its policy was in error. It decided that it was wrong, that it had pursued the incorrect monetary policies, that in fact by imposing on Canadians high interest rates it had hobbled the further development of Canadian industry. It had imposed on Canadians the inability to provide themselves with adequate housing. It had denied the Canadian people the opportunity to participate more actively in the greater global economy.

What did the government do? It suddenly decided, and it was very sudden, that high interest rates were no longer desirable, that the made-in-Canada recession which it had itself brought about by pursuing high interest rates was no longer desirable and that it was a mistake. Now the government says that we are going to have reduced interest rates.

All Canadians must welcome that sudden conversion, but the assurance that we are going to have reduced interest rates cannot be accepted without a certain grain of salt, a certain scepticism, when we see the recent performance of this government.

In the instance of its monetary policy, one can only regard the Speech from the Throne with some real scepticism. On deficit reduction equally, the government has throughout its term of office since 1984 assured Canadians that it would reduce the debt and reduce the service charges on that debt. That was a primary goal the government would pursue to ensure further economic growth in our country, to ensure that the costs of servicing the debt was not a burden on the Canadian exchequer or on the prospects of Canadians as they entered the last decade of this century.

What has happened with debt and deficit reduction is, in fact, quite the contrary. The government somehow lost its courage. It made some initial efforts to reduce government spending and, therefore, to reduce the debt and deficit, but it soon lost its courage and nerve. The result is, today, that, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out earlier, since coming to office the government has driven up the debt to unparalleled levels. It has imposed more and more debt-servicing charges on

Canadians which have become a real straight-jacket on our further economic growth.

In its second goal of economic management, one has to conclude again that the performance of this government has been a failure. Canadians will regard, with real scepticism, the phrase in the Speech from the Throne that the government, in the time ahead, will be committed to deficit reduction.

On the first two counts, we have to regard these commitments, brief as they may be, and I understand why they should be brief given the government's record, with real scepticism, as we must regard the third element in its economic program for the time ahead: tax reform.

This government came to office promising major tax reform, tax simplification and tax consolidation. What in fact do we have? We have today a tax system which is at least as complicated as it was when this government came to office. So much for tax reform. The fact is that by adding taxes on 32 occasions since it came to office, this government has not only imposed an increasingly heavy tax burden on individual Canadians and on Canadian business, most recently of course in the case of the goods and services tax, but in so doing it has also complicated the tax system and rendered it even more complex than it already was.

The opportunity for Canadians to benefit from a tax system which would offer incentives to those of an entrepreneurial character, to those who want to improve their own skills, to have the full opportunity to participate in our national economy, to move freely in our country, has been denied by the government's consistent failure to fulfil its promise both to simplify our tax system and to reduce the tax burden on individual Canadians and corporations.

That is the third of the major areas in which one can only view with real doubt the degree of commitment the government is making in the Speech from the Throne when it repeats yet again that it will reduce interest rates, that it will reduce deficits and commit itself to real tax reform.

• (1230)

I want now to turn to a fourth major area in which the government has identified a priority in the Speech from the Throne, the area of international trade. Here the government limits itself in fact to the free trade agreement and to the prospect of a North American free trade area. We look in vain for any evidence in the Speech from the Throne that the government has committed itself to a truly global approach in our international economic relations.

Canada has prospered since the end of World War II by its commitment to a global economy in which tariffs have consistently been reduced or eliminated, and Canadian governments, recognizing that Canada is a major trading country, have sought to give further prosperity to Canadians by pursuing the global route in our economic relations.

This government has chosen instead to adopt a continentalist approach. It has, as it were, chosen to place our economic interests even more in the U.S. basket, as it were, than it did in the past. In the Speech from the Throne, the government justifies its commitment to continentalism by stating that the U.S.-Canada free trade agreement has helped to secure the Canadian economy in difficult times.

What evidence does it offer for this bald statement? All it offers is more that foreign investment—according to its statistics—has come into Canada to a greater degree than has been the case in the recent past.

What is the government claiming by saying this? Is it saying that the investment has been in those areas of high economic growth internationally; that it is rendering Canada more competitive? It offers no evidence of the benefits to Canada of this particular growth in foreign investment. Aside from that particular point, is this the final justification for the U.S.-Canada free trade agreement? When the agreement was first mooted, we were all assured that secure access to Canada's major market was the principal goal of those committed to the negotiations.

In fact, that realization of secure access has not been there. The government knows this. The government knows that the free trade agreement is only half completed. Under the terms of the agreement, the whole question of subsidies, a major difficult, complex question, has been left aside. The government says nothing about this in the Speech from the Throne. Yet it must know that during the course of this new Parliament, which we have just embarked upon, the question of subsidies, that is the other half of the U.S.-Canada free trade agreement, will come to a head. It will necessarily have to be dealt with.

What is the government's commitment? What is the government's policies? What does it propose to do to bring to completion its own free trade agreement in a way that can offer some hope that Canadians can benefit from this continental approach that the government has decided to pursue?

That realization of any benefits of free trade with the United States—if indeed there are substantial benefits in a free trade agreement which has not embodied in it any agreement on subsidies—will also be limited by the fact that this government has not offered, and does not in the Speech from the Throne offer Canadians any real opportunity to benefit from the increased global competition through providing them with adjustment assistance.

My colleague from the other opposition party has just drawn attention to the consistent failure of this government since the free trade agreement was adopted to provide Canadian workers and Canadian students with the opportunity to equip themselves to compete either in a continental free trade area or in the freer trade of a global economy. What in this respect is the government offering Canadians in this Speech from the Throne? It is certainly not the best adjustment policies in the world, which the Prime Minister so glibly offered during the free trade debate. It offers nothing to justify the statement in the Speech from the Throne that "the next logical step" is the negotiation of a North American free trade area.

Any Canadian knows perfectly well that the reason the government has entered into negotiations with the United States and Mexico of a North American free trade agreement is that it had little other option. Once the government had committed itself to the free trade agreement with the United States, then by extension, it had to be at the table with Mexico. Is that the government's priority in trade policy? Is our trade policy now largely that we shall enter into a free trade agreement with Mexico? Is this the priority of the government? We look in vain to the Speech from the Throne for any evidence of a real commitment to a global economic policy, to a commitment to trade on a global level. What is in fact this government's trade policy?

It is the year 1991. We are on the eve of a European community of yet greater vigour and integration. We face the prospect of eastern Europe coming into a wider association with western Europe. Throughout Asia, the economic growth offers new opportunities for Canada. Why are we not told by this government that it will seek new trading relations, freer trading relations globally? Indeed, why not seek free trade with the European community and with those Asian countries willing to negotiate? Why not go to those countries and seek the global markets which this government says it is committed to, while the whole time it pursues mainly a continental trade policy?

We look in vain to this Speech from the Throne for anything but a rather stale and doubtful commitment to the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement which, as I say, has not been completed and, in any case, which the government says leads on to the "logical step" of Mexico. In fact, there is no such logic at all.

The logic of the government's trade policy should be to take the U.S.—Canada Free Trade Agreement as a basis, in an urgent way, to seek freer trade agreements with countries outside the North American continent.

The government does offer, in a rather indirect way, the creation of a true economic union in Canada as one way in which Canadians can hope to achieve higher standards of living and to better compete internationally.

There is nothing new about such a commitment. Indeed, the question is rather: Where has the government been? Many issues the government raised in the Speech from the Throne are to be dealt with in further studies. We are told that more commissions are required, but in most issues the work has already been done. The Canadian people know what the problems are. There is no need for further studies and further commissions.

From the days of Confederation in 1867, there has been a commitment in this country, at least in theory, to a true economic union. In 1991, the government says: "We need further study. We will look at the question some more and by 1995 we may have something to say about it".

The opportunities are here now. What leadership is the government providing with the provincial governments? Does it seek an agreement with them on a timetable for the reduction and elimination of internal barriers to the free movement of goods, services, capital and people?

• (1240)

Does it set out a timetable and then reach agreement with the provinces on a monitoring agency so as to assure the Canadian people that real progress is being made?

In any event, is this commitment to an economic union—as welcome as it is and as belated as it is—compatible with political decentralization which the government has been talking about? Is it compatible with the continued federal regulations which act as an impediment to a true economic union in Canada?

One could go on. Obviously, the whole area of greater productivity and competitiveness is one that can also be studied to death. The government, in the Speech from the Throne, offers it to the Canadian people as if it were a new found land. What is astonishing is that it has taken the government so long to identify the need for Canadians to be competitive.

Education is clearly a major part of any such competitive initiative, yet the government offers nothing specific. It simply says: "More study, more commissions. Let's look at it. Let's consider it further. Maybe some time in the distant future, we will come back to you with more specific proposals."

Mr. Speaker, I would submit to you in all these instances and in others the Speech from the Throne fails to provide Canadian people with a clear policy or a clear indication of what this government intends to do in the time ahead.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I want to raise two questions with my colleague who has just given a rather insightful analysis of some of the problems that exist in the throne speech.

From my particular perspective, I believe that the Speech from the Throne ought to be a document of hope and one that inspires Canadians with a certain amount of confidence with regard to the problems that we now face.

I have two questions. The first one: Does he believe that Canadians who are dramatically affected in a negative kind of way by Canada's current economic situation have any reason for hope as a result from this Speech from the Throne? I am talking about Canada's almost 5 million poor, most of whom are women and many of whom are children.

As we speak today, there are 2 million Canadians who are on welfare, 1.8 million Canadians approximately who will be fed by food banks and 40 per cent of whom will be children during the next year, unemployed who number over 1.5 million and bankruptcies that have gone up by over 6,000 this month.

If one compares this with a year ago, the number is up over 50 per cent. Is there any hope for any of those Canadians who are among those groups?

My second question recognizes that the deficit is in excess of $30 billion—in fact, it is $30.5 billion—and it has been hovering at about that amount for the last several years and that the debt is almost $400 billion today, it is an increase from almost $168 billion in 1984? Should Canadians have any confidence in this particular Speech from the Throne?

Mr. MacLaren: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the questions of my hon. colleague from St. Boniface.

He draws attention to the absence in this Speech from the Throne of any evidence that the government has found the resources or, indeed, the commitment to deal effectively and urgently with the real problems that confront the poor.

Many women and children remain in a state of destitution in a country of extraordinary affluence. You would look in vain to this Speech from the Throne for such initiatives to counter the poverty.

Would it not have been possible for this government to offer, since it seems so committed to studies, commissions and reports, an examination of our social policy programs? Should we, for example, be moving in Canada toward a system of a guaranteed annual income—or a negative income tax, if you prefer to call it that? Should we be examining the further potential of the tax system to provide those Canadians whom my hon. friend has rightly described as living in deprivation with the adequate resources they need to live in dignity and with the opportunity to provide more for themselves than they are able to do in the circumstances which the government has created?

Demand side economics stands back from the provision of those services in which Canadians can be equipped to help themselves. It is time that priority be given more to supply side economics where the govern-

ment realizes its role in offering the individual Canadian the opportunity to fully realize his or her potential.

On the hon. member's second question, of course the answer has to be no. We have seen no real commitment on the part of this government to bring down the debt and the debt servicing charges, that is to say the deficit, during its years in office. It made a show of doing so in its first years in office, but it got cold feet as a result of pursuing the wrong policies in debt reduction. It then gave up the fight.

To make matters worse, in the election of 1988, in promising the earth, the sky, the moon and the sun to all Canadians, it promised that a decreased level of government spending would bring prosperity. What in fact the government did, despite the denials of the finance minister of the time, was to drive up government spending further. As the hon. member points out, we are now in a situation where the debt is approaching $400 billion.

There is no real commitment in the Speech from the Throne and indeed from the government generally to put its fiscal house in order. It is part of the general tone of this wholly inadequate Speech from the Throne that the government, while touching on the point, glosses completely over what it intends to do to make any real commitment to progress in that area.

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his comments. I am not sure if you are aware, Mr. Speaker, but the hon. member has taken it upon himself, along with my colleague from Winnipeg, to study our international trade situation.

The hon. member heard what the Speech from the Throne said about Canada's trading future, that we are going to tie our trading future to a trilateral deal. The hon. member has studied the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. I know he had a big role to play in the committee study of the Canada-Mexico-U.S. future trade deal. I know that he has done a lot of work in looking at hemispheric trade.

I am wondering if he could comment on the Speech from the Throne's proposition that Canada should limit itself by tying itself to a trilateral free trade deal. I am wondering if he could comment on where he thinks Canada should go in this area.

Mr. MacLaren: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for raising what is of course a fundamental question in this Speech from the Throne. The fact that this government has committed itself in trade policy to largely a continental direction is bad public policy. It was wrong in the free trade agreement and it is wrong in the negotiation of a free trade area with Mexico. Wrong in the sense that it is limiting, that it provides a barrier, as it were, to the full realization of Canada's role as a world trader.

What does the government say in its Speech from the Throne? It says that the free trade agreement has helped to secure the Canadian economy in difficult times. That would come as a surprise to most Canadians. I think they would be quite astonished to read that. In fact, most Canadians would think that the free trade agreement probably exacerbated, made worse, the difficult economic times to which the government refers.

• (1250)

The reason that the free trade agreement has made our recent economic circumstances worse is really threefold. One is that the government has pursued monetary policies which have almost certainly rendered the free trade agreement of limited or no present benefit to Canada. The government has pursued a monetary policy of high interest rates which attract foreign currency and drive up the value of the Canadian dollar, rendering Canadian exports non-competitive. The Canadian manufacturing industry—steel, for example—has a very real problem in exporting when the Canadian dollar is at 85 or 87 cents.

The free trade agreement, whatever one's view of it, might or might not work to some benefit to Canadians with a 75 cent dollar. I cannot believe anyone thinks it is going to work effectively with an 87 cent dollar.

So, high interest rates and a high Canadian dollar have rendered the free trade agreement of little or no benefit to Canadians, if indeed it has any benefits for Canadians.

Third, of course, the government, as I mentioned, has not offered the adjustment programs which could help to make a reality of Canadian competitiveness in a world economy. We in Canada need to equip ourselves to trade with the world, not just with Mexico, not just with the

United States. We need to pursue adjustment policies to corporations and workers that would strengthen Canada's role in a global trading economy.

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to participate in this throne speech. I would like to compliment the government on this visionary throne speech which puts forward several ideas that point the direction Canada should be taking as we head toward the 21st century.

I am pleased to see the high profile given to education. Education is the basis for the future, and education is the key that unlocks the door to economic opportunity for all individuals.

I am pleased to see the emphasis on renewing the effectiveness and the responsiveness of the government, and on continuing the excellent innovations that were made toward the end of the last session with respect to how this place operates.

However, the two initiatives that are by far and away the most important include the initiative to respond to what is called the unity crisis in Canada, to look ahead and set in place a process whereby this country can come together and build and strengthen itself and renew confederation as we head to the 21st century. Also, at the same time, there must be the very important recognition that economic prosperity, economic recovery and economic strength are the real keys to unity in this country, bringing together these concepts of political or constitutional unity and economic unity and economic strength. That is the secret to the future of this country. That linkage is very important.

One cannot help but notice in these recent months that increasingly there is a tendency, as we look at this whole issue of national unity in Canada, to see a polarized focus on Quebec on the one hand and on western Canada, particularly Alberta, on the other hand. We see that in those two parties which seem to have very similar goals, the Bloc Quebecois on the one hand and the Reform Party on the other.

I am a member of Parliament from Atlantic Canada. I asked myself as I read this throne speech, as I listened to the debate throughout the nation and read the various articles in the newspapers and watched television, where is Atlantic Canada in this agenda? Where is Nova Scotia in the context of not only the national agenda generally but the agenda of the government of the day?

As I read the throne speech and look to the direction that we are heading, I ask myself where do we as maritimers, where do we as Nova Scotians, fit in all this?

I think it is important. It is a time for reflection as well as a time for looking back. We cannot ignore our history. Some may choose to abuse our history but it can be instructive. It is important to remind this House and to remind Canadians as they head into this continuing process of national renewal that my province of Nova Scotia did not come willingly into confederation. Indeed, it could be said that we came kicking and screaming into confederation.

It is important to remember that in the first election following Confederation, out of 19 members of Parliament, Nova Scotians elected 18 who were separatists, who were anti-Confederates. It is important to remember that we have not always felt welcome and comfortable within Confederation. It is important to remember that there was a separatist movement in 1886 and 1887 that elected a separatist government in Nova Scotia. It is important to remember the Maritimes Rights Movement of the mid-1920s, a movement that resulted in the establishment of the Duncan commission which reported that Atlantic Canada did indeed have a valid complaint with the way Confederation had operated.

I think it explains, if one looks more closely, the tendency throughout the last 50 years for the maritimes to be represented in this House predominantly from the opposition benches. There is a message in that. Why do maritimers tend to vote for the opposition party? The answer, quite simply, is there is a long-standing feeling, rightly or wrongly, that Atlantic Canada has never been at the centre of the decision-making process. It has never been at the centre or in the forefront of the minds of those who lead our country from the cabinet offices.

In a sense, we do ourselves an injustice if we compare the voting patterns of maritimers with the voting patterns of Quebec. Quebec has tended to vote as a block, tended always to be represented predominantly in the government benches and, consequently, to be represented in very large numbers at the cabinet table.

We, on the other hand, as maritimers, tend to send opposition members. As a result, our voices are not as numerous and not necessarily as strong as those of other regions of the country. When I go to caucus on Wednesday morning, I see four fellow Nova Scotians in the room. At the same time, I see 55 or 56 members from Quebec. It is incumbent on us as Nova Scotians to speak up loudly to make sure that our voices are heard.

That is why I stand in this debate and welcome the opportunity to participate early, to raise my voice, not only on behalf of Canada which we are all here to represent, but particularly on behalf of my own province of Nova Scotia, as we look at the two goals of economic prosperity and the quest for national unity.

Economic issues are not only the key to unity, but they are foremost on the minds of Nova Scotians today. When I am in my constituency, or travelling in different parts of my province, I find that while there is passing interest in the unity debate in Canada, the preoccupation is with economic issues.

We are in the midst of, and have been for some time, difficult economic times in the maritimes, precipitated in part by the difficulties in our fishing industry, which is still our largest industry, and also by difficulties in our forest products industry because of burgeoning disputes with the Europeans and concern about what may happen with a memorandum of understanding in softwood lumber, and other issues.

We have not been well served, quite frankly, by the medicine that has been given to the Canadian economy to respond to the overheated situation in Ontario. We have not been in an overheated situation, therefore, we have not benefited from the high interest rates over the last couple of years, or from the high dollar which makes our exports more expensive. In the south-west of Nova Scotia we are an export economy and we have not benefited from a high dollar.

Quite frankly, as I travel from one end of the south shore to the other, I am distressed at the number of businesses that have gone out of business or that are bankrupt.

Looking at unemployment insurance statistics, although recently they appear to have become more favourable in Nova Scotia, I suspect that if we were to examine the number of people who have withdrawn themselves from the labour force, that may well have impacted those rates.

It is important for people here in Ottawa to understand that whatever arguments may be made about various economic and fiscal factors, whether they be good or whether they be bad, the perception that exists in my province right now is that times are tough and that we have been negatively impacted by the economic medicine that has been targeted primarily at Ontario and Quebec.

I see, Mr. Speaker, that you are giving me the eye so I guess I will have to wait until after lunch.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

At 1 p.m., the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make the House realize of the concerns shared by the Armenian community of Canada, who are gravely offended and angry about the most recent acts of violence perpetrated by the Soviet security forces.

[*English*]

Financial assistance should not be provided to the Soviet Union if it does not immediately halt the violence against the Soviet-Armenian population. It is time for the U.S.S.R. to act as a responsible power and facilitate a peaceful solution of this crisis.

[*Translation*]

It is extremely urgent that we express our great concern and anxiety to the central authorities of the Soviet Union. We must demand an immediate end to these criminal acts.

S. O. 31

[*English*]

AIR INDIA FLIGHT 182

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, in 1985 the largest mass murder in Canadian history took place, yet not a single charge has been laid against anyone concerning the Air India Flight 182 bombing, this despite one of the costliest investigations undertaken by the RCMP and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

There have been reports of bungled surveillance, erased tapes, and in-fighting between the two agencies. They were supposed to work in concert on this investigation, yet they have produced nothing.

So far the government has refused every request to look into the investigation. Now that the trial of Mr. Reyat in Vancouver is over, there is absolutely no reason for the Solicitor General to refuse to undertake a full judicial inquiry into this whole matter.

The lack of results in the Air India bombing, where 369 innocent people were killed, begs the question "why", a question which will only be answered by a full and impartial judicial inquiry.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE THRONE SPEECH

The Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we heard a Throne Speech which is totally unresponsive to the reality in Canada, and especially in Quebec. Today, there was a general outcry throughout Quebec, in opposition to the government's intention to interfere with education. Even Maurice Duplessis must be turning in his grave. The federal government is insensitive, just like the leader of the opposition who agrees that Ottawa should interfere with job training and education.

Mr. Speaker, today, the Quebec minister of Education said that this is not acceptable. He thinks the Canadian government is using tactics of provocation, and calls it an irresponsible government. The people opposite have lost control. They ignore historic realities, and in particular the importance of sovereign provincial powers, as specified in our present Constitution, Mr. Speaker. They do not even respect the Constitution.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, from January 1, 1989 to February 10, 1990, VIA Rail's management in Montreal prepared the elimination of passenger trains in Abitibi. VIA Rail eliminated 81 trains out of 174 in that area, 69 of those for lack of equipment and/or crew. It seems odd that this information was not passed on to travellers. Usually, VIA Rail's passengers are informed of transfers on the schedule. Why make an exception for Abitibi? The service reduction by VIA Rail followed the traditional model of progressive reduction and deterioration. The same thing happened with the service between Senneterre and Rouyn: transfer to Senneterre, followed by elimination.

That is the kind of work that the president, the board of directors and public relations officers of VIA Rail in Montreal do to the detriment of travellers, without telling anybody.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL TOURISM WEEK

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Tourism Week, an event which is very important to my province of Prince Edward Island.

Tourism is the Island's second largest industry, responsible for 10 per cent of the provincial income, the largest of any province in Canada.

The government of Prince Edward Island, the provincial tourism industry, and others are planning a big celebration for tourism week. This year we celebrate our Scottish heritage. The Road to the Isles celebration will include many community events and clan gatherings, including the fourth international gathering of the clans in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia.

Visitors to the island will always be treated to our warm hospitality, our rich culture and heritage, delicious seafood, beautiful beaches and landscapes.

I want to take this opportunity to invite all Canadians to Prince Edward Island this summer for a vacation experience second to none.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, every day we hear Canadians talking about our rights. Very few talk about our responsibilities. We have a Charter of Rights. We need a corresponding charter of responsibilities.

We need a charter expressly declaring that every Canadian has the responsibility to vote in an election, to work to pay their own way, to contribute to society, to solve as many of their own problems as possible without automatically looking to government, to get an education, training or trade, to pay attention to their own health since it affects all society; to do the best job possible of raising their children, to treat others with decency and respect, to keep their temper, to be fair, to set a good example for others and to give more than they get.

It is these responsibilities along with our rights and freedoms that make up the fundamental values of our society and that bind us together as Canadians.

* * *

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of National Police Week, I would like to thank law enforcement officers across Canada for the excellent work they provide the public.

I would also like to give particular recognition to those officers who will be participating in the 1991 Law Enforcement Torch Run for the Special Olympics.

Sponsored by the Canadian and provincial chiefs of police, this year's run will have over 8,800 officers covering a total distance of 15,000 kilometres, and is expected to raise $1.1 million.

The money collected from the torch run will go toward promoting sport, physical recreation and fitness programs for the mentally handicapped.

On behalf of this House, I wish to extend our appreciation to Canada's finest for their efforts on behalf of the Special Olympics and also to police forces throughout the country for the dedicated service they provide their communities.

S. O. 31

TRADE

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, the United States today moved one step closer to approving fast-track negotiations for a Mexico-Canada-U.S. free trade deal.

This is not good news for Mexico. As the opposition leader there says: "We consider that this particular deal will consolidate the subordinate relationship Mexico already has with the U.S. economy."

Nor is it good news for Canada. In the last year, we have lost 418,000 full-time jobs in this country, mostly due to the present deal we have with the U.S. An extension to Mexico will just make things worse.

In my community alone, 40 factories shut last year, with most plants shifting to the U.S. or Mexico.

This government still has the chance to listen to the majority of Canadians who oppose this new deal. I urge them to do so for the sake of fair economic relations and Canadian jobs.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, finally there is light at the end of the tunnel. That was the finding in a recent survey on business confidence conducted by the Conference Board of Canada.

Results of the survey indicated that 47 per cent of the 400 companies polled by the Conference Board indicated they believed an economic recovery would begin within the next six months, the highest level since 1984.

Restored confidence, as outlined in the Speech from the Throne yesterday, means new investment. New investment means meaningful jobs and a better way of life for all Canadians.

This government has taken the tough decisions on fighting the deficit and holding down inflation. This news from the Conference Board of Canada confirms that while our decisions are not always popular, they are in the long-term good for the country.

S. O. 31

FOREIGN AID

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, although Canadians across this nation are suffering from the present recession, which is affecting hundreds of thousands of families very personally, many of us can still acknowledge how fortunate we are in comparison to the populations of a growing number of countries, including Iraq, Sudan, Ethiopia and Bangladesh. Canadians realize that we must put our own house in order, but at the same time our tradition does not allow us to turn our backs on those in great need in other lands.

• (1410)

Our government very quickly found additional funds to wage war in the Middle East, yet today it is running out of funds for emergency relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation for millions of individuals living in apocalyptic circumstances, many of them victims of the war we helped wage. Fortunately, the war ended relatively quickly, leaving Canadian war commitments unused. I ask the Government of Canada to reallocate these funds to CIDA to be used to relieve the famine and misery of those countries in such dire need today so that the development funds of CIDA can be used, as budgeted, to meet the pressing needs of global poverty alleviation, environmental degradation and population explosion.

* * *

THAMES BEND FARMS

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, today thousands of Canadian hog farmers are producing the world's top quality pork and superior genetic breeding stock.

This standard of excellence and the millions of dollars returned to Canada's economy can be attributed to elite farmers such as Richard and Warren Stein, owners of Thames Bend Farms of Tavistock, Ontario.

On this past April 12, provincial leaders, six members of Parliament, including the Deputy Prime Minister, plus 1,000 invited guests, celebrated the 25th anniversary of this dynamic family farm and the outstanding achievements in quality swine production and world wide exports.

Warren Stein said, and I quote:

> We are proud to be Canadians and share with you the Canadian dream. I know of no other place in the world that would have allowed us to do what we have done. Starting from a vision of serving our fellow man and contributing something of worth to society, twenty five years ago we, by using Canadian technology and with the help of you, our friends gathered here this evening, have reached this milestone in our business.
>
> I will be most happy if at this evening's end we can openly thank God for giving us the Canadian opportunity and the pride that goes with it.

What a tremendous Canadian.

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. J.W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, there is one small paragraph in the throne speech that I believe is more powerful for current times than any other. I am referring to those words which emphasize that the cause of national unity and the mission for national prosperity are inextricably interlocked and interdependent.

Yet, that statement conveys realities which are so obvious we frequently take them for granted.

Clearly, we must face the facts that unity and prosperity do go together in Canada's future. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Atlantic provinces. We are critically dependent there upon a strong and unified country to ensure that we share in the quality of life available to all Canadians. Any breakdown in Canadian unity will be devastating for prosperity in Atlantic Canada.

Conversely, however, the assurance of a unified country provides unique motivation for the entrepreneurial skills of Atlantic Canadians and strengthens their desire to contribute more fully to their own prosperity and to the well-being of the nation.

Unity does spawn prosperity and prosperity does strengthen unity.

That is the message, Mr. Speaker, that we must deliver to every Canadian.

FISHERIES

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, a serious situation is continuing to develop on the west coast regarding the native food fishery. Commercial fishermen are concerned that their livelihoods are being threatened in order to provide settlement of Indian land claims.

The commercial fishermen feel that they should not be called on to bear the brunt and cost of these claims, but that they are the responsibility of all Canadians.

While the threatened blockade of Vancouver harbour on May 31 will do nothing but annoy and inconvenience others, it shows the deep sense of frustration these fishermen feel.

I call on the government to remedy this difficult situation to prevent serious problems on the west coast this year, with meaningful discussions with all groups involved.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, clearly one of the thrusts of the throne speech is free trade within Canada. But just as the FTA, a good deal is contingent upon the existence of a level playing field. We must ensure that a level playing field exists within Canada before we start breaking down the barriers to trade that now protect smaller markets like the Atlantic provinces.

A modern, up-to-date, competitive transportation system is fundamental to economic development and prosperity in Atlantic Canada.

Federal discrimination against the port of Halifax and consequently the whole competitive situation of Nova Scotia has been a bug-bear for many years.

While Montreal benefits from free ice-breaking, dredging and nav-aid services, user pay and compensatory rates have always been applied to the rail line that is Halifax's life blood to the rest of the nation. If user pay is to apply to Halifax, it should apply to Montreal. If user pay is to apply, then CN should be required by the government that owns it to effect cost saving technology when available. The acquisition of double-stacked cars will reduce costs by 20 per cent. The survival of the port of Halifax and the health of the Nova Scotian economy depends on it.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister.

In the Throne Speech, there is a part, which makes up about a third of the document, entitled "Participating in Prosperity". I don't see why it was not entitled "Sharing Hope". For the million and a half Canadians looking for jobs, there was little hope in yesterday's Throne Speech.

Here is my question to the Prime Minister; Does he not think that time has come to abandon the current economic policies of high dollar and high interest rates and replace them with policies which will immediately create jobs for the 1,500,000 unemployed who are feeling desperate right now?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the policies suggested by my colleague are precisely the ones we are following, with some success I may add.

[*English*]

Short-term interest rates have declined 500 basis points since last year and almost 100 basis points since the budget. The Canadian-U.S. interest rate differential is now around 300 basis points, down from 550 basis points.

My hon. friend talks about jobs. We have had a difficult time of it. After leading the industrialized world in job creation for six years, we have had a very bad year of it, but last month employment increased. I know my hon. friend will agree with me that the good news last Friday was that unemployment decreased by three-tenths of a percentage point, dropping unemployment down to 10.2 per cent.

There are encouraging signs in the economy, most important, the steady decline of interest rates and further signs that economic growth will be brought about in a non-inflationary manner. This is, of course, what the government has been seeking to do, and it is the only way to provide durable jobs.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I do not deny that interest rates are going down, but there is still a spread of almost four points between United States interest rates and Canadian interest rates. It causes our dollar to be too high to make our product competitive in the United States.

In the throne speech, the government talks about 2.5 million jobs being created by the year 2000, nine years from now. Does the Prime Minister not realize that from 1970 to 1979, with a much smaller economy, there were more jobs created than this 2.5 million over the next nine years? Why is the Prime Minister not willing to do something today or not able to do what is needed to make the Canadian economy more competitive so that we will have jobs. We need a lower dollar and more competitive interest rates if we want to be able to compete.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is quite right. Indeed, in six years, from 1984 to last year, there were 1.6 million new jobs created, which was the largest per capita job creation in the entire industrialized world, with the exception of Japan. That was quite a remarkable record.

We think the targets we have set, 2.5 million new jobs and an increase in real individual wealth of 25 per cent, are achievable goals. Perhaps the nation, with increased productivity, by paying down our deficit, lessening our debt load, bringing about a greater degree of unity, can do better. That is why unity is so interrelated with prosperity.

I agree with some of the points made by my hon. friend in his speech this morning. That is why we have to work together to ensure that Canada enjoys both unity and prosperity.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the point I am making is that the Prime Minister does not care at all about the problems of the unemployed today. He is following exactly the same policies that created the made-in-Canada recession. I say to the Prime Minister that it would be easier to have unity in this country if we had a better economy, and he should start to work on that right away. In order to achieve it, he has to reduce the value of the Canadian dollar, like most people in the industrial sector are asking the government to do. In order to achieve it, the government could make the Canadian interest rate more competitive so that we can compete and create jobs.

• (1420)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my friend says that we have to reduce the value of the Canadian dollar as a top priority. That is quite wrong. We have to reduce interest rates as a top priority, and we have to reduce interest rates while keeping inflation down.

The last thing that this country wants or needs is a repeat performance of that brought about by a government of which he was a member where inflation went to the roof, where unemployment went to the roof and where expenses were completely out of hand.

We want to bring about sustained economic growth in a non-inflationary climate, and that is exactly what this government is in the process of doing.

* * *

TRADE

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, one of the wildest claims in yesterday's throne speech was the absurd statement that the Canada-U.S. trade agreement has helped secure the Canadian economy.

This is patently false. Steel workers, hog farmers, forestry workers all know that the government promise of access to American markets is a fraud. The Canadian economic battlefield is littered with the corpses of the first trade agreement.

With 1.5 million unemployed Canadians, with 360,000 jobs lost since the trade deal was signed, why is the government plunging blindly ahead into a second deal with another country?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw my friend's attention to the fact that since 1988 we have seen our trade surplus grow from $14 billion with the United States to $17 billion. We have seen exports grow by 7 per cent in the face of a recession. We have also seen a significant shift in the inward flow of investment. Net direct investment in Canada has changed from a net outflow in 1988 to a net inflow, I believe, of the order of $5 billion. In those broad numbers there are some very significant improve-

ments to our economic performance directly related to the free trade agreement.

There are any number, and I can spend some time going through these with my friend, such as Heron Cable, Union Carbide, Xerox, Proctor & Gamble, "duty elimination as a result of the free trade agreement had an important influence on the company's decision to expand operations in Belleville". We see the impact of free trade being characterized by additional growth for Proctor & Gamble.

I have a number of these success stories as a result of the free trade agreement, and I would be very happy to share them with my hon. friend.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, Canadians will not soon forget the words of this minister who created a made-in-Canada recession when he said: "You gotta die before you go to heaven". Thousands of Canadians are dying right now.

For the Prime Minister to put him in charge of trade policy is like asking the pyromaniac to guard the fire hall.

[*Translation*]

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. Copps: Yesterday, in the Throne Speech, the Government was blowing its own horn, saying that the Free Trade Agreement helped protect our economy. This is an insult to the 1.5 million Canadians presently unemployed and to the 360,000 people whose jobs have been eliminated since the start of the Free Trade Agreement. Here is my question to the Prime Minister; When is he going to acknowledge that this agreement is hurting the Canadian economy? When is he going to admit that the Free Trade Agreement is contributing to unemployment in Canada?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I remind my friend again of those broad economic numbers that I talked about in my first answer to her.

Let me go back to some of these individual companies: Xerox Canada. The president of Xerox said that because of free trade, Xerox had invested in the Toronto area from which they would sell world wide, and that free trade would provide Xerox Canada with more of an opportunity to be competitive. Kodak (Canada) said that this major production transfer to Canada was made possible by accelerated tariff elimination under the free trade agreement.

A smaller retailer, Northern Reflections, was allowed to expand into the United States in order to take advantage of reduced tariffs under the free trade agreement. That is precisely the impact of the free trade agreement, to help companies expand here in Canada. That is precisely why we feel we can move forward with confidence to look at a negotiation with Mexico and the United States to broaden that free trade area, to gain more job opportunities, more opportunities to expand world wide from bases in Canada.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Yesterday this government put forward in its throne speech its vision of the future. What it forgot to say was that since 1984, Canadians are finding it increasingly hard to make ends meet, that because of this government's failed economic policies and the Canada—U.S. trade deal, over 260,000 Canadians have lost their jobs. It failed to say that the GST is devastating small business and eroding consumer confidence. And what did it offer Canadians yesterday? More of the same: expand the trade deal, continue policies like the GST.

What did it say to the 1.5 million unemployed in this country? Wait until the next century and you might get a job.

When is the Prime Minister going to direct his ministers to show some real initiative, some real creativeness and get Canadians back working so we can create a Canada that Canadians want to belong to?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the only way that this could be done, and it is a little less dramatic perhaps than what would be suggested by my hon. friend, is to continue the downward trend in interest rates, by keeping government spending down, by reducing the deficit, by trying to get that burden of debt down, to bring about investment with which we can create the necessary jobs.

Interest rates are down some 500 basis points; 100 basis points since the budget.

An hon. member: Not enough.

Mr. Mulroney: My hon. friend says not enough. I agree, not enough. With the support of his party, some of the cost-cutting measures that we are going to introduce will help interest rates to come down even further.

I think my hon. friend will have a choice to make and can explain it to Canadian people. Either you go about the question of job creation by reducing interest rates and by bringing about the necessary investment required to create durable jobs, or, alternatively, you spend borrowed money and increase deficits—as has been done in other jurisdictions by some 300 per cent—and see where that leads you down the road. We think that is a blind alley and we think that this is the proper way to create durable jobs in Canada.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the Prime Minister that there is another option. The other option is to invest in the people of Canada and show the Canadian people that we have faith in them.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne, the government says that national unity and the economy are linked. There are 1.5 million unemployed Canadians in this country. In Montreal, for instance, one out of four people live on welfare or unemployment insurance.

If the Prime Minister really wants to help maintain this country's unity, where are the programs that will provide jobs for the unemployed in this country?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): If the Leader of the New Democratic Party has a more effective and perhaps less expensive approach than the one taken in Ontario, I will be delighted to consider it.

So far however, it is clear, unless you absolutely want to saddle our children and grandchildren with a heavy tax burden that would mortgage their future, that jobs can be created when interest rates go down. To make those interest rates go down and thus create jobs in Montreal or elsewhere, by attracting the necessary investment, we must control government spending, we must maintain our policy of putting public finances on a sound base, and we must provide incentives for national and foreign investment.

It was thanks to these policies that during our first six years in power, 1.6 million jobs were created in Canada, and we intend to repeat this exercise, starting in July or August.

• (1430)

[*English*]

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the Prime Minister speak to those hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have lost their jobs through plant closures across this country and do not see that job coming back. They know that the Canada-U.S. trade deal has sold out Canada and they don't want that trade deal extended to Mexico to do that further. That is a future I want to see, where we don't have that.

The Prime Minister talks about the future and prosperity, and in the Throne Speech identifies clearly that one of the keys to that is the education of Canadian young people and the retraining of Canadians.

This government has cut back on post-secondary funding, it taxes books and magazines, and last year cut the citizenship instruction and language training programs for immigrants. How can this government say that it is now committed to education as the key to the future? If the Prime Minister is truly committed to education as the key to the future for our children and our grandchildren, will he reinstate the funding for post-secondary education that this government cut just a few months ago?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. friend knows, the government has increased funding for EPF since 1984 in a very appreciable manner. My hon. friend should also know that the problem in Canada is not exclusively money. Canadians spend more per capita on education than any other industrialized country in the world with the exception of Sweden. The results are what is lacking, not the infusion of money, although the federal government remains ready to co-operate in regard to improving both these standards and in enhancing our competitiveness.

The hon. member points out that her party would cancel the GST, cancel the free trade agreement, cancel the deal with Mexico—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: —that they want to go back to the 19th century. They would cancel the future. But we are going to build jobs for the future as long as I am a Canadian.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Since this government deregulated the trucking industry in 1988 without any adjustment provisions whatsoever for the predictable onslaught of American competition, Canadian truckers have become the victims of endless bankruptcies, lost jobs and weakened livelihoods; in fact, they have needed blockades and parliamentary protests just to get the attention of this government.

Will the government finally take immediate action to help our Canadian trucking industry, which is literally dying while this government dithers, and respond to the crisis faced by these Canadian workers and their families who have hit absolute rock bottom?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the hon. member for his questions, because there is no doubt that the trucking industry is one of the backbones of the transportation industry in this country and therefore it is necessary to build the prosperity that we are all looking for in the years ahead.

My predecessor last year met with the stakeholders in the trucking industry. As a result of that meeting, a task force was formed and that task force, composed of all the stakeholders in the industry, called for seven studies. It was understood at the time among all the partners that the studies would be available a year from that date. The studies are going to be completed. We will get the report from the task force and we will take whatever action is necessary at that time.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are absolutely tired of being studied to death. What they want is some action and some solutions to the problems. That is what they want.

I will return to the minister, because Canadian truckers are being ridden off the road by unfair American competition. Given that our truckers pay the GST and theirs do not, the U.S. has favourable taxes on depreciation and we do not, they have low tax deals and prices and we do not. They engage in a legal cabotage and we look the other way.

Is the minister finally prepared to address the real root causes facing our trucking industry? Is he prepared to change the rules of the game so that our Canadian truckers and our industry can have a chance to survive? When is he going to stand up for number one?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I can see that the hon. member is dedicated to the trucking industry as much as we are. I would wish that he would be as dedicated to the truth as we are.

One of the items that he just mentioned was that truckers are paying GST. This is just not true, because the truckers are paying the GST but are getting a refund for it. Therefore, it is not the truckers who are paying the GST.

It was precisely to find out the real truth about the problems of the trucking industry that a task force was created last year. We ordered seven studies to make sure that we have the facts about all aspects of the trucking industry. We will take the necessary action when we get the results of these studies.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, Glengarry Transport, the fourth largest trucking company in Canada, and based in my riding, went insolvent. It created a loss of 1,800 jobs in 13 Canadian cities. So far, the company is not going and everything is stopped.

I want to ask the minister not for a study, but specifically: What is he going to do for my constituents and the thousands of other truckers who have lost their jobs or who are about to lose them?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, we always deplore the loss of jobs by any truckers as we do for any other people employed in this country.

The question of a bankruptcy by a private company is something that is beyond the responsibility of the government.

Of course our hon. friend from the opposition should know that in the labour department two years ago, we introduced a program to help the people who are laid off temporarily.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, what they want are not measures that lay them off, they want their jobs back.

[*Translation*]

Here is my question to the government opposite: 656 trucking companies in Canada went bankrupt in one year and now, the fourth biggest company in this country did the same. When is this government going to wake up? And why do we let one of the biggest Canadian industries slowly die in order to please the Americans?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I must remind my honourable colleague opposite that this government is precisely working hard to create jobs for Canadians, as it has been doing since 1984, with more than one and a half million of new jobs created in Canada, and we will continue to do so. In the Throne Speech, we indicated that we will proceed on the road to prosperity by making all Canadian industries more competitive so that more jobs are in store for Canadians.

* * *

[*English*]

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the minister for constitutional affairs.

As the minister knows, our committee on the amending formula has just finished travelling across this country holding public hearings. Everywhere we went, the consensus was that people want a constituent assembly to deal with the Constitution. The people want more than just the politicians to be involved in the committee on our constitutional future.

• (1440)

In light of that and in light of the fact the minister has said he wants to build in this country a non-partisan consensus on the Constitution, I want him to explain to this House why he pre-empted that committee report and decided not to go to a constituent assembly at this time. Would he now reconsider that decision and include in that committee next fall not only elected politicians but non-politicians representing the ordinary people of this country?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I have particular reason to know from our experience together in this House the depth of his commitment to imaginative and genuine responses to achieving goals of national unity in the country. I look forward to working with him. I assure him that I have not pre-empted the report of the Beaudoin-Edwards committee, which we look forward to receiving.

We have taken the decision regarding the phase of constitutional discussion which will begin in September. There was a question as to whether we should, as a government, respond to what is a very clear cynicism about politicians in the country by contributing to that cynicism by simply saying that politicians, elected people, will no longer be entrusted to carry out the responsibilities that have traditionally been ours.

We have taken the decision that we should not succumb to that cynicism, that we should instead give elected members of this House, and members of the Senate, the opportunity to demonstrate our capacity in the most open, innovative way to serve the interests of the country.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, what the Beaudoin-Edwards committee heard from coast to coast to coast was that the old ways are not good enough, that we have to take a courageous step to find a new way to unite this country.

I ask the minister of constitutional affairs why should Canadians have any confidence in this government listening to this newly conceived joint parliamentary committee when they have pre-empted the Beaudoin-Edwards parliamentary committee?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we certainly have not pre-empted the committee whose recommendations I have not seen, but which I look forward to receiving. I believe that it is the view of other members of the House that that committee

will have the freedom to make recommendations which will be very seriously considered by the government.

There is no question that people have had enough of old ways. They have had enough of excessive partisanship. There is no question about that, and particularly on this issue.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): As her leader and I had the opportunity to discuss the other day in Whitehorse, there is an expectation on the part of Canadians who support no party, and on the part of Canadians who support all of the parties in this House that we will put the unity of the country above either partisan considerations or any fealty to old ways. We have indicated in the Speech from the Throne that there is going to be, for example, authority for this new joint committee to meet with the elected parliamentarians in the legislatures of the territories. That has never been done before. That is a new approach. There will be several others.

I would hope the hon. member and her colleagues in all parties of the House would give us the opportunity to let Canadians see and take part in new approaches to the most fundamental issue we face, which is not simply the survival but the reinvigoration of this country.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of immigration and it concerns the case of Mr. Al-Mashat, the former Iraqi ambassador to the United States who is now a landed immigrant in this country.

We learned today that his application was processed in 28 days. Meanwhile, thousands of Canadians are waiting three and four years for the applications of their spouses and families to be processed.

Why did this former mouthpiece for Saddam Hussein get preferential treatment at the expense of ordinary people waiting patiently? Why was he allowed to jump the queue?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I had the chance this morning to see the hon. member at the press conference where my colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs and myself explained and detailed the reasons why this has happened.

The hon. member raises a point about family reunification. He will remember that when the former minister introduced the immigration plan, the five year plan, she undertook then to review the process so as to ensure that priority be given—

An hon. member: Answer the question.

Mr. Valcourt: What is the point of asking a question if you do not want the answer? What is important is that Canadians know that the government is preoccupied with that aspect of family reunification. I shall look at the processing system and make sure that in our priorities we give priority to family reunification in Canada.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable. I asked the minister why the ambassador jumped the queue and he talks about family reunification.

I will ask my supplementary of the Prime Minister. We learned today that at least one memorandum about Al-Mashat was sent to the minister of external affairs while the application was still pending. This case calls into question the very integrity of the immigration program. Canadians are entitled to know the facts. Will the government immediately table all memoranda about the Al-Mashat case sent to all responsible ministers, officials and the Prime Minister?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, this morning I made public a chronology of events explaining how this decision came about. The hon. member is now asking me to ignore the Privacy Act and the rights of Canadian residents. I do not think there is a need for that. They would like, of course, to make a big thing out of this. The facts were disclosed this morning and we have been quite transparent about it all. What is important is that we avoid such situations in the future and these are the steps we have taken.

* * *

DISASTERS

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister and it concerns the Air-India disaster.

On June 23, 1985 a bomb killed 329 people on board Air-India flight 182. Two hundred and eighty people on board that plane were Canadian. There were 80 children on board. It was the biggest mass murder ever in Canadian history.

For the last six years this government has refused a royal commission of inquiry into this tragedy. Now that the criminal charges emanating from the Narita bombing have been dealt with by the criminal courts, will the government now initiate a full commission of inquiry to investigate all the disturbing questions that have been raised by this tragedy?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the House will know that the government has been conducting an inquiry through the RCMP into this matter. I am informed that there are ongoing plans to reinvigorate the inquiry this summer with an effort to recover as much of the hull as can be recovered from the ocean floor.

I appreciate the concern of my hon. friend. We are all concerned about this and we are trying to get to the bottom of the matter. The investigation is ongoing.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister knows that the criminal investigation has come to a dead end. There has been a commission of inquiry in Cork, Ireland and another in New Delhi, India. Notwithstanding the fact that 280 people on board this flight were Canadians, the Canadian government has yet to conduct a royal commission of inquiry. We know about the advanced warnings that the Government of Canada had. We know about the erased tapes. We know about the CSIS and RCMP bungling. We know about the false affidavits. The families of the 280 Canadian victims are waiting for a royal commission of inquiry.

• (1450)

Can the Prime Minister of Canada explain why the conduct of Sinclair Stevens warranted a royal commission of inquiry and the biggest mass murder ever in Canadian history does not?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I reiterate my answer to the previous question of my hon. friend. The government is concerned. The investigation is ongoing and we are making every effort to bring this matter to a conclusion.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

A western newspaper, *The Winnipeg Free Press* reported yesterday that it was the Prime Minister's decision to open the Canada–U.S. border to wheat, despite his ministers' disapproval. Can the Prime Minister indicate to the House why he overruled his ministers to clear the way for U.S. grains to come into western Canada?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform my colleague that agriculture is of great interest to the Prime Minister. That is one of the reasons Canada entered into the Canada–United States Free Trade Agreement.

The hon. member comes from the province of Saskatchewan where a lot of our production in agriculture, as he and everyone knows, is involved in grains. Within the free trade agreement between Canada and the United States, there is a clause that opens the United States border for Canadian grains. There is a clause that says when support for Canadian grains—wheat, oats and barley—become equal or higher than the United States, we would then remove the tariffs on American grain. We have done that, because the support to Canadian wheat farmers is higher in Canada than the support to farmers in the United States.

Another reason, as the member knows, is that in the first seven months of this crop year we have exported 400,000 tonnes of wheat to the United States. We did not want to jeopardize that and neither did the Prime Minister.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the same minister.

The calculations that were used to indicate equality between the two countries do not take proper account of the fact that an important part of Canada's payments accumulate because of premiums paid by farmers and governments over a series of years generate pay-outs on the years that are chosen to decide the equality. Why did this government not stand up and get a proper accounting system to reflect—

An hon. member: They do not want to.

Mr. Althouse: —the kind of systems we have on our side of the border instead of only reflecting the kind of systems and assistance they have on the other side. Why did they not take into account the fact that we have insurance programs and that those should be spread over a number of years, instead of being calculated following the year the pay-out happens to come because of a drought.

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member is concerned about the agricultural industry and particularly the grain and oilseeds industry. We share that same concern.

The reason we entered into the agreement with the United States was to open a much, much larger market to Canadian grain producers. We are exporting more grain now to the United States of American than we have ever before.

An hon. member: Exactly. It is working.

Mr. McKnight: I can explain to the hon. member, but rather than my explanation, maybe he would like the explanation of the president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, Mr. Jesperson, who said: "We do not dispute the calculations and we do not fear opening of the border. Our superior quality and efficiency allow us to compete with any country in the world. However, we cannot compete with massive export subsidies being used by the United States, in some cases in direct contradiction".

Also, I can inform the hon. member that the Americans do not use the Export Enhancement Program in their own country. Therefore, we are competitive. We are able to command a higher price now than we were able to before. This government will continue to operate effectively and aggressively seek out markets for Canadian grain in the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker: It is time to move on now.

* * *

UNEMPLOYMENT

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Recent reports indicate that 25 per cent of Montrealers are on welfare or unemployment insurance and that Montreal has the highest urban poverty rate in Canada. These statistics are absolutely shocking, yet the government in the Speech from the Throne yesterday has promised new jobs for the year 2000.

What planet is the government living on? If it is really serious about unemployment, why are the government's targets set for the year 2000? Why not job creation goals for the year 1991?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, during the previous session I told the same member why and how the government intended to intervene in Montreal. I said it before, and I say it again, that there are a number of economic development programs in the Montreal region that are working very well, including programs in the East and Southwest. A number of other programs are also being considered at this time, but I may remind the hon. member that the same constants that apply to other parts of the country, apply to Montreal.

As soon as interest rates have gone down, as soon as the drop in interest rates has had a positive impact on the economy, I am sure the Montreal region will be one of the first to take advantage of these measures, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, the minister did not answer my question. The fact is that today, 25 per cent of the people in Montreal are unemployed or on welfare, and they need their federal government today, not in the year 2000. Why doesn't the minister have any objectives for 1991?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, if this government were to do what the hon. member's government did in 1982, when it took the kind of measures the hon. member is referring to, the results would be exactly the same as they were at the time, meaning disastrous.

I am sure the hon. member heard last week about Canadair's impressive regional jet, and I think that is the route Montreal, Quebec and Canada in general should follow.

* * *

THE CONSTITUTION

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs. For five years this government has championed the recognition of Quebec's distinct identity. That recognition was even signed by eleven first ministers. However, in the Speech from the Throne yesterday, there was no reference to Quebec's distinct identity but to Quebec's "unique character". I would like

to ask the minsiter what difference he sees between "distinct identity" and "unique character"?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): None, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, if there is no difference, why change the word? Mr. Speaker, I submit that this government—

An hon. member: Ask the question!

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): —needs a good dictionary more than it needs an adviser on constitutional law. I would like to ask the minister, considering the great debate that is imminent, whether he intends to offer Quebec anything else besides this futile play on words?

Mr. Lapierre: Right on!

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I didn't play games with words. I didn't change the words, I didn't change my political convictions and I didn't change parties.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[*English*]

HOUSING

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. In yesterday's Speech from the Throne the government set a target of creating some 2.5 million new jobs. The minister is well aware that one of the main reasons for double digit unemployment in this country at the present time is the slack construction industry.

Will the minister agree to create housing construction jobs by stimulating demand without increasing the debt or the deficit through the introduction of a 5 per cent down payment for first-time home buyers?

• (1500)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. member would be pleased about the recent upturn in housing starts and housing resales which have been stimulated in the last little while.

I also know that he will be encouraged by the fact that interest rates have receded by five percentage points in the last 11 months or so. That is all good news. There has been improved confidence expressed by the business community, and I think that is welcome news as well.

That is the best way to stimulate the housing industry. I am pleased to note as well that at yesterday's annual conference of home builders, they indicated they felt things were turning around and getting better.

With respect to the point the hon. member raised about the 95 per cent mortgages, we are examining that very carefully and will report back to the hon. member in due course.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I would like to ask leave of the House to go back to Routine Proceedings. I have a message from the Governor General, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is is agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

MAIN ESTIMATES, 1991-92

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting Estimates for the financial year ending March 31, 1992, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by Mr. Speaker to the House.

THE LATE HON. RICHARD BENNETT HATFIELD

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the frailty of human life on this planet has been forcibly brought to our attention with the passing of a truly great Canadian, Senator and former New Brunswick Premier, Richard Bennett Hatfield. Just past his sixtieth birthday, Senator Hatfield crammed a lot into his six decades on earth.

Not only were Richard Hatfield and I about the same age, he had a profound effect on me during the last 20 years of my life, although I knew him much longer than that. Having served with him in the New Brunswick legislature for 12 years, ten as a minister and six as his Government House Leader, our political association continued after I moved into federal politics.

Few people were very close to Richard Hatfield, and this includes most members of his Cabinet. Over the 17 years in which he was premier of the province, wisely he avoided close friendships with his ministers, knowing that he could possibly have to fire them at some point in the future. His leadership style was certainly unique. Definitely not a "hands-on" premier, on a daily basis, he generally left ministers to guide their own departmental activities but was always available to support them if they got into trouble with the caucus, the party, or the public. Many a minister felt the reassurance of his formidable presence when it was needed and they were most appreciative of that. He did have a lot of friends and loved to entertain the backbenchers, (the private members,) the media, and friends in the cultural and political field.

Richard Hatfield was the consummate politician. He lived and breathed politics and really did not work very long in any other field of endeavour. He was extremely good at the game of politics! While no other Progressive Conservative government in New Brunswick governed more than two successive terms, Premier Hatfield led the party to four successive election victories covering the period 1970 to 1987. For those who know the politics and the history of politics in my province, this was no mean feat! With remarkable aplomb, he built the party from its Saint John River Valley base to every county in the province.

[*Translation*]

Richard Hatfield demonstrated throughout his life that he understood well the aspirations of the francophone community in his province.

Richard Hatfield worked very hard to ensure that his party be representative of all parts of New Brunswick.

[*English*]

I sincerely hope that Richard Bennett Hatfield will not be remembered solely for the 1987 defeat of the party. That would be a most unfair assessment for a man who engineered a whole series of spectacular victories at the polls. Even after the loss in 1987, it is my view that while the electorate voted against the man, they did not hate the man. Besides, how many parties in history in any part of Canada won five successive election victories?

Perhaps unorthodox in ways, certainly enigmatic, the best term I can think of to describe Richard Hatfield is an enlightened social reformer. In many ways his reform of the political system was years ahead of that in other jurisdictions.

He believed strongly in social reform and instituted changes in family law, judicial reform and child welfare legislation.

Much has been written about Hatfield's so-called special interests, his love of travel, his love of cooking and good food, late night discussions with his host of friends, his penchant for politics—anybody's politics—and his ever-present fight with weight control. Above all of this, he had a tremendous love for his country and for its people.

Richard Bennett Hatfield is now gone from our midst. New Brunswick and Canada have lost a man whose passionate Canadian views were legendary. He loved his country with an unparalleled passion. Above all, he desperately wished to hold his beloved country together in this time of travail. Alas, he would have been able to make a major contribution to our national constitutional debate if he had been spared.

[*Translation*]

His most durable legacy will be his contribution to national unity. Ever since the 1971 Victoria Conference and until his very last day as senator, Richard Hatfield has pursued national unity with an unrelenting determination and a firm resolve.

[*English*]

Working with three prime ministers and a multitude of provincial premiers, he assumed the status of senior statesman on this issue. He believed to the core of his being that Canada was a unique land, a land endowed with a host of treasures: its natural resources; its rugged and profound beauty; its magnificent peoples that make Canada their home. His contribution to the cause of national unity will be sorely missed. His legacy, however, will live on.

I believe that when the history of Canada is written, Richard Bennett Hatfield will be accorded the place of honour he so richly deserves: consummate premier of New Brunswick, avowed pan-Canadian, reformer and leader.

Mr. Douglas Young (Acadie—Bathurst): Mr. Speaker, Richard Bennett Hatfield served the people of New Brunswick as premier for 17 years. He led his Conservative Party to an unprecedented four election victories, taking the measure of four Liberal leaders, including the member for Acadie—Bathurst.

Richard Hatfield was proud of his deep understanding of New Brunswickers and his finely honed political instincts rarely failed him, especially when it came to what the electors expected from their premier and their government. Premier Hatfield often said that the secret of his success was that he trusted New Brunswickers and they trusted him because he reflected their values and their principles. He was always supremely confident that their sense of justice and fairness would prevail, come election time, and four times out of five he was right.

• (1510)

For two decades his presence on the national and international scene was the focus for how the rest of the world viewed New Brunswick.

[*Translation*]

Richard Hatfield contributed greatly to the development of the Acadian community in his province. Unequivocal proof of his dedication to the development of the French fact is found in the unanimous approval by the legislative assembly of New Brunswick of Bill 88, an Act to recognize the equality of the two official language communities of New Brunswick. The bilateral entrenchment of Bill 88 in the Canadian Constitution would crown the courageous efforts of this good friend of the New Brunswick Acadians.

[*English*]

Chief Rolling Thunder had a special place in his heart for the Micmacs and the Maliseets of New Brunswick and his genuine commitment to aboriginal people was expressed recently in an eloquent statement by Dr. Charles Paul, who described his friend as a true champion of the Indian people.

Richard Hatfield was always, as my friend has said, a passionate spokesman for Canada and in view of his key role in the repatriation of the Constitution, Canadians know he would have made an important contribution to the current constitutional debate.

We are all saddened by the untimely passing of a man who devoted much of his life to his province and his country.

My colleagues and I extend our sympathy to the members of Richard Hatfield's family and to his many friends in Canada and around the world.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Beauséjour in New Brunswick, and especially as a minister who had to deal with Mr. Hatfield in the patriation of the Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, I was very sad to see that he was leaving us so early.

[*Translation*]

Richard Hatfield was a truly great Canadian. Throughout our negotiations with the provinces on the patriation of the Constitution as well as on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, what I found most impressive in this man was the wonderful courage he has shown throughout his political career. He has never been afraid, although himself an anglophone, to confront individuals who did not appreciate at all what he was doing to promote the French fact in New Brunswick.

Also, as the previous speaker noted, he was incredibly ahead of his time and displayed a tremendous strengh of character on these two issues, even if he lived in a society which made it difficult at times to champion the rights of the native people. Every minute of every hour I have spent working with him was enjoyable; his behaviour was always proper and he was very witty. He never looked

worried; life was always great! But he did not neglect the rejects of society. These people count a lot for us politicians.

That is why Richard Hatfield will be remembered in Canadian history as one of the English Canadians who has done the most for promoting, very rapidly and with an incredible amount of energy and courage, the French fact in New Brunswick and the Acadians that I now have the honour of representing. He also helped the native people who, at the time, were not important in the political debate. Nonetheless, every time the subject of native rights came up at the table, no one could have better promoted the rights of the natives and the entrenchment of their ancestral rights in the Constitution than the great Canadian that was Richard Hatfield.

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the New Democratic Party I would like to join in making some comments about the unfortunate passing of the Hon. Richard Bennett Hatfield.

I would like to join with my colleagues in everything they have said about the contributions he has made. I would like to concentrate on just a couple of points.

I did live in New Brunswick from 1972 to 1975 when Mr. Hatfield was the premier.

There were a couple of things that, as a resident of New Brunswick, touched me particularly. Most people who live in Fredericton at least got to know the premier because he was a person who would be available in the city. You would often see him in the market.

He was someone who touched ordinary New Brunswickers in a very special way. That certainly is indicated in the way feelings have been responded to since and also by the fact that for 17 years he was premier of that province.

I would also like to make mention of one other point which has also been raised, that is, the truly magnificent efforts that Mr. Hatfield made in bringing official bilingualism to the province of New Brunswick, something which would not have been easy for a Conservative leader at that time.

He did it. He expanded the party as has been indicated to the Acadian population and made the fact that New Brunswick is the only officially bilingual province a very important contribution to Canadian political and constitutional life.

With those few words, I would like to extend on behalf of my party our sympathy to the family and friends of Mr. Hatfield.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I knew Richard Hatfield. I too can testify to his human qualities, his simplicity and his open-mindedness.

[*English*]

He was a sincere Canadian, but at the same time a sincere friend of Quebec.

Even in critical times like these it must be possible to give tribute to a man of honesty and openness. Richard Hatfield was both.

[*Translation*]

This man, as deeply involved as he was in the political fight, had no animosity against anyone. He harboured nothing but respect for everybody.

Mr. Speaker, whatever lays ahead for Quebec and for Canada, we must be able to count on the good will and realism of political leaders like Richard Hatfield.

[*English*]

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I want to just briefly pay my respects and tributes as well to the memory of Richard Hatfield as a friend, as a great Canadian and as a fine New Brunswicker.

I had the privilege of first meeting Richard Hatfield during my work on the Special Joint Committee on the Constitution of Canada in 1980-81.

I will never forget the passion that he brought to his commitment to keeping this country together, to strengthening the country

[*Translation*]

and, of course, to promoting the equality of the Acadian men and women.

[*English*]

He was a warm man. He was a man who was gregarious and friendly, as my colleague indicated, and yet he was also an intensely private human being.

I mourn his loss. I am sure all Canadians mourn his loss. We feel a sense of pain at his premature death. We know that he could have contributed and would have contributed a great deal to the debate which is going on in the country at this time, not only with respect to national unity in terms of New Brunswick but also with respect to the particular contribution of aboriginal nations.

I want to join in saying farewell and paying tribute to this decent man, a friend, and to join in extending my sympathy and respect to his family and to his loved ones.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Pronovost for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his Speech at the opening of the session; and amendment thereto of Mr. Chrétien (p. 24) and on the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Langdon (p. 33).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Resuming debate. The hon. member for South Shore has 12 minutes left for his speech.

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up where I left off.

I was talking about the economic needs of Atlantic Canada in general and Nova Scotia in particular. I would like to set forth for the House a number of particular and specific needs.

I think we have in the throne speech some very excellent, general ideas as to the direction in which the country should go. However, I would like to now, if I may, offer some assistance to the government in making some specific suggestions of things that I think we need in Nova Scotia.

They really come into two categories. The first and foremost has to do with our need for transportation infrastructure which is absolutely essential for economic development.

Given our location *vis-à-vis* the rest of the country and the United States, transportation is a key to our economic survival, let alone development. There are three areas in which I think that there is a particular need. The first relates to the state of our highways. I realize that highways are a provincial jurisdiction normally and that the expectation is that the provinces are supposed to provide for them. However, the fact of the matter is that none of our provinces are overburdened with financial resources at the present time nor have they ever been. I know there was precedent with respect to the building of the Trans-Canada Highway many years ago.

• (1520)

Therefore, I would like to urge the government to consider seriously, over the course of the next three or four years, setting aside the funds to make possible a renewal of that highway system, certainly at the very least the quadra-laning of the Trans-Canada Highway. I would like to see the quadra-laning of Highway 103 and the completion of the all-weather system in Nova Scotia. This would contribute tremendously to our ability to participate in the opportunities provided not only in the free trade agreement with the United States, but indeed in the breaking down of barriers for trade within Canada.

A second area that is absolutely essential to our needs has to do with the rail line, what used to be called the Intercolonial Railway. As I mentioned earlier in my remarks, Nova Scotians were not overwhelmed with enthusiasm for joining Confederation. However, one of the sweeteners offered to us, both at the time before Confederation occurred and after, was the assurance that the Intercolonial Railway would be the link that made it possible for us to participate economically in this new nation.

It is sad to say that the state of that railway is not a great deal better today than it was following its completion in the 1860s. We are very unhappy and unsatisfied with the degree of attention provided that railway by the Canadian National Railway system.

I know that officials of the Halifax-Dartmouth Port Commission are in this city today and will be meeting with the Atlantic caucus of the Conservative Party—and I am sure with others—to impress upon it the absolutely desperate need that we have for the maintenance of that line as a first-class line, as well as for the implementation of new technology that will reduce the costs of using that line, thereby making it much more likely that the Port of Halifax will effectively compete with American ports like Philadelphia, Baltimore and New York.

A third area in which transportation is essential and for which funding is required has to do with port infrastructure. Of course the sea has always been integral to the economic survival of Nova Scotia. Within my own constituency of South Shore, I have a number of ports designated as Department of Transport ports as distinct from Department of Fisheries and Oceans ones. I found regrettable the lack of capital funding available to the federal Department of Transport for port development. In particular, I would like to speak about the port of Liverpool, Nova Scotia.

Over two and a half years ago, the Harbour Development Committee of the Queen's Liverpool Development Commission developed a feasibility study for the building of a new channel that would bring the port of Liverpool to life again. Three major industries are integral to Queen's County: Bowater Mersey Paper Company, Steel and Engine Products and Mersey Seafoods that are highly dependent on being able to bring larger ships into port than was the case many years ago when those businesses first began. We are talking about a major project. We are talking about a $15 million project.

There is money available from ACOA which recognizes the economic development value of that project. Similarly, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, through its Small Craft Harbour Program, recognizes the potential of it. Indeed, I might say that the province is prepared to talk with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources about allocating some funding from the offshore oil and gas fund. The lead is the Department of Transport, but the Department of Transport cannot proceed unless it has capital funds.

I could go on and speak about the dredging that is needed in Lunenburg, about the dredging that would make a channel and enable Bridgewater to become a viable port or about the needs for a new docking facility in the town of Shelburne. But I believe the point is made that funds have to be made available for transportation infrastructure in our marine areas if Atlantic Canada is to have the opportunity to grow as it should.

We understand that times change. Prior to Confederation, the trading patterns for over 200 years in which Nova Scotia was involved were north and south between Nova Scotia and New England and down the coast. Confederation and the national policy of Sir John A. Macdonald in the late 1870s and 1880s changed that by setting up tariff walls which enabled the development of essentially a branch plant economy relationship between the United States and central Canada. We in turn were subcolonialized in the maritimes. With the re-establishment of trade north and south, as opposed to east and west, we have to catch up to where we were 100 years ago to re-establish our trading links.

Therefore, I am saying that the government must recognize that not only are we a political federation but effectively we are an economic federation. We have to recreate or establish, for the first time perhaps, a level playing field in terms of the basis upon which we as Atlantic Canadians can compete effectively within the Canadian market, let alone take full advantage of the opportunities that exist with the free trade agreement with the United States, whether on a full North American basis or not.

I read in the Speech from the Throne reference to the breaking down of barriers to trade among the provinces of Canada. This is an obvious and a necessary and important step. It makes sense in theory, but as a Nova Scotian I must be frank and say that it causes me a certain amount of fear. I am not sure that the state of the transportation infrastructure enables us to compete effectively with the larger industries of Ontario and Quebec. Therefore, I trust and hope that as the government develops specific programs to make progress toward those goals, it will take cognizance of the needs of Atlantic Canada.

The second major economic area I hope the government will recognize is the long-standing practice in this country is to recognize that federal as well as provincial expenditures can play an important role toward economic development. Co-operative agreements, of course, have been very effective vehicles, but there must be

enough money made available so that development at the local level can take place under them.

We see CIDA as an agency with expenditures that can make a very important contribution to economic development in our region. Unfortunately, CIDA does not seem to have discovered the marvellous food value of fish.

For some time I have been amazed that with the food aid programs around the world we have not taken advantage of the various kinds of dry products which could be used that are wholesome, nutritious and, indeed, would support the Atlantic Canada fishing industry at a time when it is in difficulty.

The last point I wish to make on this has to do with base closures. We found out two years ago the devastating socio-economic impact that could be the fall-out of base closures. I recognize that it is difficult. The Department of National Defence is not a social agency. It has responsibility and it has to use its budget as best it can to achieve the goals it has established. However, there is no good time for a base closure if it is your community that is impacted.

I know. I lived through the base closure at Barrington as a result of the 1989 budget. It did not get the publicity that Summerside did, because of course it was not a closure of the same magnitude. However we are hearing stories now that the government is looking at further base closures.

We in Nova Scotia are hearing stories that Cornwallis may be one of the bases targeted. I want to say here and now that the closure of base Cornwallis would have a devastating economic impact on Nova Scotia at a time when we simply cannot afford it.

As a member of Parliament it is my right to be heard in this place. I believe as a member of Parliament that it is my responsibility to be heard in this place but, I believe equally so, it is the responsibility of the government to hear and to listen to what is said in this place.

I want to say here and now as one member from Nova Scotia—and I am sure I will be joined by every other member from Nova Scotia—to the government: "If you want to think about base closures, forget it for now and forget it for Nova Scotia, because we simply cannot handle that right now and we are not prepared to do so".

I know my time is running down. The key to unity is economic prosperity. When I go home people do not talk to me about unity issues. They talk to me about the basic economic issues: jobs, survival in tough times. That has to be the focus.

I commend the government for putting emphasis on linking economic prosperity and unity because they are one and the same. My closing words have to be as my opening, that as we look at the renewal of Canada, we think about Quebec and we think about Alberta but we think also of the maritimes and of Atlantic Canada. I urge the government as it makes its plans, and I urge all members of this House to bear in mind that we are all Canadians and we must all be in if we are going to have the kind of unified strength that I know we all wish for.

• (1530)

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to make a few points and raise a few questions of my colleague.

I quite agree with him when he says when we think about the renewal of Canada we have to think of every single region. We have to think of Quebec, Ontario, the Atlantic provinces, the west, and the great north.

I would, in fact, be prepared to support his plea that no bases be closed particularly if he were able to persuade his government to go back to P.E.I. and see if it could undo the harm that it has done; go back to Manitoba, to Portage la Prairie to see what it might be able to do as a result of the devastation it has wreaked upon my own province of Manitoba.

When he began his remarks he referred to a visionary Speech from the Throne. I think that is a bit of an exaggeration and I will make a few comments and perhaps have him reconsider what he said.

With respect to national unity, I wonder if he would agree with me that we are in fact wasting time. We have a constitutional crisis. I cannot understand why with any kind of crisis one is putting off action. In the Speech from the Throne there is vague reference to a possible referendum or constituent assembly. There is, and I commend the government for that, some hope for aboriginal peoples, although the extent of what will happen is certainly not clear. I would have liked some assurance that language minorities would be protected. I

am as concerned as they are with all of the rumours that have been circulating that their rights may be in some jeopardy.

I would have liked to have seen some reference to other Canadians, those Canadians of origin other than aboriginal, French or English.

With respect to the economic situation I cannot see a whole lot of hope for those people who look at the $30.5 billion deficit, the debt of close to $400 billion, the almost five million poor in this country, the two million who are on welfare today, the 1.8 million Canadians who will be served by food banks this year, the 1.5 million unemployed, and the bankruptcies which have soared and which if one compares to roughly one year ago are up in excess of 50 per cent.

My final point is with respect to education. He did make some comments. My hon. colleague knows full well that the Prime Minister, who was then the Leader of the Opposition indicated in his book, *Where I Stand*, that he would double investments in research and development, and that he made some similar promises during the elections of 1984 and 1988 indicating that he would not tamper with the transfer formula. He made some very laudable statements to his party at the annual meeting in a number of other areas of the country indicating that it should devote more time, energy, to human resource development. What happened? It cut the transfer payments in 1986 by 2 per cent, cut the transfer payments in 1989–1990 and froze them from 1990 on. Research and development used to be 1.40 of gross development and it is now down to a little less than 1.30. For literacy, $4.50 per Canadian per year has been the investment.

Is there not a flagrant contradiction in what we have heard from the government, not only in this throne speech but in other statements? Clearly actions speak louder than words. I think the throne speech has a few good ideas but there is lots and lots of rhetoric, and I am wondering if the hon. member would care to make some comments.

Mr. McCreath: Mr. Speaker, I must say I would like to compliment my hon. friend on his speech, or was it a question? I am not sure which.

I welcome the opportunity to respond. He makes a number of interesting points.

I read in the newspaper today that somebody said the throne speech is a one-day wonder. Well, the throne speech is intended, as I understand it, and most of them are, to be a statement of where the government intends to go. This one has clearly spelled that out.

Clearly the two priorities that have been spelled out are national unity and economic prosperity, and they are linked. I have spoken a great deal on the economic side. I want to talk a little bit about the unity side. I did not have an opportunity to do it before and so I will do it now.

We are all good at talking in this country, but we are not so good at listening. We are not so good at reaching out. We are not so good at seeking to understand the other guy.

When I reflect on what went on in this country a year ago, when I watched the unravelling of Meech Lake through the initial actions of Premier McKenna of New Brunswick and subsequently through the actions of Premier Filmon and Premier Wells, I said: "These people are speaking to their provincial audiences and they love to go on television and be interviewed and speak to whoever might be ought there, but they are not so good at listening".

Last year was last year. They will be judged by history for the actions they took and for the impact that they may or may not have had on this country. We have to start to listen to others. I might say the same applies to Premier Bourassa of the province of Quebec who is reaching out.

I am very pleased to see that the polls indicate the majority of Quebecers want Canada to work. The majority of Quebecers are federalists, but there is a strong feeling of rejection.

I want to send a message, a message that I get reinforced to me day after day by people in Nova Scotia who would really like to understand what the people of Quebec are looking for but they keep coming back to that great barrier that exists between English and French Canadians in this country today: the sign law, Bill 178. It is repugnant to democratic principles. That is what people see. There are so many things being said and so many things reaching out. People want to understand, people want to accommodate and people want it to work but they keep saying: "But what about that sign law?"

Therefore, I would urge the premier of Quebec and those in this House who may know him to say: "Take a look at that sign law and do not justify it by saying that they did terrible things in Manitoba 100 years ago". Two wrongs do not make a right.

We as Canadians, whether we are from Quebec, the west, Atlantic Canada or Ontario have to be prepared not only to talk but to listen and to try to understand. Then we can build this country as we want it to be.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, the emphasis seems to be on national unity these days and some say that, without it, we will not be able to meet the economic challenge.

But we know full well that the present economic krach is the made-to-measure creation of this government. It is not because Canada has been divided for the past twenty years that the federal deficit grows by at least $20 or $30 billion a year.

The cumulative debt in Canada has reached $400 billion and we are under the impression that Canada is not doing well because it is divided. Canada is not doing well precisely because there are eleven political powers operating in this country, eleven powers at odds with one another and holding elections at different times, which leads to confrontation and inconsistency. It also goes to show that Canada is not financially viable.

Let us stop kidding ourselves and start decentralizing. We have to give more powers to the regions, thereby making them sovereign. It is a must. What we want, in fact, is for Quebec to be the first to become sovereign. We do not want this country to be destroyed, but to be saved economically speaking. A flashy speech from the Throne like this one will do little for the economy of this country. Far from it.

The first thing to do is to decentralize and give more powers to the regions, thereby granting them sovereignty. Only then can we hope to see the economic situation improve.

[*English*]

Mr. McCreath: Mr. Speaker, my time is brief. I will talk quickly. Quite simply, the hon. member who just spoke ran under the banner of the Progressive Conservative Party and under the leadership of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney who was then and is now the best hope for providing leadership that will reunify this country and recreate the Confederation of tomorrow that we all look forward to.

• (1540)

I respect my hon. friend for his views, but you do not build strength by tearing things apart. You build strength by staying at the table, by slugging it out, by having your say and listening to what the other person says and trying to work together to make it all come together. At a time when Europe is coming together, where is the logic in Canada falling apart?

Quite simply, there is no logic in that. There is no logic in the policy of my hon. friend's parliamentary group, or that of the Reform Party which has the same aspirations.

I say that members of Parliament came here to work for Canada, to have Canada grow, become strong and become unified.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to a matter that affects us all, and this reminds me of that time back in 1981-82, and even before, when I was involved in the debate in this House on a new Constitution with a Charter of Rights. I found this a very difficult time because as you know, Mr. Speaker, I was unable to support measures that would reduce or quantify my rights or add a notwithstanding clause restricting the application of that legislation. I therefore voted against my leader's constitutional proposal—

Mr. Prud'homme: Trudeau never forgave you!

Mr. Gauthier: They didn't forgive me but I think they understood.

Mr. Prud'homme: Oh, they never will!

Mr. Gauthier: Today, Mr. Speaker, Canada is again facing a time of tremendous tension, a crisis partly due to the demise of the Meech Lake constitutional proposal and partly to what I see as a lack of leadership and vision on the part of the federal government and politicians generally.

Mr. Prud'homme: Especially in Newfoundland!

Mr. Gauthier: The advent of free trade, the deregulation policy, privatization, the weakening of agencies that represent our national identity such as the CBC, VIA Rail, Air Canada and Petro-Canada all of this, Mr. Speaker, acted as a catalyst for the present crisis. Because the government has been slow to resolve this conflict, a number of divergent—not marginal because

they are no longer that—groups have emerged that are prepared to tear up and destroy everything.

Since fortunately, Mr. Speaker, most Canadians are contra-revolutionary in spirit, we will get together and try to rebuild our country with the same diversity that has kept us together for 124 years.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to individual and collective values, there are two concepts I would like to discuss with my friends today, two concepts that form the very basis of this country. The first concept is dualism. Canadian duality is a fact. It is mentioned practically every year when we discuss legislation. We talk about it and in some parts of the country it has become a very important issue indeed. The second concept is regionalism, another basic concept which we believe is very important in this country, because of our geography, because of the vast territory this country covers, a country that doesn't make sense with its east-west orientation, a country that wants to unite regions that are so totally different.

First of all, our linguistic duality is based on historic, legal and political concepts. Although some may not realize this, Mr. Speaker, linguistic duality will always be a scapegoat in national conflicts. One hundred and twenty-four years after the British North America Act was passed, a reluctance to accept this linguistic duality still exists among Canadians.

Not so long ago, Mr. Speaker, and I saw it happened myself, men used to anglicize their names and forbid their children to speak their mother tongue—

Mr. Prud'homme: In order to succeed in life!

Mr. Gauthier: —as my colleague from Saint-Denis just said, in order to "get on in life" as we used to say. To succeed, they changed their names and no longer spoke French.

In spite of it all, the situation is not hopeless. Francophones can still be found in the regions. They are the majority in Quebec.

Over the last 30 years, we have made some progress, and I was part of it. Let me recount some historical facts so that we have some indications to better understand the situation. It probably began in 1961 with the Heeney Commission, the Civil Service Commission of Canada, which agreed that every Canadian should have the right to service in French or in English from the federal government.

In 1962, the Glasco Commission said the same thing. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, that is the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission, was created to, and I quote, "inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the important contribution made by the ethnic and cultural groups of Canada."

In 1965, Mr. Speaker, the Commission concluded, and I quote from the Report:

Canada, without being fully conscious of the fact, is passing through the greatest crisis in its history.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that we also are passing now through a serious crisis here in this country.

In 1966, Lester B. Bearson stated in this House "the principle that both francophone and anglophone candidates are entitled to a job in the federal government and will enjoy the same consideration and have the same opportunity to work in the language of their choice."

In 1978, Parliament passed an Act to amend the Criminal Code in order to allow the concerned parties to ask for a trial in either official languages. In 1979, the Pepin-Robarts Commission—it is now very fashionable to refer to Pepin-Robarts—recommended that the Constitution be amended in order to protect minority rights in some areas. In 1980, the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Official Languages was set up. I give credit for that to the then Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Joe Clark, who in 1979 had granted the first meeting of this Official Languages Committee. In 1982, the official and equal status of French and English in federal institutions was enshrined in the Constitution. In 1983, Parliament passed a resolution on the linguistic rights of francophones in Manitoba, and a second resolution in 1984.

To remind those who might have forgotten, in 1982, a referendum had been held in Winnipeg on the rights to services for francophone minority in that city and was defeated.

Since the Conservative government has taken power, progress has been slower. In his first Speech from the Throne in 1984, he said, and I quote: "My government is committed to ensuring that the equality of the two official languages—so vital to our national character and identity—is respected in fact as it is in law."

That promise was not kept, Mr. Speaker. That equality is not a reality today. In the 1986 Speech from the Throne, the Conservative government promised to amend the Official Languages Act. It was amended two years later in 1988. But here we are, in 1991, three years later, and the regulations have still not been passed. The act is a paper tiger, Mr. Speaker, since the regulations have not been passed. Three years after this House passed a bill on official languages, we are still waiting for the regulations.

Even worse. Rumour has it that this Conservative government is considering transfering to provinces the implementation of the official languages policy.

Mr. Prud'homme: That will be quite something.

Mr. Gauthier: The implementation of linguistic rights.

• (1550)

The Speech from the Throne delivered yesterday does not contain a single word to put that rumour to rest or to reassure French-speaking Canadians outside Quebec who sometimes feel they have to go underground for fear of hostile reactions from their neighbourhood.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, polls indicate a noticeable change in our youth. One can still hope that some day, the Canadian identity, which is largely based on our linguistic duality, will be more than a constitutional reality and become part of the heart and spirit of Canadian men and women.

Debates have been going on throughout this country. A total of eight committees sat and some are still sitting. I will name them, Mr. Speaker. There is the Spicer Commission, the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future, the Beaudoin-Edwards Joint Special Committee on the Process for Amending the Constitution of Canada, the Silipo Commission in Ontario, the Bélanger-Campeau Commission in Quebec, the Horsman Committee in Alberta, the British Columbia Cabinet Committee on Confederation, the Manitoba Task Force on the Constitution, the New Brunswick Commission on Canadian Federalism. In all, there are eight commissions presently studying this question.

Mr. Speaker, our country deserves of course much consideration, but also some actions. I believe then, as I tried to make it clear earlier, that dualism is one of the foundations of our federation. If you do away with this feature, Mr. Speaker, you will kill my country. I am quite sure of that.

Second concept: regionalism. It is a basic concept established a long time ago in Canada, since, as I said earlier, our country is so big. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, what other country can boast having vast and fertile prairies, huge farming land, large mountainous regions dotted with lakes, wild regions in the North and the Arctic tundra?

Our country has evolved from distinct regional communities strongly attached to their local identity and traditions. Still, regionalism is one of the foundations of Confederation, but it is also considered to be one of the scapegoats for nationalistic conflicts. I hear members of the "Bar-B-Q" party over there who plague us with their short comments once in a while. Quebec asks for a distinct status or, as it is put in the Throne Speech, unique.

During the school tour I made in my riding since January—I visited almost every single one of them—, I was asked the following question: What makes Quebec so different or unique, since it was said today that these two words meant it was the same thing? I did not say that the Minister responsible did it. Aren't all our provinces distinct? Of course, all our provinces are distinct, Mr. Speaker! That is what makes our country so rich.

But with 5.5 million of people speaking French on a territory where 280 to 300 hundred million of people speak English, Quebec is the only community in North America with a French speaking majority. Besides its language, Quebec has its own Civil Code, its own economic institutions—caisses populaires, Quebec Deposit and Investment Fund, etc. Quebec negotiates educational and cultural agreements directly with France; it participates in numerous international conferences and contributes to the work of the international organizations. Moreover, Quebec has its own pension plan and administers its immigration program. So, by virtue of its language, its culture, its legislation and its economical structures, Quebec is distinct from the other provinces, it is unique.

While recognizing that characteristic, we will have to meet the minimum expectations of Quebec, find solutions to the conflicts between Western Canada and Central Canada, meet the needs of the Maritimes and solve native claims. Mr. Speaker, that is an ambitious program, that is a challenge for us.

Mr. Speaker, if divorce results from an accumulation of factors, the same is true of national conflicts. If a consensus is not found, the antagonisms, whether they are cultural, social or economic, will grow and split this country.

Mr. Speaker, rather than continuing as a federation with two levels of government emanating from the same population—federal and provincial governments are elected by and accountable to the same people—some provinces seem to favour a confederation. I read recently some comments of experts on the confederation process, that is to say a government of governments. The federal government would be elected by the provinces and not the people. The elected members would elect the other level of government.

Experience shows that most confederations have been unstable and have either collapsed or moved to federalism. Mr. Speaker, while the European Community is hoping that economic association will lead to political federalism, some Canadian provinces would like to move the other way.

For lack of a representative and effective policy on the part of the central government, the Canadian federation must now make some major changes.

A number of our problems also come from the division and sharing of responsibilities. Therefore, we must consider a new division of powers which is more in keeping with our time. The society in which our Constitution was born, in 1867, was very different from the present. In a householder I sent to my constituents, there is a questionnaire dealing with this question of division of powers.

Several fields of responsibilities which did not exist or were not fully developed then have been split between the provinces and the federal government. This is the case, for example, of communication, transportation and the environment which were not controlled; fishing and logging were not regulated. Over time, the federal government entered fields of provincial jurisdiction in order to create national programs, while provinces stepped into some other fields to promote regional development. Conflicts, Mr. Speaker, have been fuelled by costly and frustrating duplications. We must, therefore, come up with a new division of powers which will respond better to a rapidly changing society, while providing for a better cultural, social and economic development.

[*English*]

Much of our current constitutional debate revolves around the distribution of powers and responsibilities. In at least one area, all levels of government—federal, provincial, regional, municipal—share responsibilities.

All Canadians, as stewards of this country, must participate in the protection of the environment. The environment carries no passport. It knows no territorial limitations between countries, provinces and municipalities. The environment is the same.

We share the consequences of neglect and abuse. We share the benefits of clean air, clean water and clean land.

In my own riding, the Rideau River flows into the Ottawa River. Both of these rivers need cleaning and protection. So far, it is only because of emergencies such as the $12 million clean-up of the coal tar spill in the Rideau River in 1987 that we have acted to protect these rivers.

As well, we have not adequately harmonized our environmental laws and regulations despite the obvious loopholes for some offenders.

In Ottawa, as an example, four federal entities—the Bank of Canada, the Department of Transport, the Department of Supply and Services, and the National Research Council—were charged in 1987 with giving chemical waste to hauling companies that illegally disposed of these wastes by dumping them, untreated, directly into the Ottawa River.

• (1600)

Only the Bank of Canada was fined. The other three had their charges dropped on the argument that federal entities cannot be prosecuted under Ontario pollution laws. Such an occurrence is appalling. The green plan created by this government should be addressing such problems.

For this reason we must consider carefully the importance of setting stringent international and national environmental protective standards. Without such standards the likely result is a confusing variety of regulations differing in both strength and scope, encouraging a low level of environmental protection in some areas and creating loopholes.

I want to deal with another important area. Mr. Speaker, I know you have told me I only have a minute. I may want to indicate to my colleagues that I would like to have a little more time, but I will see what questions come. I would like to speak about the process we are facing now, that is the constituent assembly and the referendum question. Both those questions under study at this time need to be explained. I would appreciate getting a question either on the referendum or on the constituent assembly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, let me just say that the challenge of the national unity is enormous, but it is worth tackling. We must face it in a Canadian spirit, with love and kindness. We must find solutions to make this country a greater and better place to live. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Guy Ricard (Laval—Ouest): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question to the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier. I know that he supports dualism in Canada, and that he has always, at least since I have been a member of this House, defended all Canadians, anglophones and francophones alike. He is a person who is constantly fighting for the rights of everyone.

While I was listening to the speaker who rose before him, the member for South Shore, something he said caught my attention. He said that Canadians should talk to one another. In his speech, the member for Ottawa—Vanier said something along the same line. So I would ask him to elaborate a bit on that last remark, that is, should we, as Canadians, talk to each other in order to understand one another or is it useless to do so?

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, first of all, it is true that we need to talk, but I would like to say to my colleague that, in the Speech from the Throne, the governement proposes to establish another parliamentary committee, another tool of communication, but with this difference which I am going to explain.

The parliamentary committee that will be established next September will draw from the Beaudoin-Edward Committee, the Spicer Commission and a government paper that will be presented to it this summer, I suppose, and it will travel through Canada to consult all the legislative assemblies, not the people, but the legislative assemblies; it will report back in February 1992, not to the Parliament, but to the government.

So, I say to government members that they will have to clarify this situation or explain, to me and to all Canadians, why a direct dialogue with Canadians is excluded. Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that with the Spicer Commission, the Beaudoin-Edwards Commission and all the commissions that I mentioned earlier, the situation would have been clear enough. But that is not the case! After having reviewed all those commissions, one would have thought that all the political parties of this House could adopt a common position and have it ratified and presented to the people of Canada, and that the problem would be somewhat solved.

But no! They announce some task force, a study group composed of a government majority which will review next September the said documents and report not to the House of Commons nor to the Senate but to the government.

I say to the hon. member that that is beyond me. Why not go to the people? Why not tell us directly what is happening and what propositions we should consider?

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier for his speech. Everybody knows how perceptive he is in constitutional matters. I can even tell him that we listen to him with great interest because we know that even when we were very bound by governmental solidarity he did show more vision than we did in 1981-1982 as he foresaw the problems we experience now.

The hon. member was talking about eight commissions, the hon. member for Laval on the governement side wishes for the return of a kind of Réal Giguère with *Parle, parle, jase, jase*, the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, who has seen quite a few commissions in his life, there have been eight of them, said we are going to have a ninth one, and probably a few others. I listened to Clyde Wells this morning and I seldom agree with him, but this morning he said: even if there were 20 other committees, this is not a matter of process, it is a problem of substance. And when one considers the proposals which have been made, whether it be a referendum or a constituent assembly, in the final analysis the basic problem confronting us is that we hold diametrically opposed views. We have seen today his leader make a very centralizing speech, worthy of the good years, but we listened this morning for example, to the leader of the Liberal party we heard him say: as for the environment, we are going to set the standards in Ottawa, and the provinces will appoint their inspectors; in the field of education, we are going to set the standards in Ottawa and the provinces will see to the rest. In other words, Ottawa runs everything and the provinces pay for it and end up doing all the work.

We know that no political party in Quebec can realistically agree with this kind of federalism. And I know the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier is aware that only the *Equality Party* could perhaps agree with his leader's thinking. But when we look at a report like the Allaire Report, when we look realistically at the facts, does the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier think that the new committee which has just been announced is going to settle the fundamental issues, or whether we are going to be cheated again in the process? It is my opinion and it has been our view from the start that the English Canada will never come up with an acceptable offer by 1992. Ultimately, the train has already left the station and, unfortunately for English Canada, instead of carrying on with the process, perhaps it should focus on the substance of things.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. I must tell him that, quite frankly, as far as I am concerned, if there was ever a time when any shape or form of partisanship should be set aside, it is when the unity of my country is at stake. I believe that no government, no politician and no individual has the right to roll the dice with the future of Canada. I appreciate that my colleague is a member of a caucus which is against both the Canadian duality and, more likely than not, the kind of regionalism I described. However, this is not a dialogue of the deaf. We simply disagree on the basic premise. So, we cannot come to an agreement. Explain as I may— *ad vitam eternam* and *ad nauseam*, if you prefer—Mr. Speaker, my view of this country of mine, of Canada, I will never make him understand because he has his own view and there is nothing I can do about that.

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier who has a reputation for perceptiveness in many fields in this House. He raised the question of the referendum. I would like him to expand on this question of great interest to me, as I am sure most of my colleagues would like him to do, considering his long experience. What would be, in his opinion, the criteria or prerequisites for a referendum to be a true expression of the will of the Canadian people?

M. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, on the issue of referendum I have a lot of reservations, as for that matter some colleagues like the hon. member for Saint-Denis would tell you, in 1981-1982 we went through the same experience.

I agree that the instrument or process might be acceptable. And with my leader when he announced it, I expressed publicly some opinions about it. The four requirements which in my opinion should be met or otherwise satisfied would be as follows: That the referendum question be clear and precise; second, that it should be supported by all three political parties in this House; that it does not reduce at all the rights of the minority; and that it be subject to the simple majority of the country and, on top of that, to regional plurality where each region would have a right of veto: Quebec, Ontario, the Maritimes and the West. With these four conditions, Mr. Speaker, I think that should a referendum be held, it could be seen as equitable.

Mr. Prud'homme: You might win the member for Saint-Denis with this.

• (1610)

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address this House during this throne speech debate, particularly on that part of the throne speech which had the chapter heading "Changing the way Ottawa works".

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, many changes were made in the proceedings of this House over the nearly 20 years since I was elected here. I think the most important one was the broadcasting of our proceedings because it brought about fundamental changes in the way we deal with public business. Television cameras gave Canadians access to this House. Canadian men and women in the comfort of their home can watch the work of their elected representatives. Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that about one million Canadians watch the parliamentary channel each week to listen to debates on a bill, hear a statement by their member or watch the Question Period, which is the best show of all.

[*English*]

Nevertheless, in my view this is just one of the many factors which have contributed to our image problem.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, that is precisely the issue I would like to deal with now. As a member and as a Canadian, I am deeply concerned about the low esteem and consideration of Canadians for their elected representatives, not only members of this House but also other representatives at all levels. Members of the House of Commons should take this problem seriously and do all that is needed to restore confidence and respect for elected representatives.

[*English*]

The erosion of confidence in the very foundation of our democratic system must be addressed. It is our intention to do that or at least to try to make some progress in this session of Parliament.

The issue is the disrepute into which we politicians, we members of Parliament—and I think all elected politicians in Canada suffer in this regard, but in particular, we in this House of Commons—have fallen.

The fundamental element of our democratic system is the election in which Canadians, by secret ballot, elect men and women to represent them in their legislatures, city councils, and here in Parliament. Yet the polls all tell us that those who the people of Canada elect are held in very low esteem. Indeed, in looking at the most fundamental question facing the country—namely the question of unity, the question of the Constitution— serious people, people of high repute, people for whom I have a great deal of respect, suggest that the best way to examine these changes is to exclude entirely from the process anybody who has been elected.

For people to seriously suggest that holding elective office is an obstacle to participation in the most fundamental question facing the country is to suggest that they have little respect for the institutions in which we function and that the very basis of our democratic system is in some jeopardy.

That sends signals to us that we would be fools to ignore, not only for our own personal welfare as elected people, but certainly in terms of what we all want in the end. That is to see the survival and prosperity of this democratic country and the institution of which we are a part, which is fundamental to the future of the country, to a democratic system. We cannot have a free and prosperous society without this democratic foundation, an institution like this if not this one specifically.

What is the reason for this? Why have the people of Canada reached these conclusions about those of us whom they have elected to higher office? Well, one of the factors is certainly a skewed and very limited view of House proceedings. TV, which preys on our adversarial system, does not provide the opportunity to see a lot of what goes on. We all know, as members of Parliament, that there is a lot of good work that goes on in committees and many other ways around here. We know that there are debates that are held which are not watched with great enthusiasm, they are not applauded. The press gallery today, as every day, is empty of observers.

When I first arrived here, there was always at least one member of the press gallery on behalf of Canadian Press reporting on the debates. That does not happen any more.

What people do see through television is mostly Question Period. They see high emotional debate. They see strong language. They see outrage and indignation. They see behaviour that sometimes we must acknowledge we are not proud of. What they do not see with enough frequency is calm deliberation, discussion of issues in a serious way, serious issues with serious solutions, respect for each other's points of view even when we differ, and final decision. When they see us vote, they see us vote as blocs. They see us stand up as a bloc either for or against and they wonder about the individual they elected to represent them.

There are other factors which contribute to the disrespect or the anger people have for this institution. I have to acknowledge part of it is the tough agenda and the tough medicine. This government has introduced and passed legislation which was not popular, very definitely not popular. We did so with the firm belief it was required, it was needed, and did it recognizing that we would have to account for it. In the process, people have felt that we were not acting according to their wishes.

It is ironic, 70 per cent to 75 per cent of Canadians say they want their elected officials to follow their wishes, but about 75 per cent say they want their elected leaders to take strong decisions and do the right thing, even if it is not popular. They want strong leadership but they do not want their views ignored.

Of course, they also see us involved in highly partisan, highly fractious debate. They see, too often, members standing up accusing the other side of malfeasance, of corruption, of ignorance, of stupidity, of irresponsibility, all of those things. The blame is not on one side or the other. I am not trying to assess blame. They see us all doing that.

• (1620)

Sometimes the temptation to do that is overwhelming. It is irresistible. It is emotion. We do feel strongly about these things. Yes, when you stand up and take these dramatic emotional stands, your chances of getting reported or appearing on television is increased. These things are, in a sense, understandable, but they bring us into disrepute.

There is also concern in parts of the country, particularly my part of the country, the west, that they are not being adequately represented. Too often they see groups standing up as a party group and voting on a particular issue which does not make sense to them. It does not affect them. They do not understand it.

They do not understand why those of us from western Canada are not standing up and saying: "Well, we do not like this because people in the west do not like it." They do not understand why we vote as a party bloc all the time and do not show more divergences in reflection of the divergences that exist in this country.

They sometimes accuse us of being Ottawa's representatives to the constituency as opposed to the constituencies' representative in Ottawa. They get angry about that.

They believe that the system does not provide enough opportunity for listening, consulting and taking their views into consideration. All of these things have contributed to the general disrepute in which we are held.

Much of the focus of the public debate is on the question of free votes. They say: "We should have more free votes. People should be free of party discipline. We should change the roles of members of Parliament so they can vote as their constituents want."

They suggest that we should eliminate the element of confidence from the questions when you are dealing with legislation. They should not be questions of confidence ever. The element of confidence should arise when they are clearly spelled out as being questions of confidence, thereby freeing members to vote according to their constituents.

I will deal with that in a moment. First, I think we have to remind ourselves of just what reforms we have made, because the House is a dramatically different place than when I first arrived here.

There is the old expression: "Everybody knows that power corrupts." I think it is equally valid to say that powerlessness corrupts. If you do not have power or the ability to have an impact on things, that is corrupting in itself.

It causes you to do extreme things. It causes you, outside these institutions, to involve yourself in civil disobedience and to take extreme action, if you feel you are powerless to change things.

Within this House, it causes behaviour which is not well viewed by the public.

There have been a lot of changes. In 1984, this government in its throne speech promised parliamentary reform, and the McGrath committee was appointed. It did excellent work. It looked at how this House functions, from ministerial accountability to the legislative process to committees.

The McGrath committee had three reports and recommended a total of 119 individual changes. It had 119 individual recommendations and 92 of those are totally in effect. There are 17 more that are partially in effect. Only 10 were not implemented, and most of those were for reasons of impracticality. It was not for political reasons. For example, there was a recommendation that the Justice Building be taken over for members' offices, and so on.

An overwhelming number of recommendations were approved. Committees were given their own budgets, staff and research for special projects, and could perform research on special projects on their own authority.

Prior to 1984, a committee could only meet if the government House leader authorized it to meet. It could only look into those things the government House leader authorized them to look into. Now committees can look into whatever subject they choose. They have their own budgets and research facilities. They have a lot more authority and there is more opportunity for members to have some influence.

An example of the kind of thing that is happening is: after the reforms came into effect, the number of committee reports in a two-year period went from 27 in 1987 to 29 in 1990. There were only 10 and 12 reports from committees in the two years prior to the McGrath commission.

There was almost a doubling of the number of studies. A lot of those reports were excellent and formed the foundation for changes in the law and for changes in the way Canada views a number of issues. They in fact represent substantial good works by members of Parliament.

We now have a process of review of Order in Council appointments. Everybody appointed by cabinet to a position in this country can be brought before a committee of the House. Their credentials are examined to see whether they are worthy of the position. That is new; that never happened before. Committees are set up to follow government departments and are better organized. Committee members have the ability to travel and to call witnesses. Sound recordings of standing committees are permitted.

Private Members' Business was changed. A random system for selecting Private Members' Business was introduced outside the executive's control.

A committee of private members makes the draws. Prior to 1984—in other words, my first 12 years in Parliament—there was only one private member's bill passed to my recollection. That one was by the late Father Sean O'Sullivan. It was a bill to make the beaver the official animal of Canada.

Since those reforms we have had a number of private members' bills passed; not a lot, but a lot more than happened before that.

Those are important changes. The election of the Speaker was an important change, as were Statements by Ministers with equal opportunity for the opposition, more hours of business, and so on.

Phase two of the reforms was introduced at the conclusion of last session. Again they enhanced committee activity. There was more emphasis on precedent. We are now allowing television into committees, which is a recommendation of a committee of this House. It will be a committee of this House that will decide the rules on how television works, not the government House leader or the government. It will make those decisions.

Private Members' Business has been enhanced. There is more flexibility in substituting items. Now we will need to debate a bill for only three hours to bring it to a vote, rather than five hours. That is a significant improvement.

There will be more private members' bills passed. There will be more days for consideration of private members' business than was the case previously.

We have carried on with the reforms, empowering private members in the last changes to the rules. That having been said, there still is a clear view that we need to do more and there is a clear sense that this place needs more reforms.

A healthy democracy depends on participation and information, yet most of the recent reforms and the previous ones are not appreciated or they are dismissed as irrelevant. Canadians do not have a wide knowledge of the parliamentary system and how it works. That is part of the problem.

The changes that are happening in committee are not headline grabbing stuff. It is not on the news. It is not the stuff that gets reported. Ignorance in the best sense of the word, not in a pejorative sense, exists about the parliamentary system.

What we see reported are the partisan fights in this place, the antics. We see very little about the positive, mundane parliamentary happenings which in the end are so much more important. As I said the debate now seems to focus on the issues of free votes and party discipline.

Let us look at that in some detail. First, the majority of votes in this House in fact are not on issues of substance. They are on technical details. We have a lot of votes but only a very small percentage of them is really of substance and something we want to give consideration to.

• (1630)

The question is why cannot we all vote our own conscience. I am reminded of a political science study I saw asking people who came out of the election booth on election day why they voted and how they voted. What was their reason? Forty per cent of the votes were a reflection of—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The minister's time is up unless he obtains unanimous consent to continue. Is there consent?

On a point of order the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, the minister was just beginning to enter into a question that is very important to all members of this House, and that is the whole question of free votes. I might ask if he would take some time now to respond to that issue which is very much a concern of mine.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The question is very simple. The Standing Orders provide that a member can exceed the 20 minute period if there is unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Questions and comments. The honorable member for Ottawa—Vanier.

Some hon. members: Question!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I will recognize you after the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

Mr. Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I admit the minister in question touched on an important topic, namely the question of free vote. I would like to ask him to explain his conception of what would be a free vote, briefly of course, in view of what occurred in this House when the government itself, on the opposition's initiative, wanting to reaffirm the confidence of the House in our health system, which is excellent, voted against the motion, giving as an excuse that it involved the confidence in the government. This is a good example of a situation where the government could explain us how and in what context we could use the free vote.

[*English*]

Mr. Andre: Well, Mr. Speaker, I regret that I have run out of time because I do do want to say, and I will address the question of my colleague, that it is my intention to ask the management committee of the House to look at a number of changes that could occur.

In terms of how we deal with legislation, perhaps one of the reasons we have partisan debates so often on pieces of legislation is the way they are introduced. At second reading the minister explains it in the House, the opposition is almost duty-bound to oppose it, and we are into partisan differences immediately.

I want to ask the committee to look at pre-studied bills after first reading. Bills could be sent to committee after first reading so that the explanation of the details of the bill can be done in a less partisan atmosphere than is now the case, and to see if in turn we cannot have a more limited second reading debate and free votes.

I want to look at the implication of free votes in terms of what it does to the nature of the country. We are one of the unique countries where no one is actually elected on a national basis. We all represent constituencies. We have to ask ourselves if we had truly free votes where everybody represents their constituents, why would there ever be an incentive for my honoured colleague to vote for support for grain farmers since he has none in his constituency, and why would there ever be an incentive

for me from Calgary to vote for support for fishermen, for example, since I have none in my constituency.

Political parties have a vested interest in building a consensus across the country, in fact we are one of the few institutions that do have that. I want to ask the committee to examine this matter to make sure that we do not throw out the baby with the bath water, so to speak, in saying everybody is free to vote and should vote according to their constituents wishes.

I want to ask the committee to re-examine this question of opposition day and opposition day motions, which is what the hon. member referred to. These votes on opposition day motions are supposed to be a surrogate for votes on the question of supply and therefore are confidence by definition. They do because of the motion we have raised, "this House loves medicare", and you have the government voting against it which is an absurdity. We do not want to vote against it, but if it is a surrogate for confidence we have no choice.

Let us re-examine that. Maybe we need to re-examine what those votes should be and I would like the committee to take a look at that. I think we have to examine Question Period quite frankly, because if all members are going to be equal, then all members should be equal. He knows, as I know, in watching the British House that it has quite a different approach. The approach is that everybody is equal, the government comes in and everybody has an equal opportunity to question government or make representations on behalf of their constituents, everybody.

We are organized in party blocs where the main opposition bloc first and the second opposition bloc next are structured in a way which means the individual is less important than the party bloc. If individuals are to count in this House, and the public is demanding that, we have got to look at that. Maybe that needs to be changed as well and I ask the committee to take a look at that.

I think that the empowerment of individual members is essential to give meaning to the casting of a ballot and to the selecting of an individual. We also have recognized though that we are a large diverse country and we cannot afford to dilute the glue that political parties bring to this country by giving a Conservative in British Columbia a vested interest in trying to reach an accommodation with a Conservative in Quebec and a Conservative in Newfoundland, and the same applies for the other national parties.

If we unduly destroy the cohesion of national parties, then we have to ask ourselves what is to take their place in keeping this country together? If everybody represents a small parochial interest, then we lose some very important glue. I want to ask the committee to look into that as well.

I want to ask the committee to study these and to report back as soon as possible. I would like to start these changes next September. I do not think we can get them done before the end of June, but I would like them looked at and we do not need to proceed in one large package; we can proceed piecemeal, implementing as we go along.

I know we are all pretty cynical about each other's motives, but I must say at this time when the future of the country is at stake and the reputation of parliamentarians, all of us, is at such a low ebb, that we have to treat this responsibility seriously and we have to look at those changes. I think it can be done. I hope that the committee will take on that responsibility very early and will do something for this Chamber and for this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, I can hardly hear the minister's speech and find any credibility in it. In the Throne Speech, the very paragraph about a reform of the Standing Orders of the House also mentions that the report of the Royal Commission, appointed to study the electoral reform, will be tabled.

May I remind you that the Royal Commission was also established to study political party financing. However, we all know that, in spite of the promise made by the Prime Minister a few days before the last election, to institute public financing as soon as he was elected,—two years and a half have elapsed and nothing has come of it—we know that he never intended to do so and thus he has deceived all Canadians, including Quebecers. Moreover, in establishing that Royal Commission and in appointing the members he has chosen himself, he led

the reform in such a way that it did not provide anything on public financing.

So, how can we believe all the words of the minister, when we see that in fact he does not intend to change anything?

Mr. Lortie, the appointed Chairman of the Royal Commission, recently said, in an interview with Le Devoir, there would be no public financing. He even said so before completing his study.

But, no study was made on the role of bagmen within the Canadian Conservative Party, while this process has been denounced for seven years already. No study was made on the impact of public financing, on the participation of Canadian citizens in the whole process of political parties.

• (1640)

And today, they want us to believe that changes will be made to the Standing Orders of the House or to the system. That will never be done. There is no will for a change. I would ask the Canadian and Quebec people to read the 1984 Throne Speech and see all these false wishes that never came true. And the present Throne Speech is a deception for the whole of Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure why the hon. member should be upset about having a royal commission on electoral reform. The commission is doing good work, as far as I know. We have not seen the report yet, but we are looking forward to the report.

The throne speech deals not with the electoral process, but in a sense the products of that process, namely, this House of Commons and the way we behave. Some of us get elected under one banner and then change. Whether that is appropriate or not is something that perhaps we should look at. Do the people have a right to expect some integrity from those they elect, and expect them to perform according to what they say? That is perhaps one of the things we may want to look at.

Mr. Kindy: On a point of order. I think 30 minutes has expired.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I too wanted to say a few words on the throne speech debate today, particularly about the issue of the future of Canada and national unity that is so important at this time.

There is no doubt in my mind, as we go into this crucial next one or two years of Canada's development, and as we strive to reach a national consensus, that we should make sure we devise a process of changing our Constitution that is as open, fair, accessible and democratic as possible.

The process must be democratic so that the people of this country have full access to the process, so that the people of this country are the ones who build the Constitution. Constitution-building in this country must be done by more than just elected politicians.

We must have people from all kinds of groups that are under-represented in the Parliament of Canada involved in the process.

I make a plea this afternoon about seven or eight points that should be considered as we look at the future of our country and the unity of our country, which was an important part of the throne speech read by Governor General Ray Hnatyshyn in the Senate yesterday.

A committee of this House has travelled Canada, has had public hearings in 16 different communities in all the provinces and territories of Canada, and has been given a loud and clear message: the people want in, the people want to be part of the process, the people want a new process and a new way of building a Constitution.

People want a constituent assembly where you would have, yes, the elected politicians representing all parties in this House. You would also have people who are under-represented in the current electoral system. I refer specifically to women who are under-represented in this Chamber. I refer to the aboriginal people who are under-represented in this House, and certainly under-represented in terms of our national institutions and our national decision-making bodies.

I refer as well to the many minorities, the multiracial and multicultural minorities that are a growing reality in this country, and want to be part of that process. They would not be a part of that process if our next round of

constitutional talks involves only the elected politicians and the senators here in Ottawa.

I make the plea that the government reconsider the wisdom of a parliamentary committee to negotiate the next round of our constitutional future, and expand that committee to include not only elected people and politicians, but turn it into a fully fledged constituent assembly representing the people of this country.

A second thing that is really important is that we have a broad process of public hearings and public input as we determine where to go and the future of our country. It is important that this Parliament make a commitment to have public hearings for constitutional change whenever there is a proposal made to the people of this country. All too often in the past we have not had adequate public hearings or adequate input, or we have had a proposition made by the government to a parliamentary committee and the committee has said: "Well, you cannot really change the proposition. You can look at it and you can have public hearings, but you cannot change it". That is not good enough.

We need mandatory public hearings, where a parliamentary committee would hear from the Canadian people, listen to the Canadian people and change the proposition before it becomes part of the Constitution of Canada.

I would also would like to see the provinces and the two territories of this country do exactly the same thing.

During the Meech Lake Accord, only about half of the provinces had public hearings. The other half never had public hearings at all. Many of the provinces just relied on their premier or a vote in their assembly to say yes or no to the accord.

Even Premier Wells, who likes to talk about openness and democracy, in Newfoundland and Labrador did not have public hearings at all before he rescinded his support for the Meech Lake Accord. Again, is that listening to the people? That is not listening to the people. The provinces in a federation should have public hearings and public input so people at the provincial level can have a say in what their MLAs and their provincial representatives are saying in terms of constitutional change.

The third area we should look at in terms of public participation is whether or not we should have a national referendum for constitutional change. I think that requires further study. A referendum could be very divisive in this country. We have to look at who would write the question and questions of funding for the yes and no side in a national referendum.

Then we have the question of what is a majority. In a federal state is a simple majority of 50 per cent plus one good enough? I suggest it is not. Perhaps a majority in the four great regions of this country: the west, Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic Canada. Is that even good enough? Is it right and proper to have a national referendum on a question of minority rights where we are dealing with the aboriginal rights or the land rights of the aboriginal people of this country? I am really doubtful.

I caution the government that when it tables legislation on a referendum procedure later on, it had better make sure we know where we are going before we use this tool. A national referendum could override the rights of minorities, override the rights of regional minorities, be it western Canadians, Quebecers, Atlantic Canadians, or northerners. It could override the rights of groups such as aboriginal people or ethnic minorities or, indeed, linguistic minorities such as the anglophones of Quebec or the francophones outside of Quebec.

That is an area that needs further study before we commit ourselves to having a national referendum.

It is more important to make sure that the people have a say in building a national consensus on what the constitution should be. At a time when that consensus is being built, it should be the people of this country who determine whether or not we should be enshrining more aboriginal rights or stronger rights for minorities or a charter of social and economic rights. The people of this country must have a say at the developmental process, at the proposal level and not be handed a *fait accompli* by bureaucrats, as has happened so many times in the past.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced, after spending several weeks attending public hearings throughout Canada, in every Canadian province, in the Yukon, in Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories, that most Canadians want a united and strong Canada. We must have a Canada for all Canadians. We must find a compromise for the

benefit of the West, natives, Quebecers, the North, the Atlantic provinces, Ontario and everybody.

• (1650)

I am optimistic that we will be able to find a way to save our great country and to protect at the same time its national solidarity and its real diversity, Mr. Speaker.

We are lucky to have two great languages, French and English, and the natives who were here before anybody else, and now a large number of people who came from many countries from all over the world.

After six or seven weeks of public hearings, I am convinced that most of our national population will wish to have a united and strong Canada.

[*English*]

In the process of changing our country, the most important thing is democracy, giving people a voice and allowing them to participate in every stage of the process.

I think we should look at some of our history. We have had a proud history in many ways in terms of what kind of a country we have built. We have medical care, hospitalization, health insurance, and family allowance. We have a mixed economy. We have a free and democratic country.

We have a wealthy country with many resources, but when it has come to changing our Constitution, we have often been deficient in living up to the great rhetoric and the great hope that we all hold for this country.

The oversight that is the most glaring to me is how we have shunted aside and forgotten the aboriginal people, the first people of this country.

When we look at how we change our Constitution, there is no reference whatsoever to aboriginal people. They do not have a voice at the table. Before we make changes to the Constitution with respect to the aboriginal people in this country, changes which affect them directly, whether treaty rights or self-government, I suggest that aboriginal people themselves should have a say.

They should be allowed the right of consent. In other words, we should not change treaty rights without their consent. We should not impose a system of self-government in this country. If there is self-government for aboriginal people, it should be with their consent. If we deal with issues that affect them directly, it must be with their consent.

Second, no matter what the constitutional issue may be, the aboriginal people must be at the table. They must have a voice. They must participate or take part in those meetings, because aboriginal people in this country are affected by equality rights for men and women. They are affected by whether or not there are property rights in the Constitution, whether or not there is free speech. They are affected by our languages, our many cultures and our Canadian reality.

The time has come to make sure that they have voice and that they have a real role in consenting to changes in the Constitution that affect them.

The next thing is the role of our northern territories. When you travel the north, you find out very quickly that they are treated in many ways by people in this part of the world as though they are colonies. Things are imposed on them by the politicians in Ottawa and by the bureaucracy.

Many years ago in 1905 when my province became a province of this country it became a province through an agreement by the people in the then territory that Saskatchewan now is and the Parliament of Canada.

The people of Saskatchewan and the Parliament of Canada in a bilateral sense agreed that Saskatchewan should be a province. The same thing in Manitoba, British Columbia, Alberta, Prince Edward Island and, in 1949, Newfoundland and Labrador.

It was the people in the Dominion of Newfoundland and Labrador who had a referendum and later signed an agreement with Canada through the Parliament of Canada to become a province.

In 1982, when the Constitution was patriated and brought back to Canada with the charter of rights, Parliament changed the rules for the creation of new provinces.

Instead of it being a decision of the people of the Yukon and Northwest Territories, for example, and Parliament, a new province could be created only if there was the agreement of Parliament and seven provinces representing 50 per cent of the population of Canada. That is not fair. We are not applying the same rules in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon as we applied in the rest of the country. I suggest that we go back to the rules before 1982 for the creation of a new province. If

the Yukon or the Northwest Territories wish to become a province and Parliament consents, then it is a province.

Of what business is it to the provinces of Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Ontario whether the Yukon is or is not a province? It is time we stopped treating them as if they were colonies.

Second, there is no provision in the Constitution that would prohibit an existing province from expanding its territory into the Northwest Territories or the Yukon. There is no provision that would stop that unless it was stopped by seven provinces representing 50 per cent of the people and the Parliament of Canada.

We suggest that the territories themselves should have a veto over the expansion of existing provinces within their boundaries. If British Columbia, Alberta or some other province decides unilaterally to expand north, the people in the territories should have the right to say no.

Third, it is imperative that the governments of the two territories be represented at constitutional meetings, at the constitutional table, and that they have a chance to participate and a voice in federal-provincial meetings. I am very pleased to see that in Nipawin, Saskatchewan, today and yesterday at the Western Premiers Conference, Mr. Penikett, the premier of the Yukon, and Mr. Patterson, the government leader from the Northwest Territories, were there as full participants along with the four western premiers. That is a step forward. It has become a conference not only of western premiers, but also of the two leaders from the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. Let us follow that example and apply it to all constitutional negotiations, to all federal and provincial negotiations, to all negotiations that affect the people of the two territories. If we do that we are then talking about a more democratic Canada.

These are some of the issues that we should address when discussing how to change our Constitution and how we, as Canadians, can make our country more democratic.

There is one other issue I wish to refer to regarding changes to the Constitution. That is whether we should have a free vote on constitutional matters in this chamber. We heard from dozens and dozens of Canadians right across this country who were asking the parties, at the committee that looked at a process of amending the Constitution, for a free vote. Person after person said that if there was a free vote on the Constitution in this House, members of Parliament would be forced to represent more accurately their constituents on a constitutional matter. They would be held more accountable by their constituents on a constitutional matter.

I suggest for all constitutional amendments that come before this House, we have a free vote with a two-thirds amendment, which would force members of Parliament to be more accountable to and representative of their constituents. It would also force members of all political parties in this House, be it three or four or five political parties, to try to reach a consensus on constitutional matters, to make sure that a constitutional matter is above and beyond partisan politics and that we try to achieve a truly national consensus. If a two-thirds majority was required, in almost every Parliament in this country, with a few exceptions like 1984 where there was a large majority, the consent of a significant number of people in the opposition would be required.

A government could not come before this House and say: "Look, here is the proposition and we do not care what you say, we are going to have a committee and then we will ram it through the House." That is not good enough.

I believe that on constitutional matters which are not partisan matters in the traditional sense, there must be a free vote with a two-thirds majority.

• (1700)

I think that is the feeling of the members of the Liberal and Conservative parties who sit on the joint committee on amending the Constitution of Canada.

If we were to open up the process, make the process more democratic, make it more accessible to the people in this country, then I think we could bring this country together. We could unite this country around the values that all of us share.

Travelling the country makes one more of an optimist. People want to stay together. People want this country to unite and stand together. They are also looking for a new way and a new method of building a country, reaching a

consensus and building a constitution. They want people to be democratically involved. We can do that through a constituent assembly, where people who are now under-represented in Parliament have a chance to be represented at the table, in particular the aboriginal people of Canada.

Travelling the country you would find, after you get over some of the deep-seated animosity between so many peoples in this country, a real understanding that one of the real jewels of Canada is the diversity that we have, the fact that Quebec is so unique and different, with a different language, a different history and culture, and a different legal system. We have a great tolerance toward minorities and ethnocultural groups from all parts of the world. We are the second largest country in the world, after the Soviet Union, in terms of area, and that tremendous size and the mountains and the differences in this country should be seen as things that we cherish and build on, and not divide us.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, my friend, the member for Chambly, and I, we spent two or three days just before Christmas in New Brunswick, in British Columbia and also in Edmonton and when we spoke to students, we noticed that there was not a very big difference in the various parts of the country: All people want a clean environment, a job for their children and peace in the world, whether they speak French or English or live in western or eastern Canada.

[*English*]

What we need in this country is an open democratic process. I see my time has expired and you are about to rise. We need an open democratic process that allows people to participate.

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the speech of the hon. member. He addressed the question of Canadian unity. He did not mention the question of referenda. I would like to know if he is in favour of referenda, whether he wants people's input, or just the constituent assembly.

Another point I would like to comment on is that Canadians right now have tremendous economic difficulties because of the policies of the government, of high interest rates, and so on and so forth—the goods and services tax in particular.

Travelling this country, everybody tells you the economy is slow and things are not progressing. They blame the goods and services tax and they blame the high interest rates that have caused a made-in-Canada recession.

What we should be addressing is the question of economic recovery. One of the points the Governor General mentioned in his Speech from the Throne was free trade with Mexico. I would like to know whether the hon. member's party is also in favour, at this time, of an association with Mexico, of free trade with that country. I do not believe that this is the opportune time. We have not established a working relationship with the provinces, we have not established free trade with the United States that is to the benefit of Canada. I would like him to comment.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, the most important issue in this country today is the economy—all the economic problems, the unemployment, the high interest rates, the devastation in the farm economy, particularly in western Canada. That is the number one issue. People want us to solve the unity problem within the next year or so. Then we can deal with the real problems, which are jobs and creating wealth for the people of this country.

I am convinced, after travelling this country time and time again, we do not need the GST in this country. We should get rid of the GST. The free trade deal with the United States has sold out too much of our sovereignty. We have given away much too much for what we receive. We should not now be entering into yet another free trade deal with Mexico that once again will hurt this country by sending more and more jobs south of the border into Mexico where wages are very, very low and working conditions are very, very poor.

These are real issues that have to be addressed, and addressed very quickly. This is why we have to resolve this unity question, so we can get on to the real issue of building a strong and prosperous Canada with jobs reaching every person.

Second, on referenda, I think the member from Calgary may have been out. In my speech I spent two or three minutes on referenda. I suggested that we have to look at the wisdom of whether or not we should have national referenda. If we do have a referendum, we should look at all kinds of questions that are real problems for me. It could be a divisive tool. What is a majority in a referendum? Is it just strictly a national majority or do we need a majority in each of the four regions of the country? Do we put minority rights to a

referendum, such as the rights of aboriginal people who make up five or six per cent of the population. An amendment to the Constitution may be one that deals strictly with their treaty rights or deals with land entitlement or deals with self-government. Should that be put to a national referendum?

There could be a tyranny of the majority, trampling over minority rights. The same is true of rights of multiracial or multicultural minorities. I raise those as questions that are legitimate. There are also questions about the financing of a referendum, do we have limitations on the yes and no side, who will ask the question and why.

The important thing for me is that we involve the people in the process from the beginning through a constituent assembly and through very open public hearings at both the federal and provincial levels so that people participate in building the process and building the Constitution.

There may be a place at the end for a national referendum, but only a national referendum that unites Canada, binds us together and not divides us. All I am saying is that we have to look at it more closely. I think it requires a bit more study.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt): Mr. Speaker, there are those of us who came to this country as immigrants, there are those of us who chose Canada. We could have gone to any country in the world. However, we chose Canada. We are very disturbed by some people who are trying to divide the country, the separatists from Quebec and the separatists from the west.

My question for the hon. member is the following: Will he agree that we have to invite the ethno-Canadians? Will he agree that multiculturalism has played a definite part in this country. Yesterday, the first Sikh graduated from RCMP training wearing a turban. Will he agree that ethnocultural Canadians should sit at the negotiating table and start negotiating, that these people who come to this country by choice and are sick and tired of the separatist factions of this country are needed and needed today?

I speak about my hon. friends from Quebec. We came here by choice and we do not want any part of what they are saying.

Mr. Nystrom: I obviously agree that ethnocultural Canadians have to be at the table. That is a major reason why we have recommended a constituent assembly. My friend from the Liberal Party's leader, if I can be a bit partisan here for a second, has rejected the idea of a constituent assembly. I think if one were to reject the idea, I would be hard pressed to figure out a way to bring the people who are under-represented in our parliamentary system to the table in the numbers that they should.

That is why we recommend a constituent assembly. It is easier to have the linguistic minorities, the ethnocultural Canadians, people with multiracial backgrounds and the aboriginal people at the table if there is a constituent assembly.

It is the reason why I hesitate about a national referendum. Minority rights can be overridden by the majority. I think not just of aboriginal people but people from other minorities.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueil): Mr Speaker, some called us separatists earlier. Perhaps you will be proud in a few years to learn that we saved the rest of Canada because we wanted sovereignty for Quebec.

• (1710)

Because of the way things are going right now, this country is heading straight into bankruptcy. The deficit is now $400 billions and we don't know how to solve this problem. I would like only to say that you are going to be proud to see perhaps one day a sovereign Canada, formed of the rest of Canada, that will be able to grow better than it is today.

I would have a short question for the hon. member who just spoke. We talked earlier about unity. He spoke a lot about unity. In the Speech from the Throne, the government said that education should be under its jurisdiction and that we should have a legislation providing us with a national policy on education when we know

very well that education is a provincial jurisdiction and that for Quebec, it is very precious. The Quebec Minister of Education said today that that kind of infringment by the federal government was outrageous and totally unacceptable.

Speaking on that same subject, the leader of the NDP said today that the federal government should play a more important role in education. That means that she supports the plan announced by the tories in their Speach from the Throne. Does the hon. member support that position and can he explain how Quebecers could accept such an infringement on Quebec jurisdiction?

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, our Constitution gives some powers to the federal government, other powers to the provinces and I agree that education should stay with the provinces. However, in its administration it might be useful to have a national policy with some kind of coordination between provinces in that area.

It might be possible to have, I am thinking about my own province, Saskatchewan—maybe not Quebec, because it's different—and British Columbia or Manitoba, more coordination between the various systems. But, strictly from a constitutional point of view, I think that this power should stay with the provinces.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Resuming debate. The hon. Member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to participate in this debate on the Speech from the Throne.

[*English*]

This morning when I was walking to the Parliament Buildings, I passed the post office building at the corner of Elgin Street and Sparks Street. I looked again at the cornerstone on that building. It said 1939 A.D. 1939 was after 10 years of the most cruel and crushing depression ever to have been felt in this country, and was the moment that war clouds were gathering over Europe and we were about to be plunged into the most severe military holocaust of this century.

Yet, at that low moment, in that valley of despair, someone had the courage to build a building that was a part of Canada's future. I see that as a metaphor for where we are today, that ability to inscribe hope, even to see confidence, in what we build.

What we must build today is not with mortar and concrete, with glass or steel. What faces us now is building new attitudes of confidence, confidence in ourselves as Canadians, and building a cultural renaissance in our country that will give rebirth to a greater Canada.

Over the last two years as Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, I had the chance to see how many other people around this planet view our country. If I had any wish in 1991, it would be that Canadians could see ourselves as others elsewhere in the world see us.

They would find it incomprehensible that we, in this comfortable country, are talking with such despair about our future. Hearing this current debate, they would certainly be blinking in incomprehension.

How about those who are living within the northern or southern borders of Iraq today? What about those in the Bangladesh flood plain, where the current crop of human fatalities is but an ominous portent of what is waiting as the UN today released statistics showing that world population is going to double in the next 60 years?

What about those who live, barely, in Ethiopia or Sudan staring vacantly into the dizzying void of starvation? What about those in the pollution choked countries of eastern Europe? What even of those people struggling to avoid the final collapsing remnants of the communist regimes where the lie could no longer be lived, even by those who spoke it?

Canada imperilled? Canada about to break up, to break down, to break apart? Canada? No one who sees our country from abroad can understand this nonsense. You have to be Canadian to understand the parasitic insecurity and self-doubt which constantly brings us down, to know that the route to political unity actually lies through a new attitude and awareness of ourselves. We are daring to express that in a cultural way and in a vastly more democratic way.

The late Canadian literary scholar Northrop Frye urged that we forsake political tinkering and concentrate more positively and profitably on becoming, for the first time, the cultural federation.

He saw, as I do, as a necessary precursor for our political restoration a cultural renovation of the country, a society valued mainly for its beaver pelts, its softwood forests and the soldiers it can supply to other countries' wars. Frye said, speaking of our earlier years, that Canada is unlikely to develop any cultural phenomenon beyond a problem of identity, a general state of wondering why it exists.

The last 20 years have seen a buoyant and refreshing expression of our authentic selves in a culturally robust Canada. This has directly contributed to our successes in other fields.

Keith Spicer may have been misunderstood when he said that it was important to listen to our poets, but I do not think that he was wrong.

The strength today of Quebec is but an expression of Quebecers' strong sense of a common tradition lived and expressed in a culture which went through a quiet revolution and which gave Quebecers a new sense of status and political influence. All of this, of course, has been done by Quebecers who are proud of their culture and who are living their culture within Canada.

In several very important respects, Quebecers have in fact been leaders of Canada from the beginning to the present. A reluctance in 1914 to send young men from the forests, fields and factories to die in the bloody mud of a European imperial war seemed incomprehensible to many other Canadians.

• (1720)

I believe Quebecers had discerned a truth not yet seen by others at that time. A quest by Quebecers to press for new Canadian symbols was seen as disloyal by many in other parts of Canada, parts of Canada where today those symbols have become proudly unifying for all of us.

Impatiently, ahead of many other Canadians, Quebecers who wished to be *maître chez nous* set a theme that has been grudgingly accepted by those in other parts of Canada long accustomed to the comfortable cocoon of being, first a British colony, and subsequently an American colony.

Quebecers have, perhaps not always even knowing it, given leadership to Canada. This is the time more than any other for the true sons and daughters of Quebec to stand forward and say to the rest of Canada: "follow us, let us together make the long-held dream of Canada, a greater reality." This is also the time for all Canadians to say to Quebecers that the tempering influences of our larger country have helped prevent a too insular approach. Canada helps us all, wherever we live in this country, avoid becoming too provincial.

Quebecers have not been alone, but have been partners with the rest of us, in giving a definition to the Canadian experience. *Nous sommes tous les Canadiens.*

In contrast with the United States and with France, which began with revolution and the deductive approach to unity that a revolution inculcates, as Northrop Frye has also observed, Canada has had a history of compromise and *ad hoc* agreements with a fairly constant attempt—whatever the lapses—to preserve the rights of both sides. As others have already said, in Canada today there are in fact many sides.

In this Speech from the Throne it was very important to hear the government speaking for those who in our society too often are voiceless, too often the silent Canadians.

Yesterday, for example, the references to programs for Canadians with disabilities is of fundamental importance for the kind of Canada we want to be, because 13.2 per cent of our fellow citizens have varying degrees of mental or physical disabilities. That is 3.3 million Canadians.

Likewise, the provisions for the aboriginal peoples, our first Canadians, in the whole new approach that is being taken are overdue and most deserving of support from all of us.

Third, the references to children, the most vulnerable of all in our society. Again, this is important because of their relative voicelessness in society and the importance of supporting those initiatives.

Fourth, Canadian workers and those who operate small businesses in our economy at this time. When combined with the recession there is a major restructuring under way in the Canadian economy, which points to the need for very, very careful action on that front, as was outlined this morning by the new Minister for International Trade.

On the large scale we can see in this speech where Canada is and, I believe, where Canada is going. That is, from the model of a 19th century nation state we are in transition to a 21st century international country. Within this transition all of us have our specific proposals and hopes, those things we would like to see and achieve.

For example, I have been advocating the formation of an International Green Cross, a new international agency that could do for the environment what the International Red Cross does for humans in times of calamity and disaster.

Another idea I want to continue working for in this session of Parliament and beyond is the formation of a national youth service corps for young Canadians at the end of the high school years, even before entering university, a period perhaps of 18 months. Canadians of that age from all parts of the country could work in several streams of a national youth service corps on a rotational basis around our country. One stream, perhaps, of military service, another stream of environmental service and a third stream of social activity and service, and so on. All of this would help to unify the country and build Canadian culture as a result of young Canadians having the opportunity to live for a while in New Brunswick, Quebec, Saskatchewan, B.C. and Newfoundland, and move around and see something of the silent promise this country so often hides from those who never stray beyond their own bailiwick.

These are the kinds of ideas I want to see accomplished. I know so many other members of Parliament and many other Canadians across our country have their projects, dreams and aspirations, but we can only accomplish those in a united and strong Canada. If we do not have a country, what do we have?

That is why this whole approach and the reforms talked about yesterday are so important.

Although the reference in the Speech from the Throne to our cultural accomplishments was only a passing one, I believe the greatest cultural accomplishment is the one that lies ahead of us. It is our greatest challenge to see a re-confederation on a cultural basis.

For example, consider education. The throne speech calls for a new culture of learning. Education is unquestionably the responsibility of provincial governments. Yet, no Canadian can ignore that over the past two decades it was the Canadian government that paid millions of dollars to train adults to be bilingual because the provinces operating the educational system for over a century with two large linguistic groups had largely fostered a debilitating unilingualism.

No Canadian can ignore the fact that today it is the Canadian government that must spend millions of dollars to overcome illiteracy and millions more for worker retraining, even though these, strictly speaking, are matters of provincial jurisdiction.

Provincial governments simply cannot clamour for more powers, judged against this record, until all of us who are Canadians define and defend Canadian national standards. Perhaps those Canadian standards can then be more effectively implemented within our regional and local communities. That, in my view, will be the essence of the constitutional changes which lie in the not too distant future.

The government's educational goals by the year 2000, just nine years off, as mentioned in the Throne Speech, include cutting illiteracy in half, doubling university graduates in mathematics, science and engineering, ensuring that 90 per cent of Canadians achieve high school graduation by age 25, and increasing employer funded training fourfold. That is a great Canadian national challenge. The even greater challenge is to all those who give cultural expression in whatever form to the Canadian experience.

Now is the time that all those people must come to the aid of their country and its definition, because that is fundamental to our future.

Since yesterday, the country has a clearly defined constitutional renewal plan. It has a timetable and it has clear leadership from the Prime Minister who unequivocally has stated, echoing the call of our Prime Ministers of yesteryear, that it is the Government of Canada alone which speaks for all Canadians in the coming debate over the redistribution of Canadian provincial powers and institutional change.

• (1730)

I would like to add an important proviso to that. While it is the Canadian government of all the governments which speaks for Canadians, we can and we must also go beyond governments directly to the people of Canada. When all the constitutional proposals for change have been made by the various committees and deliberative bodies, it must be the Canadian people themselves who decide. That is why the Speech from the Throne, calling

for popular involvement in this process, is an historic milestone in our evolution as a true democracy.

The Speech from the Throne advises us that we in the House will be asked to approve enabling legislation to provide for greater participation of Canadian men and women in constitutional change. Tomorrow afternoon I will table again in the House my private members' bill, the Canadian Referendum and Plebiscite Act, so that it can be considered by our Parliament in concert with this stated intention of the government.

We Canadians have been a timid democracy for the main. We owe it to ourselves to more robustly embrace our authentic experience. We owe it to ourselves to involve and to trust the people in the processes of constitution making. Our cousins in Australia have not hesitated to do this. There constitutional amendments must be ratified by the people themselves. If it is not possible to ratify, as the Australians found in eight times out of thirty-two, then if you cannot persuade a majority of the people living in the country that the proposed changes to the fundamental rules of the country are worth making then they ought not to be made.

More important even than the numbers that are added up on the night of a national referendum or plebiscite is the educational process that we go through in the campaign, that intense period of focused debate and discussion, hearing the pros and cons, the self-definition that comes, as it did to Quebecers in 1980, as it did to Prince Edward Islanders three years ago on the fixed link issue, as it did to people in the Northwest Territories on the territorial division plebiscite. This is a great opportunity for all of us to join in direct partnership with the Canadian people. For that reason also, I am very proud, as a Canadian, to be supporting this Prime Minister and this government.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his address which I found to be sensitive. I know him to be a committed parliamentarian.

As I understood the address, he attempted to answer one fundamental question: Why is Canada breaking up or on the verge of break up? Clearly, if we are not careful, it is a possibility. Certainly we hear that a great deal throughout the whole nation.

I want to explore that very briefly. Is it because of the continued tensions between the English and French speaking people of this country? Is it because of the policy of two official languages? Is it because we have ignored for too long our aboriginal peoples, creating pressures that have become very difficult to deal with? We have been very slow in addressing them. Is it because we have been unable to accommodate those Canadians of origins other than aboriginal, French and English, who somehow feel as if they have been left on the periphery? Is it the recession? We all know that people are worried about their jobs. When we do not know what will happen tomorrow we sometimes become much more impatient and perhaps less tolerant. Is it possibly because of the breakdown of some of our east-west links? I do not say that in a partisan kind of way.

Decisions have been made with respect to VIA Rail so there is less travel, disruptions brought about by the Canada-U.S. trade agreement, and the imposition, and I understand the reasons, of the government's goods and services tax. Again I stress it is not a partisan statement. Is that contributing to this breakdown?

Perhaps just a final point, is it perhaps related to, in the final analysis, our inability to work with each other? I was rather surprised by a comment of the member for Yorkton—Melville, who said that my leader had indicated that he was against a constituent assembly. I found that really surprising because I had been the one who had explained to him what my leader had said which was very simply: "Here is what I would prefer, a parliamentary committee putting forth a package, consulting with Canadians, and then a referendum". He did say, and I heard him publicly, if a constituent assembly will do better work than a parliamentary committee, if it can be decided whether it should be elected or selected, how large it should be, what it's mandate should be, then he is quite prepared to look at it.

Is it because in the final analysis, when it comes down to the fundamentals, that we cannot in fact reach out and work out a solution that is the best for the country and the best for all Canadians.

Mr. Boyer: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has listed a number of factors: language, the position of aboriginal Canadians, those who feel they are left on the periphery, the economic recession, the east–west links that have perhaps broken down, taxation issues, and others. All of these are sand in the gears grinding down the good will and successful operation of our country.

Most of these serious issues are problems in our country because of the underlying difficulty that we have communicating with ourselves as Canadians. That is why I was emphasizing the cultural basis of what our Canadian experience is. When we have a more robust Canadian identity, we are proud and capable of sharing without feeling inhibited, without having that Canadian self–doubt that causes us to act like shy country cousins and step back, but actually to step forward and embrace one another from whatever part of the country we live in. Then these issues, be they economic recessions which occur in a cyclical pattern in a controlled capitalist economy like ours, or the taxation issues that bedevil us as Canadians want more services but we are finding that the cost of paying for them and servicing the debt is too burdensome to continue on its present footing, can be dealt with.

Those of us in this Canadian House of Commons and those who succeed us in subsequent generations are never going to lack any of these specific issues to debate. Debate is the turning of the gears that makes the sound of a country actually working. My concern is the deeper one that I alluded to throughout my remarks. That is the absence of a strong, positive, Canadian cultural experience that gives us the confidence to go forward with all that we are doing so well, with all that we can be so proud of as Canadians, and celebrate it, and salute one another for doing it.

That is why I pointed particularly to the province of Quebec and its phenomenal progress in recent decades because of the intrinsic strength that comes from that shared culture. That, achieved within Canada, shows us all the better way.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I found my colleague's speech very interesting. I would like to make a comment about the dynamism in Quebec.

I must remind my colleague that Quebec may be a little more dynamic than some other provinces because, in a way, we have learned to be suspicious of the federal government. Just remember the referendum of 1980 after which Quebec had to rely only on its own resources and on its own means. It is around that time that we began to show real entrepreneurship and that our businesses began to be really flourishing. That explains in part why Quebec is one of the provinces which can best cope with global and Pan–Canadian competitiveness.

• (1740)

I would really like to ask my colleague if he ever thought about the things that the provinces had in common. We talk here, in this House, of all the differences, of all the things that divide us. I too am an immigrant, in the sense that I chose Canada, but in my case, I chose Quebec. During my trips across Canada, I saw many things that we have in common. I can quote this example: in Quebec, we have a lot of *caisses populaires*, while in the West, they have credit unions or co–ops.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, in Quebec we have also some mistrust towards Ottawa. This same mistrust exists in the West and in British Columbia, and it is a rightful, healthy mistrust. But it is not strong enough to destroy the country. I would even say that with this mistrust, we can still build a country.

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the NDP member's comments concerning the diverse dimensions of our country. That is the true Canadian spirit.

He is pondering over the Canadian identity and the realities all Canadians must dial with. That is paradoxical but the common reality is found in the Canadian diversity. As George Bernard Shaw said it, paradoxes are truly realities.

I think that the challenge is for Canadians to experiment diversity all across the country. I can see how Quebecers that confine themselves to the Province of Quebec, to that sole environment and life experience, may develop a separatist mentality. As for Canadians living exclusively in the West who never know the incredible experience of visiting the province of Quebec or even Ontario and the Maritimes, they truly show a lack of Canadian spirit.

Even Canadians from the Maritimes with their great traditions and secular experience of closeness to nature are a great lesson for us in other parts of the country.

Thus, that is very simple and that is why I have suggested the creation of a national force of Canadian youth.

[*English*]

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my remarks by complimenting my colleague from Etobicoke—Lakeshore and saying that I am appalled that he has not been to the maritimes. I hope that he will go there very soon. We will be delighted—

An hon. member: He did not say that.

Ms. Clancy: He did not say that. I am sorry I thought he said he had not been to the maritimes.

Mr. Boyer: My mother was born there.

Ms. Clancy: That is your mother, Patrick.

Mr. Boyer: I have been to Nova Scotia.

Ms. Clancy: Oh, I misunderstood.

An hon. member: Invite him to come again.

Ms. Clancy: That is fine. We would be delighted to have you visit again and share our joint feelings of Canadianism.

When I began thinking about what I was going to say here this afternoon, it was impossible not to think back to the summer of 1990, the summer of our discontent.

It was the summer that saw the failure of Meech Lake, the forcing of our native peoples to the barricades, the looming recession and the terrible polarization that began among Canadians.

Here we are, the most favoured country on earth that has been blessed by God and lent to us privileged few who have the fortune to call ourselves Canadians. We have been and continue to be in great danger of spoiling our heritage and ruining our future.

Today, nearly a year after the summer of 1990 began, we are still a nation in distress. We are perhaps a nation with an illness of the heart. We are a people filled with fear and a nation no longer willing to trust. We are a nation that is frustrated and angry. It is a terrible picture, and it is one that must be changed.

When it comes to the future of Canada, it is absolutely clear to all of us that we must put aside our differences as politicians. We must work together on all sides of this Chamber to ensure that we are are not the parliamentarians who preside over the demise of Canada.

Now and again, I have been accused of being partisan. I accept that description, and I accept it with pride. Parliament is no place for women and men who are not passionate in their beliefs and who do not fight fiercely for their policies and principles.

Partisanship has been getting a bit of a bad name, and we, in this Chamber are all to blame to some degree for that. Partisanship is an honourable tradition in this House, as it is an honourable tradition in all the democracies of the world.

All Canadians are, indeed, better off because that tradition exists and because it is the very heart of our democracy. There are certain times—God knows that this is one of them—that this tradition must give way to a higher need.

In times of national peril, we must all remember that Liberals, New Democrats, Conservatives, Reformers or Independents are first, foremost and always Canadians.

[*Translation*]

We may be French Canadians, English Canadians, Chinese Canadians or Italian Canadians, but today, tomorrow and forever we are first and foremost Canadians.

[*English*]

It is our job to convince the people of Canada that we are a constituent assembly, that we represent ordinary Canadians and that, most important, we—every one of us in this Chamber—are responsible to ordinary Canadians. We are responsive to their concerns.

One of the privileges of being a member of Parliament is that it takes you out of your own province and to different parts of the country. It does not matter where I have been in the past year, whether I was in Winnipeg, Toronto, in my own maritimes or in the far west. I heard the same thing from Canadians.

They are afraid and they are uncertain. They look to us to give them a solution to this fear and this uncertainty. Each one of us is only important in that we are here to speak for our constituents.

My constituents, those in Halifax, as well as the people I have spoken to all over this country are saying essentially the same thing. They are saying: Restore our country. Restore our faith constitutionally and economically. Each one of us who is privileged to sit in this Chamber knows that to achieve this is our most important job.

• (1750)

Consequently, this morning when the hon. Leader of the Opposition spoke, he spoke in support of a number of the government initiatives. Indeed, we on this side of the House do support a number of the government initiatives. We support the idea of a joint committee of the House and Senate. I have some concerns about the timing. I wish it were sooner. The fact that it is taking place is a move in the right direction.

We support the idea that the government will put forward its own particular views. Whether we will at the time support all of those views remains to be seen. Nobody, even at the risk of danger for the country, is prepared to buy a pig in a poke. We are here to represent our constituents and ensure that this country not only survives but thrives. The alternative is too terrible to really contemplate. The decisions that we make here, the actions that we take here, will be for each one of us crucial to our own future and the future of the generations who come after us.

Also, in a very important light—and each one of us has this belief, I think, deep down in our hearts—we particularly do not want to leave these jobs having made Canada worse than it was before we came to them. Each one of us, whatever our region, our constituency, our background, whatever the policies that drive us to seek political office, whatever our political parties, comes here, I believe, with an absolute determination to improve this country, to make it a better place.

If we listen to that commonality which is shared with all Canadians, then we are taking the steps to reduce the hurt and the fear and the distrust that has built up over the years—not just this past year but in previous years. We are taking the first steps to create an atmosphere in Canada where we listen to each other, where we respond to each other and where we understand that in our diversity is also to be found our commonality.

I turn now to the second portion of my remarks. Although we must always remember our higher calling and we must work together to ensure the survival of our country, it is not our only job as parliamentarians. We must still carry our passionate partisanship to the specifics of government policies. It is to this that I speak now.

There are many aspects of yesterday's throne speech that are troubling. If this is the last throne speech before the dissolution, and it well could be, there were many things missing from yesterday's alleged blueprint for government action.

One of the things that I noticed missing was the lack of mention of anything relating to a national child care policy or a national child care program. We cannot forget for one instant that there are still a million latchkey children in this country and they are waiting for this government to do something to alleviate their situation. Indeed their problems and the problems of their parents, and in particular of their mothers, are problems that are as crucial in their own way as are the problems of the survival of the country.

A country that is to survive must be a country that looks after its weak, its young, its underprivileged. It is our job again, as federal members of Parliament, to pay attention to this, to respond to this and to react to this.

There were other things that were not mentioned. As a member from the Atlantic region, I was disturbed at no mention in the Speech from the Throne about the fishery. I was disturbed that there was little or no mention of anything remotely offering hope in the area of regional development. I was disturbed that there was little or no mention of anything relating to the whole question of transportation and the problems that we have in Atlantic Canada as a result of the slow destruction, or in some cases the quick destruction, of the transportation infrastructure.

I was disturbed by the pronouncements relating to post-secondary education, not disturbed by the spirit of the statement. The spirit of the statement is fine. Again, it is one of those things that every one of us can agree with. What disturbed me was the call for yet more discussion papers and not a call to action.

Our universities are suffering. Nowhere are they suffering more than in my region with the highest tuition fees, the lowest salaries and the poorest physical plants. These are institutions of higher learning that have a proud tradition and send people from the provinces of the Atlantic right across this country and across the

world, people that we are proud of. This cannot go on as they are being choked by under-funding.

I was most disturbed by one line in the Speech from the Throne, and I refer to the translation: "and my government will appoint a blue ribbon panel of concerned Canadian men and women to inquire into the serious problem of violence against women in our society".

Since November when we struck the subcommittee on the status of women of the health and welfare committee, I have sat in that committee and listened to eloquent and moving testimony from witnesses from all across Canada about the increasing and horrifying state of violence against women in our civilized country, in our country where we are all talking about listening to each other and being responsive to each other's needs.

I believe that among the members of this House there is not a person who does not finally grasp the significance and the widespread existence of this problem. In my small province of Nova Scotia, and I have said this before, there have been six spousal murders of women in the past year. Those statistics alone are frightening.

We know the statistics in the city of Montreal in the year of the dreadful, horrible massacre of the young women engineering students, when 118 other women murdered. Those murders were almost unnoticed. We know that this goes on. We know that it occurs in too many households.

Women's groups, individual women, my party, and others have been calling for a royal commission on violence against women. We call for that royal commission because we know it is absolutely necessary to have both the scholarly evidence that a royal commission can call upon and the tremendous light of publicity that a royal commission will engender.

I fear from this one line in the Speech from the Throne that this is not what we are going to get. What I see here is something called a blue ribbon panel of concerned Canadian men and women. We do not need a blue ribbon panel. We need a panel that is rooted in experience and we need a royal commission.

Are you cutting me off, Mr. Speaker?

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 o'clock p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 15, 1991

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, the report into Canada's newest immigrant, the former Iraqi ambassador to the U.S., raises many, many unanswered questions.

Why did the ministers of external Affairs and employment and immigration resort to finger-pointing, blaming public servants who only did their job, thereby breaking away from that long-standing parliamentary principle of ministerial responsibility?

The Clerk of the Privy Council, the Prime Minister's deputy, rejected fast-tracking Al-Mashat's case, but that recommendation was ignored. Given that no ministers were supposedly involved, who gave the order to process Al-Mashat at break-neck speed? Was the Clerk of the Privy Council interviewed by government investigators? Three government departments were involved in the case yet the ministers were never informed, and what of the unfair treatment of the thousands of potential immigrants to this country waiting years to be processed?

Yes, it is more than a coincidence. Only a full inquiry will provide Canadians with some answers.

* * *

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, the throne speech this week was significant not just in the things it said, but also in things it did not say.

It did not contain even a token announcement of a national child care strategy as past speeches have. It did not contain any measures to address the tragedy of child poverty in Canada, and it did not contain any measures to get people back to work.

This government and this House made a commitment to end child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. If we are to achieve this, we must be working now to make the changes and set up a timetable for action. Unfortunately this government seems unprepared to make concrete commitments.

But the throne speech did mention a review of policies relating to the family. Tory review is a scary concept to most Canadian families and it may mean elimination of family allowances as some Conservative MPs have demanded.

This government should abandon its band-aid solutions to child poverty and start dealing with the real issues such as pay equity, an adequate minimum wage, adequate affordable housing for all Canadians, a national child care strategy, and full employment policies to get Canadians back to work.

* * *

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Mr. J.W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I know there will be little debate among Canadians about the old axiom that knowledge is power, or about the fact that education and training are crucial keys to future prosperity in Canada. Yet one of the most profound and disturbing revelations in the throne speech is that Canada has not been getting full value for the very substantial current investments being made in our search for knowledge, skill, and innovation.

I feel sure it will come as some surprise to many Canadians that the federal government alone, both directly and indirectly, is now spending close to $11 billion annually in support of education and training. These priorities are high dollar items in provincial budgets as well.

Unfortunately, however, the returns do not measure up. The high school dropout rate stands at 30 per cent and functional illiteracy among adults is equally bad, to state only two examples.

Education is a provincial responsibility in Canada but, jurisdictional sensitivities aside, there is a national interest in nurturing a new culture of learning and in developing co-operative strategies for attaining better educational results. This is a mission to which the government is committed and it is one in which all Canadians will want to join.

* * *

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, since this government came to power in 1984 it has deregulated the trucking industry in Canada and implemented a free trade agreement. These two moves are systematically destroying the Canadian trucking industry.

Twelve thousand Canadian truckers lost their jobs last year. Others have been losing their trucks and their homes due to United States truckers operating in Canada, yet this government expects them to compete against United States firms whose costs that are about 25 per cent less than those in Canada. Fuel costs are less in the United States, interest rates are lower, repair costs are less, and the trucks themselves cost far less in the United States.

There is no level playing field, and yet this minister stated in the House yesterday that he is waiting for seven studies. Canadian truckers do not need studies; they need action now, government action to save their industry, their jobs and their homes.

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, when Canadians think of the great national institutions which bind our country together, they think of the CBC, Air Canada and VIA Rail. They seldom, if ever, think of our political parties and their leaders. And yet a national political party and its leader must strive to find policies that will unite as many Canadians as possible by focusing on what we have in common in spite of the language, racial, regional, social and economic differences that often bitterly divide us.

The membership of a truly national party reflects as accurately as possible the demographic composition of our entire country. The compromises made by political parties, frequently considered unprincipled, are usually made in the name of the great principle of Canadian unity.

The truly national political party has been the only effective institution that we have been able to devise so far for overcoming the deep cleavages among us. It is one of Canada's greatest national inventions.

* * *

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Communications remains silent while every Canadian with a telephone has a stake in the enormous corporate showdown for control of our former Crown corporation, the international telephone company, Teleglobe Canada, and its parent, Memotec Data.

To protect consumers from abuse of market power and unfair rate increases, this government in 1987 passed a law preventing Canada's large telephone companies from controlling Teleglobe.

In the interest of Canadian consumers, I ask: Does the government still oppose corporate concentration in this sector? Is the minister the anonymous "government source" who today said that Ottawa would block any changes to Memotec? How is he answering to the BCE chairman who is asking for Ottawa's permission to get his hands on Teleglobe.

While some experts say Teleglobe could fall under control this week without prior CRTC approval as is required by law, we ask: What is the minister doing to see that the letter of the law is respected and followed?

In the interest of every single Canadian who uses a telephone, where does the minister stand? What action is the minister taking to protect a fair telecommunications marketplace?

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Walter Van De Walle (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, May 5, a crowd of Dutch people gathered at Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery to pay tribute to those Canadian soldiers who died so that they might be free.

The Dutch do not forget their Canadian liberators of years past. Each year they meet at one of the three Canadian war cemeteries in the Netherlands. The graves of our young Canadian soldiers are covered with flowers picked by school children.

To the Dutch it makes no difference if we come from Alberta, Quebec or Prince Edward Island, to the Dutch we are all Canadians. We are the ones who liberated their country in 1945.

At a time when Canadian unity is threatened, when Canadians are searching, we would do well to look at ourselves as others do and to count our blessings.

Canadians have much to be proud of.

* * *

BILL C-79

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the issue of the unusual procedures that were used to proclaim Bill C-79 last week.

By avoiding the normal procedures that are there for proclaiming legislation and avoiding the safeguards and the checks that are in place for that sole reason, the government has laid itself open to an accusation of abuse of power. The government's actions have left the impression that the timing of the proclamation was due to a court case or to an investigation.

• (1410)

I call upon the minister responsible, the government House leader, to rise in this House and list all the information from the MPs involved, their solicitors, or any other persons who acted on their behalf with any member of this cabinet.

* * *

THE LATE HON. RICHARD BENNETT HATFIELD

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Although Richard Hatfield has passed from this world, Mr. Speaker, that for which he stood will never pass.

Richard Hatfield was an active participant in Canadian politics dedicated to a strong and united New Brunswick, a strong and united Canada.

He said so simply, as was his way, in an article written for New Brunswick Day:

> It doesn't matter where you come from if you call New Brunswick my place/*mon foyer*. We have more in common with each other than any other peoples in the world.

He never wavered in his commitment toward that end and now that we are facing perhaps one of the greatest challenges to the future of Canada, his insight and wisdom will be sorely missed.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, Canada has lost a friend.

* * *

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, a delegation of three representatives of the Independent Truckers Spouses Association, led by Mrs. Janet Keusch of Alexandria, Ontario in my riding, were here today to attend a previously scheduled meeting with the Minister of Transport.

However, when time came for the meeting, the minister's staff claimed that no meeting had ever been scheduled and of course that the minister was too busy to listen to the plight of the women and children, the spouses of the truckers.

What is the Minister of Transport afraid of? Why does he refuse to meet with these women and children? I can only conclude that the minister is ashamed of his government's policies.

I call upon the minister to meet with the Independent Truckers Spouses Association immediately after Question Period. They will be waiting for him.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne, the federal government suggests that national unity would bring economic recovery. This is just hogwash. The facts speak for themselves. The government extolled the virtues of discipline and moderation in provincial spending. Result: Ontario's deficit tripled and reached $10 billion. While the management of the economy has to be decentralized , the government suggests centralizing it. Inflation is up in Ontario. The federal monetary policy is knocking out the provincial economies.

So far, unity has produced the following results: inconsistency and recessions. Now we should be looking for more unity. It is clear that this will only produce even more inconsistency and less economic efficiency.

S. O. 31

INTEREST RATES

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, let us take a look at what the interest rates have been since 1979. The rate was 13 percent in September 1979; 12.5 percent on August 25, 1980; 22.75 percent on August 7, 1981; 16 percent on August 20, 1982; 13 percent on August 10, 1984; 10.25 percent on August 23, 1985; 9.75 percent on July 18. 1986; 10 percent on July 31, 1987; 11.25 percent on August 26, 1988; 14.25 percent on August, 1990. And now, Mr. Speaker, it is down to 9.22 percent.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADA HEALTH ACT

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, the western finance ministers have issued a report that calls for the dismantling of our national medicare program. The report demands that the federal government stop all cash payments for health and instead transfer tax points to the provinces.

The report sets out new program criteria such as affordability, efficiency, flexibility and abandons the Canada Health Act standards, public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability and accessibility.

Medicare is one of Canada's most treasured programs that holds this country together. I call upon the new minister of health, in the name of national unity, to state clearly that his government is committed to a national medicare program including federal funding and national standards.

* * *

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, for some time this House has been treated to the featured corporate welfare bum of the month by the member for Nickel Belt.

Which NDP premier did not have the guts to tax the so-called corporate welfare bum pronounced by the member for Nickel Belt?

Whose NDP deficit is now $10 billion?

An hon. member Bob Rae.

Mr. Holtmann Which NDP premier increased his deficit by 300 per cent in one year?

Some hon. members Bob Rae.

Mr. Holtmann Which NDP deficit amounts to $1,000 per person in this province?

An hon. member: Bob Rae.

Mr. Holtmann Whose NDP economics on a federal scale would create a $90 billion federal deficit?

An hon. member: Bob Rae.

Mr. Holtmann Who is spending like a drunken sailor today so that our children can pay his bills tomorrow?

Some hon. members: Bob Rae.

Mr. Holtmann Therefore, is the NDP premier from Ontario, Bob Rae, not eligible for the political welfare bum of the month?

* * *

THE LATE MICHAEL B. KIRBY

Mr. Speaker: It is my sad duty to advise the House of the untimely death on April 23, 1991 of Michael B. Kirby, one of our table officers since 1979. A parliamentary employee for 25 years, Michael died of cancer after a short illness at the age of 51.

Most of us at one time or another have turned to Michael for procedural advice, for interpretation of the Standing Orders, or for information about precedent and practice. His counsel was always wise and thoughtful and usually given with a refreshing mix of Irish wit and charm. He was often seen standing beside the Chair offering your Speaker advice or guidance and he loved as well to recount stories.

A particular favourite of his, was the incident where a noted British Speaker was presiding over a particularly heated procedural row in the Chamber and sent a note to the clerk asking for advice. And, as Michael said it, the clerk sent a note back which said: "If I were you, Mr. Speaker, I should proceed with caution".

[*Translation*]

Mr. Kirby was a man of sound advice and it was at their own risk that Chairmen would ignore his advice. His dedication and loyalty to Parliament were unequivocal and were always evident in all the functions he performed, be it as committee clerk, head of Journals Directorate, principal clerk at the Table Research

Branch, principal clerk of the Public Bills Office or Table officer and Chair advisor.

[*English*]

For those of us who also have had the privilege of having Michael as a friend, his personal warmth and friendship and his unfailing generosity and good humour will be surely missed.

To his wife, Sylvie, and to his family, may I convey on behalf of all members and staff of the House of Commons my very deepest sympathy.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

NATIONAL UNITY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The first duty of the Prime Minister is to promote the unity of Canada for the benefit of all Canadians. It is also my duty, and it should be the duty of all members of this Parliament.

How is the unity of Canada being promoted by asking Parliament to remain in the dark until September about the constitutional proposals of this government?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, no one is asking Parliament to remain in the dark. The House just came back 48 hours ago. The throne speech debate has yet to conclude. The leader of the NDP and I will be speaking this afternoon and there will be a vote tonight followed by other involvement.

There has been a recommendation from both sides of the House to proceed with care and to ensure to the extent humanly possible that the constitutional initiative is a success. The House normally would rise on June 21, return in early September, and that appears to the government, and indeed to many members of the House, to be an appropriate time to begin the formal sittings of a joint parliamentary committee.

That in no way precludes that committee from spending a very productive summer of work in anticipation of the beginning of its public hearings.

Therefore I want to assure my hon. friend that while we want to make haste, we want to make haste in a prudent way to ensure the success of this constitutional initiative.

• (1420)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is again directed to the Prime Minister.

It is easy to start negotiations on the Constitution but very difficult to get positive results. We on this side of the House believe that there are a number of important deadlines that must be met and that time is of the essence.

Why doesn't the Prime Minister want to appoint this committee of the House of Commons and the Senate immediately, so that it can start listening to representations by Canadians, based on the specific document which will be submitted to them? They have had these papers for ages. The political will must be there to start immediately, so that by next spring, we will have a solution and will be able to meet any deadlines Quebec might have and avoid backing the country against the wall again, which would be disastrous for the future of this country.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I find it hard to understand why my hon. friend is in such a hurry.

After Meech last summer, all members of this House asked for more intense consultations with the public. That is why we set up the Citizens Forum and the Beaudoin–Edwards Committee.

These committees will not report until July 1. This means that if we want to be consistent, we should wait until the reports on these massive consultations have been tabled before proceeding with a government initiative.

If the government were to proceed otherwise, I imagine the Leader of the Opposition would accuse me, and rightly so, of proceeding unilaterally, without waiting for the committee reports. We want to wait until the committees are ready, we will analyse their recommen-

dations, and we will be ready to proceed, in the national interest, on September 1.

[*English*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we have been asking since December that we proceed quickly in this matter. We asked that the committee not be limited only to the amending formula but that it hear the views of Canadians on a broader basis. The Prime Minister said no.

It is, in my view, extremely important to give all Canadians the opportunity to participate in a referendum where the Canadian people will be able to say "yes" to each other, and in particular to say "yes" to Quebec. Will the Prime Minister give a guarantee to this House, as he indicated to the press this morning, that he is contemplating having a referendum? Why does he not say right away that there will be a referendum on reconciliation in 1992, before the Quebec deadline?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend should do me the courtesy, if he is going to quote me, of quoting me accurately. In respect of a referendum this morning the transcript reveals the following: "Mulroney: I can see a referendum being helpful in a number of ways. I can see a referendum being most unhelpful if it were to divide the country and if we thought that were to be the case, we wouldn't use it".

* * *

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Prime Minister. Yesterday the ministers of external affairs and employment and immigration in their report admitted that a memorandum had been sent by senior officials of the Department of External Affairs to the minister's office, but that no appropriate action was taken based upon that memorandum. Those ministers then took the unprecedented step of publicly identifying and blaming a senior official for that serious mistake.

I want to ask the Prime Minister: What has happened to the long-established principle of ministerial responsibility, which is the very cornerstone of our parliamentary system? I want to ask the Prime Minister if he is prepared to release all the documents, and especially the memorandum sent to the minister, so that Canadians can know exactly what advice was tendered? I want to ask the Prime Minister if he will now show some leadership and ask the responsible ministers in this case to step aside until a proper inquiry can be had into this very serious issue?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would point out first of all that what transpired yesterday was exactly what the Minister of Employment and Immigration had said last week would be forthcoming, which was a report on what had happened.

In terms of revealing the names of officials who may have been involved in this, I would point out that it has been past practice very often to use the titles of officials who have been involved in any particular case. In this case, there were only two. From the titles that were used, that can only be one person.

Let me also say that in terms of ministerial responsibility, there is a parallel with the contempt of court case against the then Secretary of State for External Affairs and the then Minister of Employment and Immigration concerning ministerial knowledge when they did not have the information at their disposal. The court said they did not have a legal responsibility.

The cases are not totally parallel, but they are sufficiently similar, I believe, to give us a precedent.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, the issue before the House is not a question of civil liability in a court, it is the question of the accountability of ministers for their actions, their officers and their departments. That is the issue.

I want to ask the Prime Minister specifically, because this is in his own office. It is quite clear. It was admitted in the report yesterday that Mr. Paul Tellier, who is the chief public servant and who reports directly to the Prime Minister, knew about the entry of Mr. Al-Mashat several weeks before he was give final approval.

I want to ask the Prime Minister whether he was informed by Mr. Tellier. If he was not informed, why was Mr. Tellier's judgment not called into question? If the Prime Minister was informed, what did he do about it?

I want to also ask why the Secretary of State for External Affairs was not informed by memorandum when, in fact, he was clearly in Ottawa, not travelling in the Middle East, as has been reported.

In other words, the government's whole case is full of holes, omissions and a bucket full of whitewash. Surely the Prime Minister understands that if we are going to have the credibility of government at stake, he has to have a public inquiry into this case. It stinks like a sewer hole.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend could have perhaps saved himself some degree of anxiety by reading the very complete report that was submitted yesterday.

An hon. member: He read it.

Mr. Mulroney: Well, he clearly did not. In regard to the specific question that he asked, indeed, Paul Tellier, on March 11, was informed that the Department of Immigration did not support the issuance of a minister's permit, nor any accelerated processing of Mr. Al-Mashat's application. The Clerk of the Privy Council was informed and concurred with that judgment. The Privy Council advised the Department of External Affairs that it was opposed to the issuance of this visa. Notwithstanding the firm opposition of Mr. Tellier, Mr. Al-Mashat was admitted on March 30, and we were advised on April 30. These are precisely the points that were brought forward by the ministers yesterday.

There were administrative errors made in the system for which apologies have been conveyed and accepted. It was an administrative error, no more and no less. There is no attempt to whitewash or to denigrate anyone. It was a simple administrative error that was made, acknowledged by the public servants involved and accepted by the responsible ministers.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

In the throne speech on Monday, the government stated that the economy was inextricably linked to national unity. In that throne speech, there is talk about employment and the need for a low interest rate.

In the throne speech, Canadians were promised 2.5 million new jobs by the year 2000, by the government's own projections, taking into account the growth in the labour force. This will mean that the unemployment rate in the year 2000 will still be around 10 per cent.

Is this government saying that it accepts a 10 per cent rate of unemployment and that such a rate, which now means 1.5 million unemployed, is necessary in the Conservatives' view of what constitutes competitiveness?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the answer to that of course is no. What we are seeking to do is to reduce the number of unemployed. From 1984 until the recession hit, 1.6 million new jobs were created in Canada and Canada led the industrialized world in the creation of durable full-time jobs.

We want to replicate that in the next number of years. The process that we propose to follow is one of lower interest rates and greater investment in a non-inflationary climate. It is the only way that durable jobs can be created.

We do not accept the idea of a 10 per cent unemployment rate. In point of fact, when we formed the government in 1984, the unemployment rate in Canada was 11.7 per cent. We reduced it to 7.3 per cent, and we hope to do better in the upcoming cycle.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, despite what the Prime Minister says, the projections in their own throne speech indicated that there will still be a 10 per cent unemployment rate in the year 2000. This means more food banks, more people on welfare, and it will not mean Canadians working.

Today, Statistics Canada reports that same-day trips to the United States by Canadians are up 25 per cent. It is clear that Canadian consumers and Canadian jobs are heading south of the border. The trucking industry has reached a desperate situation. We need only go outside this House to hear what truckers are saying about their situation and the effects of this government's policies on their livelihood.

Ask Canadians across this country, and they will tell you that this government's economic policies are not working. They did not want to hear more of the same in the throne speech.

Will the Prime Minister stop pursuing policies which are clearly making Canada uncompetitive and start putting in policies that will get Canadian families back to work?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we have, of course, a great deal of sympathy for all people in Canada who are confronted with rising costs that make the sale of goods and services and products of various kinds less competitive.

My hon. friend points to the fact trips to the United States border are up dramatically. That probably has been up dramatically since the Ontario budget because with the budget in Ontario gasoline is 14.3 cents a litre, whereas in Michigan and Ohio it is 4.6 cents and 3.1 cents.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The government is well aware that it is this government's policies of deregulation and the trade deal that have directly led to the state of the truckers and of the loss of jobs.

[*Translation*]

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne the government said that economic recovery will depend on whether interest rates go down. However, according to a report published in February, at the height of the recession, the Governor of the Bank of Canada intervened directly to prevent a drop in interest rates. Could the new Minister of Finance give the House the assurance today that he personally had a meeting with the Governor of the Bank of Canada to advise him that the government's policy is to continue to lower interest rates?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, interest rates have come down by five percentage points since the high of last year, and we hope that trend will continue. That trend will continue, providing we attack the underlying causes of inflation, the inflationary pressures, the inflationary expectations and as long as we can keep our fiscal house in order.

I can assure the hon. member that her concurrence with the Government of Ontario in chalking up a huge deficit with complete and total disregard for fiscal responsibility is not the course of action that this government wants to take. I must suggest to her that it is not the proper course for any province or any government to take in these circumstances.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. If the Al-Mashat fiasco is nothing but an administrative error, there should be no fear of an open inquiry. In the report to the immigration and external affairs ministers issued yesterday by the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs concerning this case, we are told that the investigators interviewed "a number of the officials who had been directly involved".

My question is a simple one: Who were these officials? Which officials were not interviewed? Why were they not interviewed? Did the Clerk of the Privy Council tell the Prime Minister?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): I have already indicated to my hon. friend that the Clerk of the Privy Council was advised of the possibility and he indicated his disapproval with the issuance of a visa to that individual. He conveyed that directly to the department.

Notwithstanding the firm disapproval of the Government of Canada, the visa was issued. When he arrived in Canada with the visa that ought not to have been issued, the Clerk of the Privy Council, again, and I were subsequently advised. In other words, the Clerk—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Mulroney: Indeed. I was advised a month after he got here. We should have been advised by the public servants in advance because Mr. Tellier, speaking for the Privy Council Office, said "do not admit him". Notwithstanding that, he was admitted. That was in violation of the procedures of the Government of Canada.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, on March 11 the director general of case management in employment and Immigration informed external affairs and the Privy Council—and we have heard this—that Mr. Al-Mashat's application should not be fast-tracked.

If he was so concerned that he called the Privy Council Office, why did he not inform his own minister, why did not those briefed immediately brief the external affairs minister, and why did Mr. Tellier not tell the Prime Minister immediately?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is missing a very key point. Of all the questions that are being asked around here on this issue, the key point is this: ministers were not informed. That was the error in judgment, not that Mr. Al-Mashat was admitted to the country, not that Mr. Al-Mashat was admitted on a fast-track. The key point was that ministers were not informed. That is the problem with this case. That is why we are saying there were errors in judgment, and that is what the report that we called for and was made public showed.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, we know that in late February the security intelligence service conducted an investigation to determine whether "Mr. Al-Mashat was a valuable source of intelligence". Mr. Reid Morden, the director of the security intelligence service, was aware of it. Will the government not admit that the director of the security intelligence service, Mr. Reid Morden, informed the former Solicitor General prior to Mr. Al-Mashat arriving in Canada?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, there is a committee which meets to discuss matters such as my hon. friend refers to. The membership of the committee changes from time to time. Whoever is familiar with that particular file sits on the committee. All the proper procedures were taken.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, this so-called comprehensive report that the government issued yesterday was strangely silent when it came to the role of the former Solicitor General and the role of the director of the security intelligence service. I put the question to the present Solicitor General: Exactly what was the role of Mr. Reid Morden, the director of the security intelligence service, and when did he inform the former Solicitor General?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the role of the director of the security intelligence service and CSIS in these matters is to examine the situation and determine whether or not the individual involved is of any use to Canada in terms of intelligence matters.

• (1440)

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I want to come back to the Solicitor General.

In view of the concern of Canadians about the extent to which procedures were violated, and the extent to which a gentleman whose record is documented in a report which I received this morning written by him which includes, among other things, the statement that members of Amnesty International are bigots who make a noise and: "I would like to see one victim of chemical weapons inside Iraq".

In view of that kind of documented background, I want to ask the Solicitor General once again if he will clarify at what point was his predecessor as Solicitor General informed by CSIS that Al-Mashat was seeking to enter Canada? Was that before the visa was issued or afterwards? When was it?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, it is my information that the previous Solicitor General was informed after Mr. Al-Mashat entered Canada.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, for the Prime Minister.

I want to ask the Prime Minister first of all, why is it that the director of CSIS did not inform the Solicitor General about this very serious matter?

Second, if the Prime Minister is not concerned that the former Minister of Employment and Immigration, who found out about this matter on April 16, did not do any follow-up inquiry whatsoever other than issuing what she called a sharp note after being scraped off the ceiling, and did not even bother telling the next minister of immigration that this was a problem, does the Prime Minister not recognize that Canadians do not accept this explanation? They do not accept civil servants being blamed, and they do not accept this cover-up of ministerial responsibility.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would look at the report which he has in hand, he will first of all see the dates on which CSIS made a routine report to officials and thought that was the end of it.

If the hon. member is suggesting that a sharp note to a department is not sufficient, let me just point out to the hon. member that also in this report it indicates that there was follow-up.

My department and the people who work for me have always recognized that if I send a note, I expect some follow-up. There was in this case.

* * *

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The trucking industry in our country is taking a brutal beating since the government introduced deregulation, thereby putting our Canadian truckers on an unequal and impossible footing in comparison to their American counterparts.

Since the Prime Minister has spoken so proudly in the past of having been a truck driver himself, when will the government stop hiding behind the studies? Will the Prime Minister request the Minister of Transport to at least have the decency of meeting with truckers. Together we can hammer out real and immediate solutions so that Canadian truckers can once again begin to earn a living, just like the Prime Minister did a few years ago?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the hon. member that it is precisely to take away from the discussion the type of things he says are not exact.

For instance, he says that the effects of the government deregulation has had a very negative impact on some aspects of the trucking industry. He forgets to say that the federal fuel excise tax in Canada is one-third less than in the U.S.

He also forgets to mention that the removal of the manufacturers' sales tax has reduced the tax on fuel by 2.5 cents per litre. He also forgets to mention that the recent decision of the Ontario government to increase the tax on fuels by 2 cents a litre immediately and another 2 cents in January is also increasing the problem of the trucking industry.

We did not decide to begin the studies and analyses just for the fun of it. It was understood by all stakeholders in the trucking industry; the provinces, the Canadian Trucking Association, the unionized truckers, the Coalition of Independent Owner-Operators and federal departments, that we would form a task force to examine all aspects of the trucking industry in Canada. That task force decided to have seven studies. They are not frivolous studies. Some of the studies are on the effect of taxation on Canada-U.S. competitiveness, assessment of Canada-U.S. trucking cabotage, comparison of Canada and U.S. trucking costs in transborder—

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. minister can find another way to provide that information. The hon. member for York West.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the same minister. It has become painfully obvious that this minister does not understand, or appreciate, the absolute terrible state facing Canadian truckers and their families across the country.

How can the minister and this government expect the trucking industry to survive when Canadian truckers in increasing numbers have lost their rigs, their earnings, their profits, their homes and their dignity to the unfettered American competition? Does he not think it is time that he came out from behind these studies and studied the problems facing real Canadians, that he sit down and get some real solutions so that together our industry may have a chance of not only competing but of surviving?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, contrary to the customary way of doing things by members on the other side, we believe in the notion that before we can arrive at solutions we must identify the real problems. This is what all the stakeholders have decided to do, not just the government itself. They have agreed that before we can discuss things intelligently, we must have the facts.

We have met with the Coalition of Independent Owner-Operators group that represents 7,000 members. I have met with representatives of the Canadian Trucking Association. I have been open to discussions with all authorized representatives of the trucking industry. We sympathize very much with the truckers. We are trying to find a complete and permanent solution rather than to

try to have temporary solutions, which is the favourite subject of members on the other side.

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the same minister. Already in my riding of Haldimand—Norfolk three trucking firms have collapsed under the weight of this government's policies.

The minister fails to realize that bankers will not wait until he finishes wall-papering his office with studies. Truckers are losing their jobs. They are losing their trucks and they are losing their homes. It is completely in the power of this House to do something about it. What is the minister waiting for?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I believe that the member was not listening when I gave the previous answer. This matter was the subject of very serious discussions among all the parties involved last June. At that time we established a process of having seven studies that will establish a level playing field. These studies are in preparation and will be given to the task force shortly. At that time we will know exactly what are the complete problems, the hypothetical solutions and we will take that report very seriously.

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the minister. The minister said that no action would be taken by the government until all the studies were complete. I have a letter from the former Minister of Transport and it says in it: "I have no intention however of waiting until all the studies are completed to take action".

• (1450)

Will the minister now honour the words of his predecessor and take action today to help these Canadian truckers?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that one of the main actions we took to improve the lot of the trucking industry was to remove the manufacturers' sales tax of 13.5 per cent. But we could only do it after a year and a half of bickering by the Liberal Party and their friends in the Senate.

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. An environmental disaster has been discovered in Mercier, Quebec. It is clear that Laidlaw-Tricil broke the law. It is clear that this company is an environmental criminal and that the contamination at the Mercier site is only the tip of the iceberg. Will the minister apply the sanctions provided under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act? Will the government act now?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, like the hon. member, I was informed that containers had been discovered on a site, a lot in Mercier. The hon. member is probably aware that a memorandum of understanding between the federal and provincial governments provides for clean-ups of unsupervised sites. Now it seems that this particular site, as the hon. member implied in his question, belongs to a company known as Laidlaw which has started clean-up procedures. I may remind the hon. member that under Quebec law, the company may be charged. Meanwhile, we will let the investigation proceed and testing continue, and subsequently, Mr. Speaker, we will take appropriate action, if necessary.

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, Quebec is sick and tired of being exploited by environmental criminals who unlawfully use the provinces as a dump for dangerous products. My question is directed to the Solicitor General. We have already seen Quebec used as a dump for toxic and dangerous products. We saw it in Saint-Jean, we saw it in Saint-Basile and we see it again today in Mercier. Is the minister prepared to order the RCMP to conduct an investigation of course, with the co-operation of the Sûreté du Québec to examine the whole issue of transportation inside and outside Quebec under the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I can assure you and the members of this House that we share the concern of opposition members and the hon. member who just spoke about the transportation of toxic wastes of any kind. However, I may remind the hon. member that it is also important to avoid making general and sometimes unfounded allega-

tions, and that the truth and the facts must be respected. Actually, since I became a member of this government, I have been impressed by the fact that there has been very little political partisanship on environmental issues. There is a tendency to avoid such tactics.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that as far as I know, governments have never taken lightly situations involving the transportation of toxic waste, and that when violations were discovered, they were thoroughly investigated. That is what is happening today in the case of the Mercier site, which was mentioned yesterday on the news and in the media. My department intends monitor the situation very closely, as has always has been its policy in the past, and we will also continue to monitor any similar allegations.

* * *

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, the minister of immigration knew about the Al-Mashat matter on April 12; indeed, she reprimanded her department on April 16, but her colleague, the minister of external affairs says he did not know until May 7.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Could he tell us today why the minister of immigration did not tell of this matter to the minister of external affairs?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the then minister of immigration found out on April 16. The memo was dated April 12 and reached the then minister on April 16. A note was sent back to the department saying that this was not to happen again and looking for follow up. At that point there was no particular reason to inform another minister because there was no way of knowing where the error had taken place.

But what is clearly important is that action was called for on that date, but the report was not made before the transfer of responsibilities to another minister.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I know it is astounding to the Canadian people that there was no reason to tell the then minister of external affairs about an ambassador from a country with whom we had been at war a scant two weeks before. More important, the minister learned, as she says now, of the Al-Mashat matter on April 16 and allegedly hit the roof. But no investigation began into this matter until May 8, the day after the press broke the story. Inquiring minds would like to know what was the hold up.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, inquiring minds normally take advantage of the material that is put in front of them. As the hon. member will see in the report, there was follow up within the Department of Immigration and that there is, indeed, a note in the Case Management Branch on May 1.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The government has attempted to convince parliamentarians and, through Parliament, Canadians that no minister had any idea whatsoever about the arrival in Canada and request for asylum by Mr. Al-Mashat. That is what the government has claimed.

The government made clear in its report published very recently on this whole affair that a memorandum was sent to the office of the former Secretary of State for External Affairs on March 8. This memorandum requested that the minister be informed of the request by Al-Mashat for residency in Canada.

The minister said in her public statement yesterday: "The one memorandum sent to the minister's office via the senior departmental assistant prior to the arrival did not clearly seek ministerial view or concurrence". We are being told that because the memo was less than crystal clear the ministers are absolved.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister table that memo and make it public? Let Parliament judge whether or not ministers were informed of this matter.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as usual we are getting very mixed signals from people in the opposition. On the one hand they say that names should not have been

released and now they are asking for more names. I do not understand what they want. They do not like the names we released, they want other names. Maybe that is what the difficulty is.

The point is that what is laid out in here was a report to deputy ministers by two neutral people within the Public Service who entered into this issue very carefully. My successor, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, had said a report would be made. A report was made. It is as complete as it can be and it tells people what they need to know.

The critical point which the hon. member continues to miss is that ministers were not told. That was the error, that was what was wrong and that is why ministers themselves were not pleased.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, what we are looking for is not names, we are looking for the truth.

The fact of the matter is that the senior political staff in the office of the minister of external affairs were informed. A memo was sent. The senior public servant, who reports directly to the Prime Minister, Mr. Tellier, was informed. It is incredible that when the ambassador to a country with whom we were at war seeks asylum in Canada, no minister claims to know about it. We simply do not believe it. Canadians do not believe it. Make the memo public and let us judge for ourselves. Put an end to this whitewash and this hanging of innocent public servants.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think the report speaks for itself. The report goes into some considerable detail in a very precise form as to what happened during the process of this incident.

• (1500)

I may say as well that in a different case where the two ministers did know in advance that someone was seeking to come to Canada, that was turned down. Therefore, that should have set the stage for any future people who chose to come to Canada under similar circumstances. I do not know what else ministers can be expected to do.

[*Translation*]

RAIL PASSENGER SERVICE

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport.

Between January 1, 1989 and February 10, 1990, 81 out of the 174 routes serving Abitibi were eliminated, 69 of them for lack of available crews or trains.

My question is this: Can the minister tell us today why the president and the management of VIA Rail have deliberately cut passenger service in Abitibi on several occasions to the detriment of both patrons and employees of VIA Rail?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I want to praise again the hon. member for Abitibi for his unrelenting concern for his area and all that affects it.

I also want to tell him, as he probably knows already, that VIA Rail is a Crown corporation with its own administrative structure. I can confirm, however, that the Abitibi line is under examination by VIA Rail because of the infrastructure problems it has experienced in recent months. We are still monitoring the situation through, as I said, the administrative structure of the corporation.

* * *

[*English*]

POINT OF ORDER

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, I am honestly not quite sure whether this is a point of order or a question of privilege.

I was the seventh member on this side to make a statement today. Out of 12 statements, only five were for this party. I was listed to be the second person from this side to ask a question. Only one question got on. As a backbencher, I think we deserve better than that in terms of being able to ask questions and make statements.

Mr. Speaker: I accept the hon. member's intervention. I know that all hon. members would want me to do the very best I can to make sure that the count is fair on both sides of the House.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ORDER PAPER QUESTION

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a point of personal privilege

arising from a response to a question on the Order Paper, pursuant to Standing Order 48(2). I provided notice to the Chair on April 15 of this year.

This is the earliest possible opportunity for me to raise this point of personal privilege.

On April 11 last, I placed a question on the Order Paper for the Minister of State for Multiculturalism and Citizenship. The question dealt with the involvement of a Dr. Ralph Agard and the establishment of a race relations network. This question was subdivided into eight questions.

I believe that my personal privilege as a member of this House was violated because of a response provided by the minister. My question asked whether Dr. Agard had received any contracts, either directly or indirectly, since April 1, 1985, other than for a feasibility study for the network. The minister's response was "No."

It has been brought to my attention that this response was incorrect and that the minister was probably aware of this fact at the time he answered my questions.

On June 9, 1989, the minister announced three race relations initiatives. The second, according to the press release from the minister's office, was the commissioning of International Briefing Associates to develop a national action plan to propose specific concrete measures that would lead to improved police–minority relations.

I provided the Chair with a copy of this press release. I have also provided a copy of a discussion paper summarizing the consultations carried out by this organization. It is clear from this document that Dr. Agard benefited directly from a contract with the Ministry of State for Multiculturalism and Citizenship. This is in direct contradiction to the response of the question that I placed on the Order Paper.

How am I to perform my duties as a member of this Parliament if the responses ministers of the Crown provide to questions are inaccurate? Had the minister taken the time since he provided the response to correct this error, I would not have risen on this point of privilege. He has not done so.

Mr. Speaker, I urge you to assist me in finding a means to remedy this situation.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I think it is fairly obvious to the House and to the Chair that this is not a case of privilege. As the Chair is well aware, there is never a case of privilege when there is a matter of dispute over an answer.

The Speaker is also aware that to any question raised in the House or put on the Order Paper I could rise on behalf of the minister in my capacity as Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader and say: "Yes, no, maybe". The truth is that it is an answer and it is not, therefore, a subject of privilege here in this House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you rule quickly on this one so that we can get on with the business before us.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has raised an issue which is not an unusual kind of issue to raise. The hon. member is not satisfied with the response given. The difficulty that is always with the Chair in these cases is that there are often very great differences of interpretation on answers that are given. In this case, I think the hon. parliamentary secretary is correct. It is not a question of privilege, it is a question of disagreement over certain facts and answers that were given. The hon. member may, perhaps, have another means to pursue the matter.

I thank the hon. member for giving me notice and complete detail of her question of privilege.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PRIVACY

TABLING OF REPORT *CROSSING THE BORDERS OF PRIVACY*

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I am pleased to table today the study *Crossing the Borders of Privacy, Vie privée sans frontières.*

The study was undertaken in response to a recommendation of the parliamentary committee which reviewed the federal access to information and privacy legislation.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

VISITORS TO GALLERY

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek your guidance.

I had guests today, 15 people from the Labour College of Canada and three from the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, who were to attend in the opposition gallery and they were turned away, being told that room was being made for 100 guests of the Prime Minister.

I am not sure what to do with this or where to go to seek advice or with whom I should raise the question.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member could come and see me at her very earliest convenience.

* * *

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Section 36(8) of the Standing Orders, I have the honour to table in both official languages the government response to 18 petitions.

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

* * *

CANADA REFERENDUM AND PLEBISCITE ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Etobicoke–Lakeshore) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–201, an act respecting referenda and plebiscites in Canada on questions of public importance.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased at this time to present to the House for first reading the Canada Referendum and Plebiscite Act. This is the enabling legislation under which plebiscites or referendums could take place in Canada at the national level. It is the same Private Members' Bill in substantial form that I have had in the House since July 1988. While there is much discussion from all sides on whether and when there should be referenda, there is at the moment no federal enabling legislation for that purpose and that is the intent of this Private Member's Bill.

• (1510)

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

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr.Speaker, I would like to present a bill, seconded by the hon. member for Kamloops, entitled an act respecting a compensation fund for members of the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member for Mackenzie, but I have just been informed that the Table does not have a copy of the hon. member's bill. We cannot proceed without that. I wonder if the hon. member would like to discuss the matter with the Table and perhaps we could take it up tomorrow.

Mr. Althouse: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, my staff has them.

* * *

PETITIONS

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition on behalf of a number of residents of British Columbia who point out that the government has cut back millions of dollars to the RCMP and as a result there has been an erosion of service and of effectiveness in terms of police protection. Also, there have been cuts in training, in patrols, and in the ability of the police to enforce laws. Therefore, they are asking the government to consider restoring proper funding to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to enable the force to fulfil its mandate and role as the only visible police force for communities across British Columbia and to remain a viable symbol of Canadian unity.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by a large number of citizens from my constituency of Notre–Dame–de–Grâce condemning the government for critically cutting the budget of CBC and requesting the Parliament of Canada to strengthen the CBC to serve as a primary instrument

of Canadian cultural sovereignty, providing high quality service to all Canadians.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present a petition signed by over 300 petitioners, stating that whereas thousands of eastern Europeans did enter Canada legally in good faith and did subsequently apply for permanent residence in Canada pursuant to the self-exile program, and whereas these refugee claimants who, although successfully established in Canada, are being refused landing at pre-inquiry humanitarian and compassionate reviews, they are calling upon this Parliament to request the Minister of Employment and Immigration and the Secretary of State for External Affairs to speed up the processing of any outstanding self-exile applications, to allow self-exiled applicants in Canada to be allowed to work and/or be allowed to go to school, and accept all persons registered in the refugee backlog who are established in Canada for landed immigrant status at their pre-inquiry humanitarian and compassionate reviews. These are hundreds of petitioners already added to the thousands that have been tabled prior to today.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege and pleasure to rise under Standing Order 36 to present a petition from 225 of my constituents of the Bonavista Peninsula, 15 other communities including King's Cove, Plate Cove, Southern Bay, Sweet Bay and indeed from the other extremity of my riding in Lumsden and Bonavista North. These people are very concerned about the deep and drastic cuts that have been made to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation because they feel that one of the things CBC does for the Atlantic region and particularly for Newfoundland is to maintain and nurture our cultural integrity. They are particularly concerned about the demise or coming demise of the program *Land and Sea*.

They call upon Parliament to ensure that CBC programming remains intact, and in particular, that local programming like *Land and Sea* be maintained and indeed restored.

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my privilege to present to this House on behalf of many Canadians a petition asking that a great woman, Marie Sklodowska Curie, be honoured for her scientific contributions to humanity. In fact, she must be honoured.

We believe that the gift of the discovery of radium to heal the sick of the world deserves to be recognized by Canada.

The petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to honour Marie Sklodowska Curie by issuing a commemorative stamp on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of her birth, November 7, 1992.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased today, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present a petition signed by Canadians from Montreal, Toronto, and Scarborough dealing with the subject of a very famous woman who has contributed greatly to the health of the world, Marie Sklodowska Curie.

The petitioners ask a very simple thing, that Canada honour her by issuing a commemorative stamp on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of her birth on November 7, 1992. I certainly think it is a laudable goal.

THE SENATE

Mr. René Soetens (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my privilege to present a petition signed by many of my constituents, as well as those who live in neighbouring constituencies, dealing with the Senate.

The petitioners reflect in this petition their concern about the Senate's contribution to the democratic debates in this country. It says: Therefore, that the Senate now performs no useful function, is completely partisan and has proven after many efforts to be impossible to reform.

Wherefore, the undersigned, your petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to abolish the Senate outright.

I submit this petition on the petitioners' behalf.

CANADIAN FLAG

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition to the House today signed by numerous residents of my riding of Kingston and the Islands.

These petitioners are concerned about the desecration and destruction of the Canadian flag, which happened recently in the riding of Kingston and the Islands.

These petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to defend the symbol of our country and pass a law making it an offence to destroy or desecrate the flag of Canada.

CIVIL RIGHTS OF CROATIANS

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk—Red River): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, on behalf of a number of my constituents I would like to present a petition asking Parliament to support the civil rights of the Croatians in the country of Yugoslavia.

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to add my voice to the petition just presented supporting free choice for the people in that country potentially on the brink of a civil war.

My petition today deals with the great woman who has already been referred to, Marie Sklodowska, commonly known as Madam Curie. She not only should be honoured for her scientific contributions to humanity, but because she has also served as a tremendous role model to young women around the world.

I believe, along with a number of my colleagues, that the Canadian government could commemorate this on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of her birth on November 7, 1992 by launching a commemorative stamp. This would certainly speak volumes about the place of womankind in science.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions to present from my riding in addition to the many petitions that have already been presented on this issue.

The petitioners again call upon the government to reject its current proposals to increase costs to provincial and municipal governments for maintaining RCMP services. The petitioners also ask that the government continue the 70–30 per cent cost sharing ratio between the provinces and the federal government for RCMP services to allow our national police force to remain visible across the country as a national body.

* * *

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in House of Commons): I would suggest that all questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Shall the questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*English*]

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

CANADIAN TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Mr. Speaker: I am in receipt of a notice of motion under Standing Order 52 from the hon. member for York West.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 52, I ask leave to move the adjournment of the House to discuss an urgent and immediate matter, namely the crisis currently being faced by the Canadian trucking industry.

I served the appropriate application to His Honour this morning. It is not my intention to adjourn immediately, but simply request that after the 8 p.m. vote this evening the House of Commons engage in an emergency debate to try to resolve together some of the problems facing the Canadian trucking industry.

I put before His Honour simply a few quick facts. The fact of the matter is that there were some 656 trucking companies in Canada that went bankrupt.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member on an important matter, but the hon. member knows that in making the application one should not slip into debate. However, that takes nothing away from the importance of the application.

I wish to respond to the hon. member. First of all, I want to thank him for giving me notice and bringing this to my attention.

I should say to the House and to those who are listening and watching that I have watched and listened with great interest debate about this matter, both yesterday and today. It is clearly a matter of very great concern, as has been evidenced by both sides of the House, by the people who are involved in it and, no doubt, by Canadians in general.

However, at least at this time I am not inclined to think that it requires an emergency debate tonight. I will be listening carefully to what transpires in the House. I thank the hon. member.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from Tuesday, May 14, consideration of the motion of Mr. Pronovost for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his Speech at the opening of the session; and on the amendment thereto of Mr. Chrétien (p. 24), and on the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Langdon (p. 33).

Mr. Speaker: I would like to advise the House and the hon. member for Halifax that the hon. member has three minutes of debate left to her. I will call her in just a moment. That will be followed by ten minutes for questions and comments.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, when I interrupted my remarks yesterday I was presenting some of my views, the views of a number of my constituents and the views of women across this country on the crucial matter of violence against women and its escalation in Canada today.

There are questions the women of Canada are asking, which have arisen due to the Speech from the Throne. They would like to hear from, and are hoping they will hear very soon, the right hon. Prime Minister. We heard in the Speech from the Throne that a blue ribbon panel of Canadian men and women will be appointed to deal with the question of violence against women. This, as I said, raises a number of concerns.

As I said yesterday, I and several other members of this House have been, since November, members of a subcommittee on the status of women dealing with the question of violence against women. We have heard many eloquent witnesses over the past several months and have more witnesses scheduled to appear in the next few months.

Many of us, many women's groups across this country—such as the YWCA of Canada, the National Action Committee, the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, and a number of others—have called for a royal commission on violence against women.

The major reasons we have called for this royal commission is that, first of all, the research into violence against women and its causes still tends to be, in this country and in other countries of the west, anecdotal as opposed to empirical. We also believe that a royal commission, properly constituted, would shine the light of publicity and provide this frightening and rapidly growing problem the kind of notice and the kind of credibility it requires in all corners of this country. The sad fact is that too many people in Canada still believe that incidents of violence against women do not happen to people in the so–called mainstream, that they happen to some mythical underclass who really are the architects of their own destruction.

The women of Canada are concerned and many supportive men in Canada are concerned that this issue not be shuffled off. We want to know what a blue ribbon panel is. More than that, we want to have a royal commission. We want to seek and find and publish the answers as to what the root causes are to the questions of violence against women.

We know, for example, that alcohol plays a part. We know that the cycle of violence from childhood plays a part. We know that economic problems play a part. However, none of these things is necessarily common to every incident. What we need is a royal commission rooted in the experience of women and some men who work in the front lines, in transition houses, in shelters, and in women's centres across this country. We need to hear from police officers, we need to hear from judges, and we need to hear most especially from the women who deal in the transition houses on a daily basis with the battered and injured women who are the victims every

day and every night in Canada of an horrendous wave of violence.

I call upon the Prime Minister and the government to let us know what their plans are. I beg them in the name of the women of Canada, indeed in the name of all of those who believe in a truly just nation, to deal with this problem as soon as possible and to deal with it in the way that the women of Canada and those experts in the field have asked.

I call upon the Prime Minister to appoint a royal commission into violence against women.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Halifax has certainly been a leading proponent on the subject of women's issues in Canada. As our caucus critic in that area, she has assumed a considerable responsibility and has had many dealings with women's groups across the country.

In the course of her work with those groups, I would like to ask her if she has encountered any opposition to the idea of the creation of a royal commission to look into the question of violence against women.

I may say, as a passing comment, that I have received widespread support for that idea from women's groups in my own riding that have met with me. I wonder also if she could tell us how she sees the work of a royal commission tying in with the review of current government expenditures in this area, namely, in its support for women's groups and in its campaign against violence to women which the Minister of National Health and Welfare has discussed in this House on past occasions.

Ms. Clancy: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Kingston and the Islands for his question. Indeed, it is a very relevant question because some women's groups across the country have been leery of the concept of a royal commission.

A colleague of mine from Mount St. Vincent University, the Women's Studies Department, very recently engaged with me in an interview on CBC Radio where we discussed it. The fear of some women is that the matter could be shunted aside into a royal commission, that it could be put on the back burner, so to speak. If they send it to a royal commission, they can forget about it.

This is not the kind of royal commission that women's groups, we on the opposition side of the House, and we on the subcommittee on violence against women have been talking about. We are talking about a royal commission that is rooted in women's experience. That is the phrase that has been used by proponents of this commission over and over again. We need women who have spent time and gained expertise in this area, and we have them right across the country in every province, in every region: north, south, east, west. They are there and they are willing to serve.

Let me turn to the second part of my colleague's question on how this relates to government funding. We know there have been great difficulties. We know there have been cutbacks and freezes to women's groups and women's centres which are in the main the referrals and the havens for women who suffer violence. We know there was an initiative announced by the then minister of health, now the Minister of Communications, on second-stage housing. However, we still need action on they very front lines.

• (1530)

By the way, the amount of money the government has allotted for second-stage housing would build one small apartment building in each province in Canada. The problem is we need first-stage housing and first-stage assistance. For every 10 women who seek assistance, five are turned away.

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I was interested to hear my hon. colleague's comments. Obviously, everyone in this House agrees concerning the seriousness of the problem of violence against women. That is why I was so delighted the Prime Minister and this government have agreed to proceed with a national inquiry into this very issue that the hon. member and so many women across this country have raised. I know that I have received something over 25,000 names on petitions asking for us to take further action in this area.

I see the requirements to be an initiative which ensures that we co-ordinate and integrate, the knowledge that is available and we search for new, creative solutions. In that process we need something that is quite creative. We do not need the sort of old style perhaps royal commission where people sit in a hotel room and just hear briefs from groups. We need the capability of highly qualified, dedicated men and women

who would go out where women are, where women who have been victims, where women who have been involved in the front lines and really find out the causes and seek out, I hope, some solutions.

I would ask my hon. colleague, and other colleagues, to give me their advice on the terms of reference and the kinds of processes that I hope will come from a feminist perspective, that we can think about something different. We have the commitment to the inquiry. What is now important is to make sure that it works, that we have the best people involved and that we will in fact progress to finding real solutions to this societal problem.

Ms. Clancy: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. minister for her comment. Indeed I am aware of her interest and her commitment to this. I guess I will turn to Shakespeare: "For a rose by any other name". I am not wedded to the term "royal commission". I do not think any of us are.

What we are wedded to is the kind of creative solutions and creative investigation of which that the minister is speaking. It gives me heart to hear her make these comments.

What is tremendously important, and I believe the minister referred to this, is that we are really talking about the same thing. When the minister refers to going out to where the women are and seeking the answers, that is certainly part of it. I would also hope that this national panel would have as part and parcel of its mandate the academic, scholarly, empirical thrust as well. A great problem, and a problem that we have heard time and again from witnesses at our subcommittee is that we do not have the hard evidence that convinces, with the greatest of respect to the gentlemen in the Chamber, our male colleagues across the board about the seriousness of this issue and that we are going to need—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would like first to offer my congratulations to the mover and the seconder of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, the member for Saint-Maurice and the member for Regina—Wascana. I have absolutely no doubt that their words will persuade all members, unanimously, to adopt the Speech from the Throne.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, in the history of nations as in the life of individuals, there are times when it behooves us to consider the hopes we all have for the future on the basis of past history.

Canada, as a country, and all of us as Canadian citizens have reached one of those crucial moments when we have to draw from our historical background the resolve and confidence we need to face our destiny. In coming to terms with our identity, we must now decide what we want to become.

This session of Parliament is sure to go down in the history of the Canadian Federation.

[*English*]

We have great problems to confront, and it will help if we can maintain a sense of historical perspective. In the debates leading up to Confederation, the public finances of Canada were in bad shape; the economic outlook was uncertain as Britain declared for free trade as opposed to Imperial preference; Lower Canada felt, even then, that its language and culture would be swamped by Upper Canada; and later, Mr. Speaker, there were even separatists elected to the House of Commons—from Nova Scotia.

Some years later, Laurier spoke of his fears for Canada. He said:

> The Province of Manitoba is in open revolt—the Province of Nova Scotia demands its separation from Confederation—In fact—from East to West and from North to South—the prevailing feeling in Canada is one of unrest and uneasiness, of discontent and irritation.

Three years later, in 1890, Laurier had occasion to warn that:

> We have come to a period in a history of this young country when premature dissolution seems to be at hand.

But leaders persisted, and Canadians prevailed.

[*Translation*]

Like our predecessors, because of the trust placed in us by our fellow citizens, each of us has the historical responsibility to help strenghten the bonds that hold this great country together.

In this House, as members from all political parties, we represent the various regions of the country. We each have our political affiliation and our own views on how to solve the country's problems. However, if we are to succeed, we must never forget that what bonds us is stronger and more precious than any divisive factors that might break us up as a people.

Indeed, the leader of the opposition was right when he said recently that the future of Canada is more important than a political career. At the beginning of this new session, I want to reaffirm that both myself and my party fully intend to work with all members whatever their party who share the desire and the will to build a stronger Canada while, at the same time, respecting the legitimate aspirations of the regions and the provinces.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, now is the time to move beyond special interests. Now is the time to speak for the national interest. That is the role and the responsibility of the Parliament of Canada. There is no greater constituent assembly than the House of Commons and this House of Commons will assume national leadership.

Our constituents have sent us here to debate the issues and to resolve Canada's problems. The problems are serious. But so are the opportunities. Men and women of good will, of vision, who believe in Canada, who know of the magnificence of our own citizenship and our own heritage, will confront this challenge. We will prevail because Canada's interests, the national interests, demands it and Canadians will ensure that that turns out to be the case.

• (1540)

We all have partisan interests and instincts. That is the nature of politics. I occasionally, not often, indulge in partisan comments myself.

Some hon. members: No, never.

Mr. Mulroney: But on this issue, Mr. Speaker, we are all partisans, partisans of Canada.

I have said it before, and I tell this House now, what matters is not the next election, what matters is Canada; only Canada.

While leadership is required, there is also a time to listen. And we are now listening carefully to what Canadians from every corner of the country have to tell us, their representatives. After the consultation, precise and perhaps far-reaching initiatives will be announced. When that time comes, we will do so with the certainly that the Canadian population has had the opportunity to offer us their opinions and the chance to express their own hopes and dreams and those of their children for the future.

Make no mistake, the government and the Parliament of Canada, all parliamentarians, will play a leadership role in this debate, not simply as arbiters, but as proponents and strong defenders of the national interest.

I noted the comment of one of the members of the Citizens' Forum who said Canadians were ready for a new Charlottetown. Our challenge in the government and Parliament of Canada is to provide a focus for these voices which seek change. I am confident that Canada and Canadians will rise to that challenge.

We are called upon now to find a common vision and a common purpose. Perhaps it is not as complicated as some may believe. Irrespective of where we sit in this House, irrespective of our own personal backgrounds; if we bear in mind our common values of compromise, tolerance and respect for one another's language and religion, culture and region, we will come through this challenging time in the life of our country and Canada will be a better and a stronger nation for it.

We will need all of those values if we are to define a new vision of this country. We are challenged to bring forth not just a vision that Canadians will accept, but one they want.

[*Translation*]

Those who signed the British North America Act were not dreamers or sorcerers' apprentices. They had a realistic and pragmatic concept of the geographic, cultural, social and economic factors that would determine our future on this continent.

[*English*]

The Canadian economic union succeeded for a very simple reason. It went hand in hand with a Canadian political union. In our history books we focus on Confederation as an act of accommodation and indeed, it was

that. We tend to overlook that it was an act of separation as well, an act of separation from the 1840 Union and that too is an important consideration.

In choosing federalism over a unitary system, we put an end to the notion that the path to Canadian unity lay through submerging our diversity in a unitary state. Rather, we chose a system in which provinces are sovereign in their respective areas, but Canadians are associated on matters we have in common.

Our economic and political union, founded on generous ideals and on sound principles, has proved remarkably adaptable in the 20th century. It facilitated the entry and the development of six "new" provinces into the Canadian family. It has evolved in response to depression and war, the growth of the modern welfare state, massive immigration and the post-war baby boom. In the face of the stresses and strains of the past decades, Canada has developed innovative and sophisticated solutions to meet remarkable new challenges.

Today Canada is one of the world's leading economic powers. Our standard of living has consistently been among the highest in the entire industrialized world.

Our record of growth in job creation has been one of the best among the industrialized, G-7, and OECD nations in the last six years. The strength of our economy and our solidarity have allowed us to implement cultural and social programs that express our generosity, our values and, in many ways, are regarded with envy and admiration by most people around the world.

We are one of the great trading nations of the world and a strong voice for international co-operation. We have earned our place at the G-7 table. We have earned our place at G-7 and we are going to keep it.

[*Translation*]

Some self-styled economists say otherwise, but the Canadian economic union has served Quebec well since Confederation. In fact, it is rather ironic to hear these people urging Quebecers to leave a federation that, according to them, can only spell economic disaster, and then turn around and say there must be an economic union with Canada.

Mr. Speaker, although they refuse to consider being involved in developing Canada's financial policies, they do want a monetary union with Canada. The Allaire and Bélanger-Campeau reports acknowledged that Quebec would be well advised to maintain this union. However, these reports, some of which were not necessarily prepared by the Commission but by certain groups working for the Commission, are on the wrong track when they maintain that economic ties will not necessarily be affected by political separation.

Quebec is an integral part of the Canadian economic union. It is a vast market for other parts of the country and, in turn, enjoys extraordinary benefits as a result of its participation in the economies of the other provinces. In fact, six of our provinces, including Quebec, sell more manufactured goods to other provinces than to foreign countries. It would be unrealistic to think that an economic union could be run effectively in the next century without the central government playing a major role.

Mr. Speaker, why would Canadians jeopardize an economic union that has worked so well and that still has so much to offer? No one claims that Canada is perfect, but we are all aware of the benefits we have enjoyed in this country for almost 125 years. The most eloquent example of economic and political integration today comes to us from Europe, especially from France and England, the mother countries of Canada's two great linguistic families.

All over the European continent, we see nations that have waged bloody wars practically from generation to generation during the last millennium and who, thirty years ago, started to create an open and dynamic economic union of over 300 million people.

Mr. Speaker, how can anyone seriously consider strengthening an economic union that is so vital and necessary to the future of Quebecers and Canadians, while at the same time isolating the members of that union? Quebecers know Canada isn't perfect, Mr. Speaker, but as a Quebecer—and I said as much recently in my own riding of Charlevoix—I know the people of my native province are deeply attached to Canada and that they are very proud of its great achievements.

Mr. Speaker, in spite of certain speeches and impressions, Quebecers have no intention whatsoever to tear their Canadian passeport and plunge into the unknown. That, I can guarantee you, Mr. Speaker.

A month ago, Mr. Jacques Delors, chairman of the European Economic Community, during an official visit in Ottawa, was asked a few questions on national unity. I did not provoke the question. It was a spontaneous question asked by a distinguished member of the public gallery. The answer given by Mr. Delors, a former minister of Economy in the French government, when asked about Canadian unity, could not be clearer; here is what he said here in Ottawa a few steps away from here:

> As you know, in Europe, we are working on a certain political union, a federal state. Our conception is federal, he went on to say, and it provides for a common policy on external and economic affairs, a common currency, a common central bank, and an economic policy parallel to this monetary policy, both policies being strongly convergent.

And he concluded:

> So, in Europe we are uniting because we believe that nowadays we do not have individually a sufficient liberty of movement to guarantee our autonomy, our well-being and reach our goods.

Certain people in Quebec would want us to believe that, while prosperity in Europe will be gained through unity, our prosperity in Canada and Quebec can gain through disunity. What an illogic and unacceptable statement that is for Canadians and Quebecers!

I am sure that the best way to protect the French language, to guarantee that it will continue to express the characteristic spirit of the French majority in Quebec and of the French minorities outside Quebec, is to maintain the stability of our political institutions and the economic prosperity which derives from it. That is because Canada, unlike many countries, respects diversity, one of it's fundamental principles. The influence of the French language will extend over large areas only if it is used in great alliances and the main international forums.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is quite true to say that the few French immigrants who settled here three centuries and a half ago would marvel at the sight of Canada today, the world's second largest francophone country and, with France, on of the main supporters of the international francophonie.

[*English*]

The great preoccupation of Quebec and French Canada is now, as it has been for many decades, the preservation of cultural and linguistic heritage. Let us not forget that this undertaking was given in the most solemn way in 1867.

There are political groups in Canada who now tell their supporters that this country should plan to get along without Quebec or that Quebec can and should get along without Canada.

These groups, at opposite ends of the disunity spectrum, stand for fragmentation whereas Canadians and Quebecers have always stood for solidarity, unity and strength. The greatest assurance this House and this country can give French Canada of the respect of its language and its culture is the assurance that that language will be respected and honoured in the rest of Canada now and as we work and live together in a greater and greater way across the nation in our homes and in our lives.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: Quebec wants the tools necessary to protect and affirm its distinctiveness. Last June 23, I said that before we tried again to amend the Constitution, we would have to clear up some of the difficulties and misunderstandings and find a better way to amend the Constitution. So we set up a citizens forum to listen to and gather the views of as many Canadians as possible in as short a time as possible.

I think, under very difficult circumstances, the citizens forum has done a remarkable job. I have every confidence that its final report will be a valuable contribution to the proposals the government will bring forward in the autumn.

Running on a parallel track is the Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons, known as the Beaudoin-Edwards Committee, which is seeking the views of Canadians on improving the way we change our Constitution. The excellence of its work has been commented on in editorials across the country.

On behalf of all members of the House I want to pay tribute to members of that committee, who have done such outstanding work.

Clearly, we must find a better way to transact constitutional affairs in this country. I am hopeful that the joint committee will help point us all in a better direction.

The reports of both the citizens forum and the joint committee are due by July 1, and the government will give every consideration to their recommendations in formulating its proposals over the summer months. Then, in a little more than three months, the government will submit its proposals to the new joint Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Affairs. The committee will travel the country for several months, seeking the views of Canadians in every corner of this land.

The committee, as noted in the Speech from the Throne, will meet legislators from parallel committees of commissions in other provinces; perhaps on the floors of their own legislatures. It will also meet with aboriginal groups across the country.

This is an inclusive process open to all Canadians. I see nothing exclusionary about it.

I give this House an undertaking, on behalf of the government, that the government will be very open-minded to constructive amendments offered in the spirit of improving its proposals and broadening the consensus that Canadian unity needs and demands.

Reform of the Senate of Canada and of other institutions will improve and ensure both greater fairness and greater responsiveness. Oftentimes we are told that in some cities in western Canada people live some 2,000 miles from Ottawa and yet they feel that they are 2 million miles away because of the manner in which some concerns are dealt with. A lot of that has to do with the deficiencies in some of our institutions and the lack of responsiveness to the calls of the regions. Reform of the Senate and of other institutions to ensure both fairness and responsiveness means a great deal in western Canada and in many areas of Atlantic Canada.

People in Ontario are concerned about the growing costs of government generally and about the need to compete with our world-wide trading partners.

Aboriginal Canadians continue their quest for social justice and constitutional assurances.

This round will be a Canadian round, east and west, north and south, English and French speaking. All Canadians can and will benefit from constitutional reform.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: While there is no doubt that we are living through a crisis in the life of this country, it can also be viewed as an opportunity. It is an opportunity to do even better. The only deadline we face is the time needed to build a consensus among Canadians on how to improve Canada. Our only challenge is to recognize that a strong, economic and political union is fundamental to our collective prosperity.

• (1600)

Today I want to address, very briefly, some of the economic issues and options that will underlie the government's proposals. Others have referred to them. No one is re-inventing the wheel, as the Leader of the Opposition or the Leader of the NDP has pointed out in different circumstances. The Constitution clearly must guarantee the free flow of people and goods and services, capital and technology within the federation. It must also provide a broad framework for the economic union and establish key economic rights. The need for competitiveness and the imperatives of economic success make it essential that the provincial governments work with the federal government.

We must ask ourselves some basic and blunt questions about the efficiency of our economic union. Is it normal, for example, that internal barriers make Canada a much more balkanized domestic market than Europe or the United States, geographic groupings with 10, 12, 13 times the population of this country? Why is it easier for some firms to do business overseas than in a neighbouring province? Should Canadian firms be handicapped by the need to comply with two sales tax schemes; one federal and one provincial? I know some people will argue that we should not have any at all. I see my friend from the NDP applauding, but I can tell him one little fact of life: if you want sound and magnificent social services, we have got to pay for them.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: I say that with respect to my friend from Regina.

Do we really need three separate security regulators when all over the world countries are moving to a much more centralized regulatory regime? Does it make any sense that a trust company conceivably can face 11 separate sets of rules and regulations if that corporation wishes to operate across Canada when the goal in Europe is to allow institutions in one country to operate under a single licence right across the community? Is the population well served when a provincial government raises its deficit dramatically while the federal government and all other provincial governments seek to reduce the financial burden of the nation?

Sovereignty is the capacity to develop fundamental common values along with the economic strength to sustain and defend them. A country whose public finances drift into disrepair creates problems not only for future generations but for its capacity to act independently and assertively on the world scene. In the conduct of its public finances, Canada has been flirting with danger. Since 1984 we have made some progress in regaining control of the public finances. The rate of growth of program spending in Ottawa since 1984 has increased 3.7 per cent per year below the rate of inflation. In the previous 15 years the annual rate of increase of program spending on average was 13.9 per cent per year every year for 15 years.

There are consequences for overspending. There are consequences for everything we do. I mention this simply to make the point that at the end of the day this nation needs the resources if we are going to remain strong and united. A national debt of roughly $18 billion in 1969 with no deficit was transformed by 1984 into a national debt of $206 billion and an annual deficit of $38.9 billion.

My hon. friend from Newfoundland asks a very good question: What is it now? He is quite right, it was $206 billion and it is now $389 billion, but I want to point out to him that almost all of the increase in the national debt since 1984 is the result of compound interest on the glut that we have had. My hon. friend will understand that, believe it or not, this is not said with the view to scoring a given point. It is to try and make a point. I know that he would make the point if he were on this side, pointing out the gravity of the same problem.

The problem is that when we began, 12 cents of every tax dollar was going to service the debt. With this size of debt, 32 cents of every dollar was required to pay the interest on the debt. So financing the deficit sucks up huge amounts of capital that are no longer available for education and for health care, defence expenditures, foreign aid, and assistance to building a better quality of life for Canadians.

This Constitution and national unity cannot be discussed in abstract terms. There are some very hard realities that we have to consider. If all of that amount, 32 cents, 33 cents, 34 cents per dollar, the second worst record in the industrialized world, if that amount is going to bond holders, to people holding our debt, that means we have the $20 billion and $30 billion per year going out, which in comparative terms is not going out of other treasuries, that we do not have for investments in infrastructure, for investments in social programs, for investments that strengthen the unity of the nation.

I think it is important to point out because without economic strength, and if you add to the deficit and you continue to add to your debt service costs, then what is left to provide programs for Canadians? How would we fund medical and pension benefits for an aging population? How would we invest in infrastructure improvements? How would we honour our obligations in the world?

I do not think it is a partisan statement to say that to believe in sound finances for the Government of Canada does not signal a lack of compassion. It signals—and I think I can say that on behalf of all members—a sense of realism that, without fiscal discipline and sound economic growth, the only thing that governments can deliver is a fool's paradise and that is not good enough for Canadians.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: The questions of our unity and prosperity cannot be considered apart. When Canadians are troubled over their future together, it sends very negative signals to the investment community. When our prosperity is diminished, it weakens the foundations of our living together. The unity of Canada is tied to our competitive position in the world and our competitiveness is a pillar of Canadian unity.

[*Translation*]

The Speech from the Throne mentioned the major problems facing us and the decisions we must make. As we predicted, there are now signs that we are coming out of the recession. Last month, the unemployment rate fell for the first time since last June. The increase in jobs during the past two months was also a positive sign. In April, housing starts increased by nearly 30 per cent over previous months. Confidence in the business community is now at its highest level in seven years. Interest rates, the cornerstone of all genuine and durable economic recovery, dropped 5 per cent over the past year and have gone down 1 per cent since the federal Budget.

However, we cannot, in the long term, continue to take our prosperity for granted. We cannot afford to sit back and rely only on Canada's vast natural resources. A difficult road lies ahead if we are to raise our productivity to the same level as that of our competitors. However, instead of letting ourselves be paralysed by our problems, I say we should take advantage of this opportunity to strengthen Canada.

We must consider how to increase our productivity which alone can create durable prosperity. Government deficits and letting the Bank of Canada print more and more bills leads to inflation. It may get us a few part-time jobs but it does not produce any durable wealth. Productivity alone is the key to a great nation's durable prosperity. Clearly, we have not been able to maximize the principal agent of our prosperity our human resources.

• (1610)

In the Speech from the Throne, it was announced that we would initiate a debate on education, while fully observing the jurisdiction of the provinces in this field, and that we would do so by publishing a discussion paper on learning. Together, as citizens and parents, we must stop the draining away of our young talent and help them stay in school instead of dropping out, now that education, excellence and training are vital to success on the labour market.

[*English*]

The Speech from the Throne set out the problem quite clearly. The issue in this regard is not exclusively or even primarily money. Canada already spends more money per capita on education than almost any other industrialized country in the world. I believe the exception is Sweden.

From the federal level alone, the federal government spends almost $11 billion directly and indirectly on education and training, to say nothing of the billions that are spent by the appropriate provincial governments in providing facilities and training for our young people.

Yet, the issue remains: results. Three out of 10 students drop out of high school before graduating. In some jurisdictions, it is higher, it approaches four out of 10. Four out of 10 adults cannot read or do mathematics well enough to perform everyday tasks.

Canadian industry spends less than half as much on training its employees as American industry does, a fifth as much as the Japanese, and an eighth as much as the Germans. This is not the kind of performance that will guarantee increasing prosperity for our children.

In fact, it has given rise to a very important question and concern. That is, whether the next generation of Canadian men and women will be the first to have a lower standard of living than their parents.

The Speech from the Throne proposed some important objectives for the nation. These goals could include cutting illiteracy rates in half, ensuring that 90 per cent of Canadians attain high school diplomas or the equivalent by age 25, doubling the number of post-secondary graduates in mathematics, the sciences and engineering, and quadrupling the training provided by employers to their employees.

One member from the back says: Mind your own business.

I want to tell you: This is my business.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: If you are here today, it is because one morning you woke up and found out that you were born and you were a Canadian.

It is because you are a Canadian that you turned out to be educated, so prosperous looking and so dignified from time to time.

These are valid and urgent objectives for a nation whose domestic lifeblood is international trade. Only substantial productivity improvements will restore and

sustain our competitive position and under-write our economic security.

The Speech from the Throne emphasized the need for Canadians to share in the benefit of prosperity and nowhere is this more true than in the case of aboriginal Canadians.

I have been gratified by the favourable response to the appointment of former Chief Justice Brian Dickson to advise the government on the membership and terms of reference of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs.

A few weeks ago in Victoria, I set out some of the progress now being made. First, the fast-track process is introduced to deal with land claims of $500,000 or less. Second, in order to accelerate claims processing, the authority of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to approve settlement payments without reference to the Treasury Board will be increased from $1 million to $7 million.

Third, some $355 million will be dedicated to this initiative over the next five years. This represents a quadrupling of resources for this program.

Fourth, the process will be made fairer by the establishment of a specific land claim commission.

Fifth, in co-operation with Indian leadership over the next few months, a joint Indian government working group will be established to address unresolved specific land claims process and public policy issues.

Finally, pre-Confederation land claims will be accepted for consideration for the first time.

Another native agenda initiative designed to help Indian leaders build a better future for their people is the Pathways To Success program. The objective of this program is to create a skilled, competitive aboriginal workforce. We anticipate investing approximately $200 million per year in aboriginal labour market programs.

As part of the native agenda we have increased the budget of the Indian post-secondary program by $320 million for a total expenditure of more than a billion dollars over five years. This year government assistance is making it possible for 22,000 Indians to go to college and to change their lives. When the member for Saint-Denis and I were going to college, there were fewer than a hundred aboriginal students. This shows that some slow but steady progress is being achieved.

Perhaps the combination of the royal commission, strong support by Parliament and government, and constitutional change will provide our aboriginal peoples with the justice and the respect they have long deserved but have too frequently been denied.

Recently, the former Secretary General of the Commonwealth, Sonny Ramphal, said: "Canada is a model of stability in a multicultural world, and the breakup of the country would be seen as an encouragement for other societies to fly apart. Canada", he said, "has been something of a flagship of stability in a world of multiculturalism; the Canadian model has been replicated around the world."

[*Translation*]

A handful of professional pessimists keeps focusing on the flaws in our political system. Of course there are flaws. No one ever said Canada or federalism were perfect. There are flaws, but the same professional pessimists who concentrate on those flaws and are always trying to obscure the greatness and strength of Canada, would have us succumb to their siren song and thus undermine our belief in the unity and greatness of this country. In Quebec, they are promising people the moon, and referring to economic and political unions that are purely imaginary. There are others outside Quebec who would have us believe that the best way to deal with the pervasive malaise in this country would be to separate Quebec from Canada.

[*English*]

Both sides of this pessimistic equation—those who want Quebec to leave Canada and those who insist that division is inevitable—both of these graduates, with doctorates in the school of pessimism, are completely wrong and they will be repudiated by history.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mulroney: People who think Canada is a set of building blocks that can be rearranged at will or who think Canada can function just as well without one of its basic components are badly mistaken.

[*English*]

To strengthen our economic union, the federal government must exercise key economic powers and both levels of government must work together to secure our prosperity.

I believe it is possible in areas of federal jurisdiction to integrate explicit and effective inputs from regions and from citizens into the making of laws and policies. We must also find new and imaginative mechanisms to manage the interdependence of the federal and the provincial governments.

A look at the attribution of powers in 1867 provides a guide to the genuine thinking of the Fathers of Confederation when they created this country.

• (1620)

You will see that the erosion of many of those powers over the years has brought about quite a different country from that which they contemplated. This explains some of the serious problems that provinces feel, particularly as they are further and further removed from the centre, as they are more and more concerned about their capacity to protect language and culture and regional interests.

And so we must find new ways to manage the interdependence of the federal and provincial governments. Federalism is a balance between the need for central authority and the scope for decentralization to meet local aspirations. Its genius lies not in its perfection, because no system of government yet devised is perfect, but its genius comes from the fact that it combines self-rule and shared rule, sovereignty and association.

The challenge we face is to rebalance our federation, not to throw it out. This will be the most important challenge that we have to meet during this session. The eyes of the nation are turned toward this Chamber and all of its members. It is not the time to exacerbate our differences; I think, Mr. Speaker, it is the time to extol our diversity. This is not the time to weaken our country; it is the time to strengthen our resolve. It is not the time to point fingers; it is the time to join hands. This is not the time to turn our backs on the common destiny; it is the time to prepare a better country for all of our children.

On July 1, thousands of Canadians, young and old, French speaking and English speaking and first Canadians and recent immigrants, will stand outside this building and look to the top of the Peace Tower. They will see there the maple leaf, be witness to our history and the emblem of our future greatness. Indeed, my friend says "a great flag", and he is 100 per cent right.

Our challenge is to reject the call to selfishness and division and to point the way to a better Canada, a Canada that is more open and fair, and generous and free, which will become the pride of its citizens and a model for the entire world.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Hamilton East has very generously assisted the Speaker. I recognize the hon. member for Yukon.

The hon. member for Kamloops on a point of order.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I want to express our gratitude to the Official Opposition for its courteous gesture to allow our leader to make some remarks regarding the throne speech. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if I could also seek unanimous consent to allow my leader to complete her remarks during her response.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to indicate that indeed that had been the proposal in the rule changes that we had negotiated at the end. It is too bad it could not be automatically part of the rules, but of course we would extend that courtesy to the Leader.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to comment on the government's Speech from the Throne as well as on the Prime Minister's remarks just preceding this.

We have heard many members of this government say that this session could be the most important one since Confederation and I and my party certainly agree with that. We have also heard the government say that imagination will be required to move forward and emerge stronger from this crisis in which our nation finds itself. Again, we in the New Democratic Party agree with that. I have heard from this government that we are at a turning point in our history and once again, we agree.

In listening to the Speech from the Throne, what is most striking and most disturbing is that there is nothing in it to meet the challenges confronting Canada now. It contains the same old responses, the same failed eco-

nomic policies and the same flawed constitutional process.

It is saddening that this government has chosen and is determined to follow the same old course, because being at a turning point means turning. The government refuses to turn. Instead it goes blindly ahead and takes Canada into another dead-end. We must turn to find new directions and new ways, to find a destination and a new future for Canadians. That is the responsibility for all of us.

The throne speech identifies unity, competitiveness and responsive national government as priorities. Indeed, they should be because in the six years since this government took power, Canada has moved to a large degree from unity to disunity, from being globally competitive toward being globally uncompetitive, and from having functional national institutions to national institutions such as VIA Rail and the CBC that are mere skeletons of what they were when this government took power.

These are issues which must be addressed and I will do that today, but in a very different way than this government. I propose that we follow a people's agenda, an agenda that serves Canadians and Canadian families.

It is clear to everyone, except a few across from us in this House, that the Conservative corporate agenda has failed Canadians. I want to ensure the Canadian people that our party will not stand by and watch these six years be followed by another six years of this kind of failed economic planning.

This Parliament is charged with one responsibility this session. That responsibility is to work to build the kind of Canada that all Canadians want to belong to.

[*Translation*]

It means drafting a Constitution that will unite this country. It also means creating an economic, social and environmental partnership among Canadians and between governments and the people they represent.

Canada as we know it today is a country where 1.5 million people are jobless, where the gap between the rich and the poor is widening by the day and where the middle class is in the process of disappearing.

Our health system is in jeopardy, our education system is deteriorating and major social programs are being eliminated. Moreover, the crucial environmental challenges we are facing are left unanswered. Every day sees another institution, a symbol of our Canadian identity, such as VIA Rail, Air Canada or the CBC, undermined or simply eradicated. The links that bond this country together are being cut unscrupulously. The problem is that the Prime Minister make a lot of fuss about the need to save Canada, but then his Minister of Finance tables a Budget that strikes at the heart and soul of this country. It will take more than declarations of love for Canada to save this nation and allow it to grow. It will take a government capable of making concrete commitments toward giving the country a strong and fair economy and strenghtening our social programs and national institutions. We will need a government committed to shaping Canada to be a better place to live for all Canadian men and women.

• (1630)

[*English*]

It would not be fair of me if, based on no evidence, I accused the government of a gap between its rhetoric and its action, so I draw your attention to the last throne speech delivered in 1989. It said that one of the government's objectives was:

> —to maintain a caring, compassionate society which will be able, through continuing economic prosperity, to meet its obligations and responsibilities to those who are less fortunate and in greatest need.

What did the government do toward this end? It introduced the clawback to old age pensions and family allowances. It abandoned funding of unemployment insurance. It announced the delay of long-promised national child care programs. It introduced the GST. It capped funding for social programs to B.C., Alberta and Ontario. It froze transfer payments for post-secondary education and health care.

I have not read the most recent edition of the *Oxford Dictionary*, but it seems to me that unless the meanings of caring and compassionate have changed—the words that this government in 1989 said it cared about, that it wanted to make sure existed in Canada—they have been revised by what this government has done. The policies I have just cited which have been put forward by this government have nothing to do with caring and compassion, but everything to do with indifference to the ordinary Canadian.

Surely if we are to have a renewed Canada, we must build a nation in which all people can share in its bounty, in which all Canadians can participate and in which all Canadians feel they genuinely belong.

In this throne speech, the government speaks of the need to build an economy competitive globally. Global competitiveness is the new corporate catch phrase and I am sure we are going to hear a lot about it in the months and years ahead. The question is not whether we should be competitive, of course we should be. The question is how do we get there.

The government and the corporate community insist that there is only one road. That is to further cut workers' wages, to reduce benefits, to cut social programs, to provide fewer government services, to weaken government and diminish standards to the levels of countries such as Mexico.

There is another way. There is not just one way to become competitive. There is another way and that is by investing in people. It means investing in research and development, investing in training and education. It means strengthening programs which increase economic security, ability and productivity of workers to compete with high wage, high productivity and low unemployment countries such as Germany.

The choice is clear. We can reduce Canada to the lowest common standard or work to join the world's best. We, on this side, say let us work to join the world's best.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Mississauga South who will chair the Fiannce Committee stated recently that the Canadian worker, and I quote, "can either work harder for a lesser pay or not work at all. It is quite simple. That is what competitiveness is all about."

That may be how this government defines competitiveness but, for the record, the New Democratic Party will not let the governement use this argument as a pretext to close down plants, to drive farmers to the brink of banckruptcy and to trample the rights of the Canadian workers' families.

The government must recognize that it is unacceptable that, for the sake of competitiveness, we have 1.5 million jobless people in our economy.

That is totally unjustifiable, Mr. Speaker. The NDP finds unacceptable as to the Canadian people.

The government undertook in the Speech from the Throne to create 2.5 million jobs by the year 2000. The question is how can that be done. That the government did not say.

I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that this vague commitment will bring little comfort to the 10 percent plus Canadians who are without a jobs in 1991. It will not reassure the Canadian men and women who will loose their jobs in 1992, 1993, 1994 and so on, because this government has its mind set on pursuing destructive policies such as free trade, the GST, and high interest rates combined with an overvalued Canadian dollar.

[*English*]

While the 2.5 million job creation figure may sound impressive on the face of it, the reality is, given the fact that more people will be entering the workforce this decade and given the growth in the size of the workforce, the creation of 2.5 million jobs between now and the year 2000 will mean an unemployment rate, not of 4 per cent, not of 5 per cent, but of 10 per cent in the year 2000.

Some hon. members: Shame.

Ms. McLaughlin: This government is planning for permanent unemployment. A 10 per cent unemployment rate in Canada—millions of Canadians out of work—is not the New Democratic Party's definition of competitiveness. It clearly is the Conservative Party's definition of competitiveness: some workers have to be out of work; some workers cannot work; and some workers cannot be productive because that is going to be in the interests of this nation.

We say that is not in the interest of this nation. The human deficit is the largest deficit we have in Canada today.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. McLaughlin: The Prime Minister will say: "Well, we have created a lot of jobs". There is also the question of what kinds of jobs are being created.

A few days ago the finance minister said that to him, a job is a job is a job. There is little one can do in the face of such an insensitive remark but to ask the minister if he believes that a single mother forced to take a part-time job, making $100 a week, has a job just like a cabinet

minister who makes thousands of dollars a week or a lawyer or a corporate executive who makes over hundreds of dollars an hour.

What would he say to the women some of my colleagues spoke to yesterday, one of whom has a husband who is a trucker and has not had work for eight months, thanks to the policies of this government? Here is a woman who supports her family by making $300 a week, working six days a week, paying $625 a month in rent and who has not been able to buy her teenage daughter anything new in two years. Would that minister tell that woman that a job is a job is job? Well it is not. It is poverty.

• (1640)

Job creation is about more than poverty wage jobs. It is about creating full-time jobs that have decent wages and dignity. It is about pay and employment equity. It is about ensuring that child care is available for all Canadians who require it in order to make a living.

Job creation is also a matter of improving training, research and development and education. This is the front that this government has failed miserably on. It promised the trade adjustment program after the trade deal. For most Canadians, it never happened. Its cuts to the National Research Council have devastated that council, and that respected institution and this government's spending on R and D continue to lag behind those of our international competitors.

In the education field, after years of cutting transfer payments to the provinces for post-secondary education, with cuts of $3.8 billion between 1990 and 1995 alone, for this government to turn around and identify education as a primary national objective in the throne speech is the ultimate hypocrisy.

You cannot cut post-secondary funding just a mere three months ago and now identify education as a priority. Somehow, the government's actions have to match its words. Strong curriculum and teaching objectives and goals are all part of quality education but adequate funding is crucial. I would suggest that if this government is serious about education and about attacking the problem of illiteracy, it restore funding immediately.

[*Translation*]

One last comment on the economy, Mr. Speaker. It is interesting to note that the Speech from the Throne finally recognizes—better late than never—that economy and national unity are closely intertwined. I have been saying so for a long time.

To the Saskatchewan family facing the loss of its farm because of excessively high interest rates, interest rates are a matter of national unity. To the Windsor worker who has lost his job because of free trade, free trade is a matter of national unity.

To the young woman laid off by a textile industry in Montreal, it is also a matter of national unity. To the northern residents who must pay the GST when everything already costs so much, taxes are a matter of national unity.

Thus, for the sake of national unity and competitiveness, I ask the government to recognize once and for all that free trade, GST and high interest rates are bad policies that must be rescinded.

[*English*]

I would now like to comment on some of the other aspects of national unity in the agenda put forward by this government.

I would like to address in particular issues concerning the constitutional aspects of national unity and the call for non-partisan co-operation. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the future of Canada is more important than the fate of any one political party. It is more important than the career of any one of us in the House of Commons. Our decisions and actions in the coming months must be guided by that reality. The good of the nation comes first always.

I believe that we can find a way to work together for the good of the nation. I say to this House with honesty and with a depth of emotion that the members of the New Democratic Party will do all that we can to work to forge a common future. That is our responsibility and we take it very seriously.

At the same time, I say with honesty and emotion that the members of the New Democratic Party and all Canadians cannot be handed a take it or leave it deal and be told to accept it in the name of non-partisanship. Non-partisanship is about bringing people together into the process from the beginning. It is about truly listening,

incorporating constructive suggestions put forward and it is about respect. It is about respecting the views of others and it is about true co-operation. Non-partisanship does not mean playing by only one set of rules, the government's rules; it means setting the rules together.

I say to the government and to the Prime Minister: Let us begin by opening up the process. The establishment of another traditional parliamentary committee I think will signal to most Canadians more of the same, more of the old way, more of politicians talking to other politicians and more delays in dealing with the real issues.

This House could move to immediately establish a constituent assembly based on Canadian reality and on Canadian needs. There are many other models across the country, but we do not have to just accept those. We have enough innovation here. We could create our own, one that meets our own needs. We should establish that format so that Canadians are directly involved in the process from the beginning.

If we cannot start with something new, how will Canadians have any confidence that the result will be a new and renewed Canada?

I believe that we could have a constituent assembly where there would be elected officials and non-elected officials, where there would be a genuine guaranteed participation of aboriginal groups, women, northerners, multicultural and official language group communities in addition to participation by our elected colleagues in territorial and provincial legislatures.

I know the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs and the Prime Minister will say that a parliamentary committee, the traditional way as opposed to a constituent assembly, has been established by this government because it is up to elected representatives to take responsibility to set the course of the nation. By doing so, they will say, elected representatives will gain credibility and the trust of Canadians.

We elected representatives do have a crucial role but surely the way to earn the trust and support of Canadians is to demonstrate that we have been listening to what Canadians have been saying. Canadians have been saying: "We want a different way. We want to feel included in the process from the beginning".

It surely cannot be that difficult to be somewhat creative, somewhat innovative and to try something new that will respond to the calls from the public and will be a truly co-operative effort in forging this new nation.

As it stands under the government's proposals now, which I hope it is prepared to reconsider, with the various committees that have been travelling the country and will travel the country, in the final analysis it will be the government itself that will be able to retain all levers of control, to decide what evidence it will hear and what it will listen to. Will it just perhaps follow an agenda that it intended to follow all along? That is something that we all as parliamentarians have to address; we are saying to Canadians at the beginning that their views count. I suggest we can do that by a process of including a broader range of people right from the beginning.

We must continue to work for a fair and open process because Canada quite simply cannot withstand another failed round of constitutional discussions.

[*Translation*]

As for the content of those discussions on national unity, my party will continue to put forward ideas that we sincerely believe will contribute to strenghtening our national unity.

We have already made positive suggestions on the contents of a new Constitution and on the need to not only conclude a constitutional agreement but also agreements on economy, environment and social programs.

Therefore, I ask the government and the Prime Minister, in the spirit of the call to non-partisanship that is reflected in the Speech from the Throne, to consider those propositions and try to integrate them into a program to strenghten national unity.

• (1650)

[*English*]

Let me close by saying that having recently travelled extensively throughout the country, I have seen a positive change in the mood of the country. I think some of the acrimony or the bitterness that emerged after the Meech Lake process has diminished, and Canadians are really beginning to renew their search for compromise and agreement.

I am optimistic that we can succeed in meeting the many issues before us, in meeting the unique responsibilities of Quebec, the home of French language and culture in North America, and in addressing the real concerns of aboriginal people, the west, Ontario, the

north, the Atlantic provinces and all the people who live within our borders.

I believe we can, through acknowledging diversity, make that diversity our true strength, our true uniqueness as a country. The goal must not simply be keeping Canada together; the goal must be building a truly better Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. McLaughlin: There will in the coming months be much discussion about what is wrong with Canada, but let us never lose sight about what is right with Canada. Ours is really a marvellous achievement, an achievement of diverse cultures coming together, of people separated by great distances creating common bonds, and of individuals and communities sharing common values and common objectives.

I recently read something that a Canadian song writer, Andrew Cash, wrote when he returned from a trip to India, an old country that has a long history. He observed that Canada:

> —has more space and time than, perhaps, any other nation in the world to be thoughtful and innovative, not just in accumulating wealth, but in the field of human understanding, in pioneering new ways for different peoples to live together in harmony.

It is our responsibility as parliamentarians to take this session of Parliament and use it to be thoughtful and innovative, to find new ways for Canadians to live together, to work with all Canadians in building a Canada that says to the world: "This is what can be achieved when a nation takes the gifts it has been given and dedicates itself to creating a society that values and cares about each and every one of us".

The New Democratic Party pledges to the Canadian people to work toward and offer constructive suggestions to make sure that this great country of Canada, the one that many of us grew up in, will be here for our children. In my view, we do not have the privilege of dealing away this country. We must take the responsibility for building it. I look forward to that task, as does my party, with great enthusiasm.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, a few moments ago we heard the Prime Minister calling Canadians to take heed to the celebration that we will experience here on Parliament Hill on July 1.

The Prime Minister did not talk about the thousands upon thousands of Canadians who this July 1, like this June 1, like this May 1, will be experiencing hunger and frustration and disappointment and despair because this government is not meeting its responsibilities to Canadians.

I listened to the Prime Minister remind us of the fact that this is a country that must operate in the public interest. I could not agree more.

I have watched this government for six and a half years. This has been a government of the private interest. The private interest of American Express. When it wants to deal, there is a turn around time of 24 hours. The private interest of the Iraqi spokesperson. Thousands upon thousands of people around the world are waiting in line for months and years to come to Canada, but he receives a quick turnaround because he has a private interest.

The private interest of the Boeing Corporation. We remember when the Prime Minister, a mere two years ago, stood in the House and said that he was introducing legislation to save those jobs. Now the single largest employer in the city of Toronto has its livelihood threatened by a takeover from a company that is asking for $500 million in taxpayers' aid before it even guarantees Canadians jobs.

What is the public response of this government? Since the Tory takeover in 1984 of over 900 foreign takeovers, Investment Canada has not overturned a single takeover.

When the Prime Minister talks about the private interest and asks us to rally around the public interest of Canadians, I say to the Prime Minister there is a public interest here. There is the public interest of the women in the gallery today who were in tears. The members opposite may laugh and chuckle but those women were in tears because they saw their families' livelihood being dealt away by a trade deal signed by this Prime Minister.

In my own community there is the public interest of the steel workers. From December 1989 to December 1990, imports of steel from the United States, during this

great window of opportunity supposedly created by the trade deal, increased by 166 per cent while exports from Canada to the United States decreased by 12 per cent. Is it any wonder that in my own community over the last year unemployment has increased by 67 per cent?

I want to say to the Prime Minister that when he tells Canadians to wave the flag on Parliament Hill on July 1, he should also tell Canadians that by restoring the economy, the sound economy of this country, we will begin the road toward constitutional and economic sanity.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has made a fine speech today in the House and I would like to believe him. He has mentionned the fact that we must work together, that we should not indulge in narrow partisanship about the constitutional issues. I feel the same way and I completely agree with this idea, Mr. Speaker.

But we must remember, Mr. Speaker, who has indulged in partisanship for the last three years concerning the future of our country. It is the same man on the other side who claims now he is going to revitalize Canada, the very person who has created a situation where people, across the country, do not believe in our Canada.

It is neither the leader of the Opposition, nor I, the member for Hamilton East, it is not the other hon. members who have gone to Quebec, time and again, to tell them: "If the Lake Meech Acord is not ratified, you will be humiliated." It is the Prime Minister who has kept spreading this rumour. That is what he is doing, Mr. Speaker.

• (1700)

[*English*]

A wave of the magic wand and the Prime Minister is supposed to be able to restore a sense of team work here in the House of Commons. I want to believe him because I agree with the statement made by the House leader of the government side that this is probably a turning point in Canadian history.

Those Canadians outside the province of Quebec who see the constitutional question as just another chapter of Canadian sabre rattling are wrong. Those outside the province of Quebec who think they can merely excise the wishes—

[*Translation*]

—the will, the aspiration and the history of a people who has been living here for 400 years, I will tell them: You are wrong!

[*English*]

Those people outside the province of Quebec who believe, as does the leader of the new Reform Party, that you can have a Canada without Quebec are wrong.

There are two parties now on the federal scene who aspire to achieve political success at the expense of the country. On the one hand you have the bloc—

[*Translation*]

—who wants a Quebec without Canada. On the other hand, you have the *Reform Party* who wants to have a Canada without Quebec.

An hon. member: They are crazy.

Mrs. Copps: But in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, every hon. member, whatever his political colour or history who really wants to have a Canada, should understand *de facto* that it must include Quebec.

[*English*]

Those people in my own province who recently spoke before the Ontario committee on constitutional reform and believe that somehow the cost of separation would be borne only by a single province, their neighbouring province of Quebec, are wrong.

Thirty billion dollars worth of business takes place annually between my province and the province of Quebec. Those who think that we can arbitrarily cut them out of the Canadian equation at no cost to the rest of Canada are dead wrong.

The constitutional clock is ticking. On this side of the House we made very specific proposals. Last December we called for the Prime Minister to act immediately to give the parliamentary committee of Beaudoin–Edwards an expanded mandate. My leader, Jean Chrétien, the only national leader to appear before the Bélanger–Campeau committee, spoke in a very eloquent fashion about the steps that must be taken immediately to restore constitutional sanity to this country.

What have we had from the Prime Minister? We have had a disgusting exercise of constitutional strip–tease. He takes it off one by one by one. Two months ago he announced that he would be announcing an announce-

ment of an announcement next September of a committee that might have a chance to report sometime next year. Yesterday he announced the announcement of the committee of which the membership will be announced in September and we still do not know whether the committee will be mandated to examine a notion as simple as either a national referendum or a constituent assembly. Further chapters to follow.

I say to the Prime Minister, the time for the constitutional games are over. Now is the time to act, and to act in the best interest of all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

The Prime Minister told us earlier this afternoon—and I think everyone, including me, would agree with that, that the Parliament of Canada and our ability to survive as a nation is much more important than the fate of any political party, and that is true. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I, as a Canadian, cannot help but ask myself a question, and I know that is tough. Some members close by will tell me: Mrs. Copps, you are being much too hard on the Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, do you think the Prime Minister can in fact regain the confidence of the people, after having lied so many times about the constitutional issue?

A few weeks ago, I held a public meeting in my constituency and about 300 people attended. I can tell you this was not an English community meeting, which does not even really exist, since 34 of the 35 people who took the floor chose not to speak in their mother tongue, English, and all of the participants, who wanted some answers about the economic situation, the interest rate policy, the monetary policy, and the constitutional policy, said: In order to rebuild this country, we have to get rid of the Prime Minister.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, we know the economic problems. We know the inflationary problems caused by this government's insidious GST. We also know that Canadians are unanimous on one question and it is that this Prime Minister has rolled the dice one too many times.

If this Prime Minister really cares about Canada, then maybe he should rethink his political future. Maybe he should step aside and give a chance to somebody who really wants to rebuild this country. Maybe he should take the high road and let Canadians, by way of an election, choose for themselves the leader who can rebuild a true Canadian constitutional family. Take it to the people.

This Prime Minister expects all Canadians to rally around the absurd notion that he has taken the politics out of constitutional discussions. I sat here in the House when my leader was away on medical leave and watched the Prime Minister tear strips off him daily in his absence. I sat here as the self-same Prime Minister then called out to the opposition and said "we must be non-partisan".

We all realize how important this country is, and I for one was among those who were prepared to take a very difficult position on constitutional reform and support the Prime Minister, as I did in 1987. I believed that the capacity for reconciliation and the greater good of the country was more important than single political initiatives. But the Prime Minister has betrayed us too many times, and for him to come into the House today and ask Canadians to believe that he will be non-partisan on the issue of constitutional reform is just too difficult for Canadians to believe. It stretches the credulity of even the most silent backbencher on the government side.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the next 14 months will be crucial in the history of Canada. I am not sure that the tide has turned yet, although the leader of the New Democratic Party said so in her remarks. But I think we have the ability to make the tide turn.

• (1710)

For example, we made very precise proposals in that regard. In fact, they included elements of Senate reform, elements of monetary policy reform, elements of power sharing reform, elements providing that all government levels would have to respond to the needs of every citizen and that any decision on power sharing would have to be made in the interests of the citizens, not of the government level.

When my leader attended the Belanger-Campeau Commission and when, after his appearance, he issued a statement in Montreal, he was very clear about the

timetable that we expected. Unfortunately, the government ignored it. I do not know why it is dragging its feet. Mr. Speaker, we already lost six months and we expect to lose another three. We lost almost a year before the Prime Minister gave Parliament the tools that are needed to reform the Constitution.

The Prime Minister argued earlier that the word of the people, the uppermost word, is the word of the Parliament. Why, then, does he not give us the tools, right now, so that we can start working to reestablish the constitutional sovereignty in Canada?

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, we in the Liberal Party are prepared to start working now. We are prepared to start working today, because the constitutional clock is ticking and too much time has already been wasted.

We ask the Prime Minister, why wait until fall? Start now with the process of allowing the people of Canada to have their say through their elected members of Parliament. Unlike the NDP, we do not want to wait until Spicer and Beaudoin–Edwards report. Certainly their reports can be complementary to the work that is being done by this parliamentary committee, with the objective of looking at all aspects of constitutional change.

Given the time frames that are facing us, whether or not they are of our own choosing, they are a political reality. The time has come to get down to business in this Parliament.

It is strange, as we talk about the future of the country, as the Prime Minister himself says, so much is at stake. Why is it that we are the only Parliament in Canada that is forbidden by the fiats of the Prime Minister to deal with issues other than the simple amending formula in the Beaudoin–Edwards committee? It makes absolutely no sense that that committee's hands should be tied at a time when we should be listening to Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

We have proposed a Canada round. In fact, a number of the proposals articulated today by the Prime Minister, were taken, as a matter of fact, from speeches delivered on several occasions by the Leader of the Opposition. He called for the Canada round because he understood that for constitutional reform to truly work, it has to involve the empowerment of every Canadian. It cannot be a special interest exercise.

[*Translation*]

We believe that we have the political will and that, when they realize that they are wanted by the rest of Canada, Quebecers will say yes to Canada. The time has now come for the Parliament of Canada to say yes to Quebec, to say yes to the distinct society and also to say yes to Senate reform and to power sharing among regions which will really reflect a renewed Canada.

The task is weighty and time is running out. The time has come to start working and we expect that, right today, the Prime Minister will appoint a new constitutional committee to really do the work that must be done in order to restore to Canadians their confidence in the best country in the world.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from Hamilton East was complaining about the record of Investment Canada.

I share her concerns about that deplorable record. That member was a member of the Liberal Party, which was in office until late 1984. When we look at its record, we find that Canada had more foreign ownership and control per capita than any other industrialized nation and more than many developing nations.

Despite FIRA's record, less than one half of the approved foreign take–overs intended to increase their investment or provide any new jobs. Since the beginning of 1984, 15 per cent of those approved promised neither new jobs nor new investment.

I am wondering whether the member associates herself with the attitude of the Liberal government of those days with respect to FIRA and the way it used it, or believes there should be a new policy toward foreign ownership in Canada.

Ms. Copps: Unfortunately, the member should talk to his colleague, the member for Vancouver Kingsway.

I do not know how many times in this House the member for Vancouver Kingsway has urged that the government re-institute FIRA because he thought it did such a good job protecting Canadian investment.

While he is talking to his colleague, he might want to pass a word along to the premier of Ontario, who not only closed his eyes, but kissed Varity good-bye as it moved its operations from Canada to the United States.

The former Massey-Ferguson got the blessing of Bob Rae when it moved off to the United States with Varity Corp.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member for Hamilton East and I can say that she talks a lot—very well by the way—but she does very little.

Mr. Speaker, if we could give an award for partisanship, the hon. member for Hamilton East would win handily if it were put to a vote. I never heard the hon. member, although the government did not always—

Naturally, Mr. Speaker, nobody is perfect and no government is perfect, but the hon. member for Hamilton East has never, not even once since I am a member of this assembly, acknowledged that the government was trying to do something. She conveniently forgets that it is this government, our Prime Minister, who recognized the distinct society and worked assiduously to try and save Canada.

We would not be talking about the Constitution if it had not been for her party, if influential members of her party had not done the utmost behind the scenes to sink the Accord. She is now saying that the Canadian federation is in need of changes, but between the talk and the action there is quite a gap, as she seems unable to propose anything. Her leader says one thing, only to contradict himself the following day.

We are talking about transfer of responsibilities to the provinces. That is what the provincial governments want, but her leader is against any transfer of powers to the provinces. Could the hon. member for Hamilton East tell us—as deputy leader of her party—whether she is in favour of transferring powers to the provinces? What kinds of powers would she agree to transfer and how would she do it? Let her make some suggestions, we might find them interesting.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): But at least our leader had the guts to put these proposals before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, while your leader won't even raise the question in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I can talk about the political aspect of Meech. Is that all right? Don't ask me about the rest, because if the hon. member thinks the Prime Minister did a good job, it is because she does not know Canada outside Quebec. He sent a gentleman who could not even run for dog catcher, former Senator Lowell Murray, who was sent across Canada to sell Meech Lake. Why? Because he wanted to go back to Quebec to tell them: You have been humiliated! The reason people will not accept Meech Lake is because they are against Quebec. He used Meech to damage the Liberal Party, but he did not bother to say one word outside Quebec.

I made speeches in Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, to explain how important it was for Quebec. The Prime Minister sent Lowell Murray. Come to my riding, Mr. Speaker, and ask ten people who Lowell Murray is. They don't know.

• (1720)

They don't know him from Adam.

An hon. member: The dog catcher!

Ms. Copps: He couldn't even run for dog catcher. Imagine!

Our position on the transfer of powers was clear. We stated quite clearly there is nothing sacred about the division of powers. In fact, we have to start analyzing the division of powers between the federal and the provincial governments. We should start, bearing in mind what is good for Canadians, what will minimize duplication and repetition, and what gives us the best return on our investment. That is what we want to do, and this was made quite clear to the Bélanger-Campeau Commission on several occasions but, unfortunately, the hon. member insists on claiming that her leader is the only person with a political position.

If he really wanted to sell Meech Lake, he could have done so by acting responsibly as the leader of the government. What we have here is not the leader of a

government but the leader of a political party, and that is why my speech was partisan as well.

It shocks me to hear him claim he is going to save Canada, when he cannot even say the same thing in both languages, in English and French, across the country.

[*English*]

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): I have a very short question.

The preceding speaker from Hamilton East, I am quite sure, has taken note that nowhere in the throne speech was there one word in reference to medicare, the cornerstone of our social policy in this country and not a word. Does she not find it strange that at a time when medicare is being eroded this government does not even lend one word of support or encouragement to medicare?

Ms. Copps: That is not surprising if you look at the financial record of the government. In the last budget the former Minister of Finance, who is now being charged with the responsibility of making us competitive, savaged the transfer payments from the federal government to provinces for health and for post-secondary education. The savage cuts by the Minister of Finance and by the Prime Minister really laid bare for all the world to see how false their claim is that they are now going to invest in education and health care for Canadians.

I think the proof was in the pudding when the government recently defeated a motion by the opposition to defend medicare. It is not even prepared to vote for it in the House of Commons.

Mr. Al Johnson (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, it is with considerable pleasure that I rise today to comment on the speech of His Excellency the Governor General of Canada, which opened this session of the 34th Parliament.

His Excellency has expressed, on behalf of our government, a number of particularly pertinent themes. Our overriding concern at this time must be for the unity of our nation and, within that context, for all of the elements which contribute to a strong and vibrant Canada. This includes creating a political structure within which all Canadians can find free and full expression for their aspirations.

It also includes, as the throne speech rightly points out, the assurance of economic prosperity, of a clean environment, of improved representation and of a stable, compassionate and caring society.

If, as the throne speech states, the family is the most fundamental building block of Canadian society, then the elements of a strong and vibrant Canada must include the protection and nurturing of the family. It is for this reason that our government has committed itself to review its policies in relation to the family

This is a commitment that I and many of my colleagues have worked hard for and I want to express most sincerely my appreciation to the Prime Minister and his cabinet colleagues for listening to our concerns on this issue.

I am also grateful that this government has indicated that in the context of its over all plan for constitutional reform it is prepared to act to ensure that our support for families is effective, fair, efficient and above all, that the rights of families to choose their own lifestyles are protected. This commitment, I believe, is confirmed by the statement that "the test of constitutional reform will be fairness, effectiveness, efficiency and the protection afforded to the rights of all Canadians".

The family is the most fundamental building block of Canadian society. Strong families have had, and will continue to have, an enormous effect on building and strengthening our nation. No matter what part of the country we come from, we see this impact in our history.

We recall the early settlers of both our founding nations; the families of United Empire Loyalists who established themselves in the maritime provinces—

[*Translation*]

In Quebec, we know that families have been for a long time one of the pillars of the Quebecer society. Family respect and loyalty have played a key role in the building of the Quebec culture which is so rich, warm, distinct and open to the rest of Canada.

[*English*]

In Ontario and western Canada we celebrate the remembrance of our families, who often came in waves of immigration from England, Ireland, Germany, the Ukraine, from China and many other Asian countries, in fact from throughout the world. Everywhere in Canada our aboriginal peoples celebrate the endurance of their

families and often-times heroic endurance that has given them the strength to survive enormous cultural, social and economic change.

Whatever our origins, we all look back on our families and relate stories of how their courage and determination built our nation. It is only with strong families which feel secure in their inheritance that we can continue to grow and prosper as a nation.

I have to say that there are problems. Over the years our laws, particularly taxation laws, have not kept pace with the changes in society and in family structures. In our well-meaning attempts to fix problems we have created an extraordinarily complex system of deductions, credits, refundable credits, exemptions, support payments, sales tax credits and support programs; a system which almost no one can understand and one in which different elements often work at cross purposes or to the disadvantage of certain lifestyles, particularly traditional family lifestyles.

Although I will highlight certain examples today, I cannot refer to all of the anomalies in our laws and regulations which conspire against the family. Let me say, however, that I recognize that most of them are paradoxically rooted in the concept that the traditional family is the norm, and in old-fashioned and sometimes inappropriate concepts of dependency.

A simple example of this is the well-known case of two senior citizens each receiving the old age pension and the guaranteed income supplement. If they get married, they lose about $3,000 per year. Similar situations occur with veterans widows' allowances. If the survivor marries, the allowances are reduced or cut off. Examples abound in the Income Tax Act and I will come to these in more detail later.

The issue is that we constantly put an economic disincentive on marriage and that the government through its policies interferes in family decision making, particularly as it relates to child care.

Let us examine, then, the tax system as it affects families. I wish there was a way to make it simple but there is not, and that is part of the problem. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that you and my colleagues will bear with me.

The first issue is the impact of the tax system on marriage. Although the tax system is essentially based on individual income, rules have been introduced relating to certain credits where eligibility credits are based on family income. The GST is a good place to start. First let me say, without apology, that I support and supported this progressive and much-needed tax reform because I know that consumption taxes are fairer than income taxes which only penalize success. In my view, there is one important flaw in the GST. It relates to the credits for low income earners.

• (1730)

Because the rules refer to family income, the result is that two people living together, each making only $24,000 per year, that is with a family income of $48,000, can retain full GST credits and bonus credits totalling some $580. The minute they are married they lose the entire credit because their family income now exceeds the limit. In fact, two people making only $17,000 each would not be eligible for the credit if they were to marry. Add children to the family and the benefit to the unmarried couple is even more significant.

Another example is the principal residential exemption. Under the income tax system, profit from the sale of a home is considered non-taxable capital gains. This exempts the taxpayer from any capital gains tax on the sale of a home. Marrieds are permitted only one exemption because they are not permitted to share income. Since persons who just live together can share income, they are eligible for two exemptions.

There are also problems with the capital gains exemption, which I will not detail today because of the lack of time. However, they are similarly related to the examples just given.

What is also surprising is the rules for disabled attendant care. If an unmarried spouse is disabled, he or she can pay their spouse for care and claim a $5,000 deduction at income tax time if the disabled partner's tax rate is higher than that of his or her spouse. Again, marrieds are prevented from doing so by the attribution rules.

The equivalent to married exemption was intended to give single parents the same tax advantages that married couples enjoy, that is a spousal deduction. Unfortunately, many unmarried couples are manipulating the credit to their advantage. Unmarried couples with children can

claim two equivalent credits, each worth $1,400. As a result, the unmarried couple can be almost $1,300 better off after tax.

Let me give another example. The threshold of the refundable child tax credit is $24,800 and is based on family income. Unmarrieds can each make $24,000 and still receive their full credit. A married two-income family with the same incomes as the unmarried couple will lose the entire credit because their family income exceeds the threshold. In fact, the married family could have a family income of $17,000 less than the unmarried family income and still lose their entire credit.

The second major issue in the tax system is the combined effect of having only one earner in a family, along with the effect of marriage.

The first of these examples is the effect on family allowance. Family allowance rules require that the higher income spouse in a married family report the family allowance as income. Unmarried families can avoid this rule; the lower income spouse can claim the family allowance and reduce the tax burden of the higher income spouse.

The unmarried couple also benefits under the new family allowance repayment rules. Here family allowance benefits under this scheme are available in full only until the individual's income reaches $51,000. Unmarrieds can avoid the repayment threshold either through income splitting or by the lower income spouse claiming family allowance.

Two earner married families may not be able to use income splitting measures but they do benefit from the fact that the threshold is based on individual income. In a one-income family, the benefits are taxed back when the family's single earner's income is $51,000. A two-income family, however, with each parent earning $51,000, for a combined total of $102,000, retains their benefits in full. Concerning the child care deduction, if you are married you cannot pay your spouse to remain home and care for the children. If you are unmarried and living together with children, you can pay your spouse for caring for the children and then claim the payments for child care expense deduction which amount to $4,000 for each child under seven and $2,000 for children ages seven to fourteen.

Within the marriage category, however, the one income family is hit the hardest since it is only eligible for a $200 tax credit supplement to cover all the costs of raising children within the home. The working married couple on the other hand can obtain the full benefit of the deductions. The full costs of raising children within the home are not considered by the present system. The system interferes with parental decision making by making out of home child care the preferred economic option. The system is not neutral or passive.

To summarize the impact of just some of these rules, I would like to table an analysis of the tax circumstances of two families in Ontario. I have that here in both languages. In these examples each family has $60,000 of income. Similar examples could be presented from each of the provinces, but of course I am only presenting one here as an example.

One family lives a traditional life-style and has one income and three children, two under seven and one child over seven. One of the parents cares for the children at home. They are married. The other family is the same in every respect except that one of the younger children is unrelated to the others, both parents work—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): We require unanimous consent for the hon. member to table a document. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Johnson: The other family, as I was saying, is the same in every respect except that one of the younger children is unrelated to the others. Both parents work, earning $36,000 and $24,000, for a total of $60,000. The adults are not married.

Let me say at the outset that this analysis is designed to dramatize the impact of the Income Tax Act on these two families, but it does not by any means use all the loopholes that are available. It may seem incredible, but the total taxes paid by these two families differ by over $12,200. That is over $1,000 per month more tax that the traditional family pays. Almost half of this can be related to the $36,000—$24,000 income split. The other half is due only to the fact that the traditional couple is married.

In the examples that I have tabled, the income splitting effect has been separated from the marriage effect by also including data for a married couple with the same income split.

The tables show that the total taxes of a one earner family with three children and a family income of $60,000 are more than $6,700 higher than the two income married couple with the same number of children and the same income. The total taxes of a married two income couple with three children and a family income of $60,000 are more than $5,400 higher than the unmarried two earner couple in the same circumstances.

As I have said, the combined effect is that the total taxes of a one earner married couple with three children and a family income of $60,000 are more than $12,200 higher than for the unmarried couple in similar circumstances.

There is no doubt that we have a problem, but where do we go from here? The answer lies in the throne speech. We must carefully review not just tax legislation but all legislation that affects families. There is no easy solution. We are all aware of the difficult financial circumstances Canada faces with its mounting debt and seemingly intractable deficits. We need a complete review of all legislation and regulations that deal with family. Fairness must be the keystone of any response that we develop.

The other guiding principles in the throne speech—efficiency, effectiveness, and the protection of individual rights—must also be fundamental to our response. Directionally we must be certain that we are fiscally responsible. Family support already costs this government over $10 billion a year. Our challenge therefore is not to spend more money but to do a better job with what we have. The issue is fairness.

• (1740)

One of the difficulties we have is defining the family and developing laws that treat all families fairly. I submit that the definition of a family should not be based on relationships between adults, but on the presence and circumstances of children. Children define families and are its most vulnerable members.

Surely there are opportunities for us to combine the dizzying array of family support systems—family allowance, GST credits, child tax credits, equivalent to married exemptions, spousal credits and social assistance plans, all of these—into one meaningful payment that can be directed to children based on their circumstances, not that of their parents. This would allow more meaningful support to be directed, for example, to children in single adult households who are truly disadvantaged. It would also mean that parents would have a greater freedom in deciding whether or not to care for their children at home.

An alternative would be to develop a system of family taxation, a system through which people gain access to preferred methods of taxation through commitment to family responsibilities.

Another approach might be to extend all family attribution rules to all persons in a household.

It is not my purpose today to propose an all encompassing solution to a very complex problem. Rather, it is to applaud our government and our Prime Minister for their forthrightness and courage in opening this subject up for discussion and for committing to review all aspects of government policy that relate to families.

An opportunity exists for us to re-establish the family as a unifying factor as we design our constitutional relationships. I can foresee a national program of family support that binds the country with common standards and commitments to national well-being, similar to our national medicare program and our pension legislation.

It may be appropriate to establish a program that is consistent nationally and can be augmented by provinces or regions to account for local differences in living standards, culture and lifestyles. This would mean abandoning the Canada Assistance Plan, but we must not be afraid to establish clearer responsibilities and delegate taxing authority to the specific level of government that has the spending responsibility.

Clearly, I support constitutional models which have some shared responsibilities, but which limit the national role to setting and taking responsibility for minimum national standards. I prefer universality and I hope that we can get away from complicated tax brackets.

In closing, we are faced with many problems, but also with an historic opportunity. In the context of revitalizing our Constitution, we can reassess our approach to families and develop laws which are, above all, fair to all families, which are effective and efficient, and which return to parents the primary responsibility and the

ability to choose what they consider the best form of upbringing for their children.

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a few comments and maybe ask a question here or there.

Listening to the Prime Minister this afternoon and the hon. member who has just spoken, there seems to be a linkage in the throne speech between Canadian unity and the economy. I agree with it and our party has been saying it all along. I am glad that the government has finally realized it.

I do not understand how, if you examine the economy and what is happening and the policies of this government, it can put forth such a throne speech and believe in it. It is certainly not doing anything for the economy, or more accurately it is doing the wrong things for the economy.

I want to give a very specific example. In my riding, the unemployment rate has gone up in the last little while. Nationally it has gone down and the government has bragged about that, but it has gone up in my riding. The unemployment rate is at 18.5 per cent in my riding. Last week, Canada Post announced that it would eliminate 11.5 jobs at the post office in Campbellton, a city in my riding. It is going to relocate those jobs to another city farther south where the unemployment rate is much lower.

That does not make sense. I would have thought that since the unemployment rate is so high in an area, the government would try to at least preserve what employment is there, if not add to it.

There seems to be a movement in government toward a lack of compassion or thought. People are just a bunch of numbers. The government is eliminating the federal presence right across Canada while trying to convince people that this is a country that has to remain united.

It is unbelievable that there is nothing in the throne speech about job creation. We are talking about 10 years from now. There might be the creation of maybe 2 million jobs, or whatever.

What is happening today? That is the key—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, 1,500,000 Canadian men and women are looking for work across this country. There is nothing in the speech from the Throne that can give them hope. There is nothing in it for the fishermen or the workers in the mining and forest industries.

I ask the honorable member who has the floor if he can explain why the Speech from the Throne contains no job-creating program.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Before I recognize the hon. member for Calgary North, I must say that I have five questioners here, six now.

If you would like to use this question, I would like to get everybody in. It will be a little difficult, but I will try.

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, I will try to be brief in response to that rather rambling question, which was somewhat unconnected to the speech that I made.

I think the issue of jobs and the health of the economy is best outlined by the way the interest rates have been coming down. The government has been applying its economic policies to get this country moving again.

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, I want to very sincerely applaud not only the remarks that my hon. colleague made today, but the tremendous and intense effort that he has put into the family caucus.

As you may or may not know, he chairs the family caucus. It has been a refreshing time since the hon. colleague has taken on that role.

He made a comment that seems to underlie his motivation. It dealt simply with fairness. That is essentially what he is after.

I will ask a question and then follow it up with a bit of background to provide the basis from which the question comes. It concerns the family caucus.

I am inquiring whether the family caucus has addressed child care as it relates to the child care needs for single parents, as it relates to those who choose to stay at home, the relative fairness of existing tax laws, and that sort of thing.

The background I wish to provide the member I gained from knocking on doors. There are situations where single parents have found it beneficial to them and their

family to stay at home and raise their children, on the one hand. On the other, there are people who prefer to stay at home and raise their families in an environment where there is a spouse working and bringing income into the family.

There is the question of income tax rules affecting both of those situations. I also knocked on a farmer's door where the wife said that if the husband hired a tractor driver, the tractor driver's wages are deemed to be a business expense while if she hires day-care and rides the tractor, the day-care expenses that she incurs are not deemed to be an expense.

That is the background for that question.

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my hon. colleague.

I would like to mention that the issue is certainly fairness. Within that issue is the issue of choice. We cannot develop a program that gives everyone the choice to do just what they want to do because of economic limitations.

We have to develop a program which delivers support to children so their parents and guardians can best choose what type of child care they should have. Within that concept, I would be willing to see considered a system whereby spouse can pay spouse to look after children. We could do away with the spousal deduction and allow it to be compensated for by one spouse to another in the tax system.

That system would also lead to homemaker pensions, and things like that. I think there is a lot to be said for that type of approach.

• (1750)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will recognize the hon. member for Edmonton Southeast, then the hon. member for Northumberland, then the hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia and then the hon. member for Oshawa, in that order.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, very briefly, I am glad to see that the hon. member is involved with fairness for families, but will he tell us how he thinks that raising taxes, I think it is 33 times since 1984, primarily for low and middle-income Canadians, has helped the state of the family in Canada.

Will he tell us how his interest rates have helped low and middle-income families pay mortgages? How his prolonged high dollar has helped families try to keep their jobs?

Will he tell us one single thing his government has done since 1984 that has helped the cause of building stronger families across Canada?

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, very briefly, as far as the economic issue of raising taxes is concerned, we do not deny that we have raised taxes to take care of the deficit left to us by the Liberals. I do not want to get into a long discussion on that.

As far as the one single thing the government has done, I think we should look back at the $130 million announced in the last session to help with the problem of violence in the family.

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, in the member's earlier comments, he, as have other members in the House debating the throne speech, referred to the section in the throne speech, and I will quote it:

> Our unity is strengthened by a strong economy.

Certainly, everybody in this House knows that we lack in a strong sense of unity in this country at this time and we certainly lack a strong economy.

It goes on to say in the throne speech:

> The disunity in the face of the global economic challenge invites decline.

As we stand here and debate, there is a growing crisis in our country that is brought about by actions of truckers across this country. I would say that action is simply symbolic of a crisis that is expressed to me day after day after day by constituents in my riding.

However, I get the sense on this side of the House that members on the other side of the House do not have that same sense of urgency and crisis existing in their constituencies.

I feel that we have right here in this House of Commons a constituent assembly and that many of us are prepared right now, today, to get on with the issue of our Constitution and our unity issues.

I want to ask the member of Parliament across the way if he has personally heard stories of the frustration and crisis among his constituents. If he has, how does he respond to his constituents and tell them to wait that it

will all come to pass. I have a terrible time trying to assure my constituents that their economy is going improve and that their country is going to stay together.

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to comment briefly. If the member opposite would like an example of how disunity invites decline, she should have listened to the member for Hamilton East a little earlier.

As far as the other comments are concerned, I know very well the frustrations of unemployment, having experienced it at times in my own family. I also know that the only way to get the country back on a healthy track is to stick with firm policies that reduce the deficit, bring interest rates down and get the country back to work.

An hon. member: Very wise.

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I really only have a comment. I commend the hon. member for Calgary North on what I think was a very outstanding, meaningful and practical contribution to the debate. I know the hon. member for Calgary North has developed a reputation as a hard worker, especially in this area of research into family issues, and fairness and equity in family taxation.

It is good that this House acquiesced unanimously to allow the tabling of some documents which the hon. member prepared. I would urge that all members have a look at them. I think it provides some important background material for deliberations which may come down the road.

I think that there are ways of rolling together this plethora of programs that we have relating to the family, to child care, to child tax credits and so on, of putting them perhaps all together in a more meaningful way, a way which may not require more money being spent. I think it is important that we not try to buy our way out, the way the opposition has suggested, the way the opposition have acted in the past, the way the present Ontario government suggests, that somehow you help young people by mortgaging their future.

I just want to congratulate the hon. member. One question I would ask him is: how can he justify in any way the actions of those who suggest that in order to solve the problems of today, we borrow more and more and more. Does he see that as a solution to the needs that have been expressed here today by opposition members?

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, very briefly, I do not see any excuse for borrowing money. As I said in my presentation, we spend some $10 billion a year now on family support. I think we have to do a better job with it.

Mr. Mike Breaugh (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I was struck by the sincerity and the thoroughness of the arguments the member put forward about things that were wrong with the tax that he supported just last year.

I am a little lost and confused. In this Chamber perhaps you can make that argument that this is all very well in the long run. I would like to ask him one simple question. Outside this Chamber, on Wellington Street this afternoon, are families whose lives have been ruined by the economic policies of this government. Has the member tried to go out there and explain it to them?

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, once again very briefly, I just want to explain that it is quite possible to support a tax like the goods and services tax and not be in agreement with every particular aspect of it.

The member opposite may recall that the report on the technical paper on the goods and services tax issued by the Standing Committee on Finance in November 1989 also commented on this problem and the need to come back to the inequities that may exist in the GST credit system. I do not think I need apologize at all for that. This is an area that needs substantial work in the future.

Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I realize it is traditional to thank the mover and seconder of the Speech from the Throne at the outset of one's remarks. I will have the pleasure of doing that in a few moments.

I am still basically a broadcaster by instinct, and so I will lead my remarks with the news that today, May 15, within the past 24 hours, the man who was supposed to become the president of Yugoslavia, Stipe Mesic, was the man who told me that he would be the last president of Yugoslavia as we have known it.

When a parliamentary delegation, as part of the Canada/Europe Parliamentary Association met with Mr. Mesic three weeks ago, I asked the then Vice-President from Croatia: "Mr. Mesic, I ask this question with sadness, but will you be the last president of Yugoslavia?" He answered me directly: "Mr. Scott, you asked the question with sadness, I answer it with joy. Yes, I will be

the last president of Yugoslavia." Well, Stipe Mesic never got the chance to take over as head of one of the most politically turbulent countries in the civilized world, which I will point out in a few moments, makes Canada's troubles seem like a calm cul-de-sac with little butterflies, by comparison.

Not simply because of tradition, but also because of admiration for both gentlemen, may I sincerely congratulate the mover and the seconder of the Speech from the Throne, the hon. member for Saint-Maurice, and the hon. member for Regina—Wascana.

As you know, I have been around here covering Parliament in the news business, or sitting in this place as the member for Hamilton—Wentworth since 1958. During those 33 years, I have sat through dozens of throne speeches, and their movers and seconders, and I cannot remember in recent times when I have heard more eloquent testimony to the reasons this country should hang together than those presented by the former Mayor of Regina and my friend from Quebec, a fellow journalist by background. Well done, Larry. Their genuinely expressed feelings, from very different parts of Canada, about what it means to keep this country united, lead me directly to what the throne speech says about how we are viewed outside these borders.

> Around the world Canada is respected for the constructive role we play in global affairs, for the protection we accord human rights. Millions of people around the world would gladly give up everything they have for the privilege in living in Canada.

• (1800)

Never did I realize that so profoundly as during a recent visit to Yugoslavia and Albania. I spent the Easter weekend in Albania, which is one of the most brutally repressed countries in eastern Europe as a result of 50 or 60 years of communism, as a result of an assignment by the Department of External Affairs. I also spent an unforgettable two days in Bulgaria while we were in eastern Europe. I will have more to say about those countries on another occasion. It is because there are so many hundreds of thousands of Canadians of Yugoslav origin that I must weigh my next remarks carefully.

This 24 hours in Yugoslavia could be truly historic; today, May 15, could signal the end of Yugoslavia as we know and treasure it.

Let me quote the distinguished *Toronto Star* columnist, Richard Gwyn.

> The country's present is defined by its past. North of a line essentially within Slovenia and Croatia you are still in central Europe. The towns and hamlets, neat and orderly, as if belonging to a poor province of Austria, and above all clearly European. South of the line, you are in the Balkans; everything is much poorer, is harder and starker and much more clearly Slav.

Mr. Gwyn points out:

> While in London last week, the Croat president Franjo Tudjman declared provocatively 'Serbs are another world and another civilization from Croats. It has long been probable that south Slavs, or Yugoslavs, would discover eventually that the common denominator was not enough to keep them together. Former President Tito did this by the power of his personality and by terror'.

To many Croats the creation of Yugoslavia was a forced partnership. The Croatian people never expressed a will to enter this state, according to one Croatian journalist. This two-way deep-seated mistrust has bubbled over as Croatia and Serbia clash over their differing views of a future Yugoslavia. The Serbian president Milosevic—and I will refer to him in a moment—and President Tudjman "like to fight; they enjoy the hate", contends Milovan Djilas, a former communist dissident and long-time observer of the Yugoslav political scene.

Some analysts say the current crisis—the tanks, the armoured vehicles, the troops, the shootings, the deaths—has been used by the communist leader of Serbia, Slobodad Milosevic, to "step up demands for emergency measures" to stop Stipe Mesic from assuming the presidency of Yugoslavia today. Serbia is also determined to prevent Croatia from holding a planned referendum on independence this coming Sunday, May 19.

As of today, President Milosevic seems to have got his way. Mesic is a Croatian who is understandably vehemently opposed to the Serbian president and all his works. I guess that is why the Serbian president and others in the collective presidency ganged up on Mr. Mesic and denied him the natural right to the presidency.

Tourism is a $2.5 billion a year business for the country of Yugoslavia. It has been severely harmed by the last several months of unrest. Hardest hit have been towns along the Adriatic coast, like Makarska, which earn their livelihood from foreign visitors. The dispute in Yugoslavia sharpened several weeks ago when Croatian policemen were sent to protect Kijevo, a Croatian village inside the Serbian enclave. Serbs replied with a blockade of all traffic into the village, cutting off food and medical shipments.

Shortly after the Yugoslav army arrived to act as a buffer between the two sides. Croatians were incensed that the army, which is led by a predominantly Serbian officer corps, did not move to open up the road to Kijevo and they organized a demonstration against the military in Split, a coastal city with a major garrison.

That protest and others damaged Yugoslavia's reputation. Those pictures toured the world. As Yugoslavia reaches the front pages and the TV screens of the world media, I believe it would be foolhardy to think that we can contain the unrest and turmoil to the confines of southeastern Europe.

We are now watching the unravelling of an international state, the total collapse of the political and economic structure of Yugoslavia. Holding this country together, or as we discovered while travelling through the various republics, this country of countries, with apologies to my right hon. friend from Yellowhead, will be a dangerous game requiring great skill. Maybe the whole thing can be settled peacefully. Canadians of Yugoslav origin tell us that "a just divorce settlement can be reached after an unhappy marriage". Maybe, but do not count on it.

If anyone attempts by force to create a new state of states, the army will be called in, violence will be the continuing inevitable result and then equally inevitably, you will have a civil war. That episode would widen, I believe, into a much larger regional crisis extending far beyond the borders of Yugoslavia and would attract world-wide attention and concern.

I hope the Canadian government will urge the Secretary General of the United Nations to stand by and be ready to move quickly with UN mediation efforts in Yugoslavia if the situation deteriorates in the way I fear it is doing now. The United Nations has been effective elsewhere around the world in containing those painfully difficult transitions on how to get from communism to democracy. That is really what this whole struggle in Yugoslavia is all about as tensions between the Serbians and the Croatians and the Muslims reach a fever pitch.

The Canadian delegation of parliamentarians to the various republics in Yugoslavia heard everyone talk about a peaceful resolution. We urged everyone to dissolve the union or restructure it, but do it peacefully. I can vividly remember the moment when I sat next to the President of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic. I literally erupted. I had my finger wagging, pleading with the communist boss of Serbia that we Canadians do not mind demonstrations. We tolerate and occasionally enjoy them in our country, including all the horn honking in front of the Parliament Buildings today. "But please, please for God sake", I asked the Serbian president, "try to avoid the international bloodstains of Yugoslavia's reputation by keeping your demonstrations peaceful as we try to do in Canada".

The official translator was simultaneously whispering in the president's ear. He kept nodding in apparent agreement. I am not sure what the enthusiastic handshake at the end of our encounter really meant, but I believe the violence one reads about on the front pages these days indicates that President Milosevic took my pleading with all the seriousness that he thought it deserved.

Yugoslavs are entirely on their own now. The west is no longer worried that the Soviets will try to exploit the situation now that the cold war is over. I am sad to say it, but I echo the words of Yugoslav's Mesic: "Croatia and Slovenia are just too European not to leave Yugoslavia sooner or later and enter Europe itself". I am deeply convinced after my travels through the many republics and the two provinces and after conversations with hundreds of Yugoslavs that some sort of loose federation is the only answer to the survival of the country as we know it. Were it not for the comments of somebody like Mesic, as I mentioned at the outset, I would optimistic that the collective presidency of the country might somehow result in a decision for the continuation of the multiplicity of states within a state. That collective presidency is meeting as I speak at this moment.

• (1810)

Even as a perennial optimist, I am doubtful about the outcome of this Sunday's referendum in Croatia and the resulting fallout. Now, as the crisis deepens, I think it is going to mean that Yugoslavians are going to have to keep stiff upper lips and white-knuckle their way through this, with hopefully a dash of diplomacy thrown in. Otherwise Yugoslavia may be just hours away from a full-fledged civil war.

Indeed, Slovenia has already been heading outward toward western Europe. Slovenia's local parliament has passed laws of dissociation from Yugoslavia. Does that sound familiar? Outright independence in Slovenia is planned for June. Croatia would like to do the same except for one slight problem. Of its five million people 600,000 are Serbs. Again, does that sound familiar? Quebec has 5,300,000 population, the English speaking minority, 637,000.

The tragedy of Yugoslavia sends a very real message to Canada. It is hard to believe that even the most nationalistic Quebecers cannot understand the consequences of dissociation, or separating. Quite simply it means the disintegration of Canada as we know it. Just as we are seeing the disintegration of Yugoslavia as we know it now, I thank God for the thrust in the throne speech which says, in effect, let us build Canada as we know it but let us build it better. I do not want to see my country break apart the way we are watching it happen right now in Yugoslavia.

The other welcome direction in the Speech from the Throne is the fact that individual members of Parliament will be allowed freedom from discipline by the government in order to give expression to our views and the views of our constituents. I am taking the government at its word so here goes.

I want the goods and services tax, the GST, removed immediately from feminine hygiene products. This government is taxing the menstrual cycle while exempting donated male sperm and sperm banks from the GST.

Time after time, phone call after phone call, I have received the same answer from the Department of Finance: "Sorry, feminine hygiene products don't qualify under GST-exempt regulations. They cannot be zero-rated like male sperm".

I want the Minister of Finance to give me logical reasons why not. So far, all finance officials have told me is that these products are not health/medical related. I believe they are.

While I have received the utmost co-operation from both finance department officials and spokespersons from the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, the hon. member for Capilano-Howe Sound, I am still waiting for answers that make sense. I am going to keep the questions going until I get those answers, and until we get the GST removed from feminine hygiene products.

If I have time I would also like to draw to the attention of the House the outrageous largess that this government is lavishing upon one of Canada's greatest and wealthiest superstars, Wayne Gretzky. Why on earth should the Canadian taxpayer be subsidizing a Calgary-based company, Kevin Sports Toys, to the tune of $1 million for the "Great One's" blessing on NHL insignia and colours, with royalties in the millions, to the disadvantage of one of my Dundas companies, M.A. Henry Ltd., which is trying to make it on its own without government money?

Since M.A. Henry stands to suffer as a result of Ottawa's $1 million to Kevin Toys of Calgary, will somebody please tell me why this is being done at all? Why is this government not playing on a level board hockey table top? Can't Wayne Gretzky make enough millions on the ice without dipping into our pockets?

Mr. Speaker, I hope to have the chance to put these and other questions as the days in this Parliament roll on. I thank you and hon. members for your attention.

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, I was listening with interest to the hon. member, but I was in my office and I missed some of what he said.

He addressed a very important issue, the situation in Yugoslavia. As he said, Mr. Mesic was not elected president. He was vice-president and it was his turn to become President of Yugoslavia. I think the vote for his presidency was four in favour and one abstention.

Yugoslavia is going through a very difficult time. The people of Yugoslavia have different views of what their country should be, as do we in Canada. We have the same type of problem. There are differences of opinion about what Canada should be.

It is a very difficult question. I wish to ask the hon. member one particular question. Does he believe that the Croatian people have the right to self-determination? I attended the election Mr. Tudjman as President of Croatia. It was a free and democratic election.

The people of Croatia had spoken. They said: "We want a somewhat looser association within that confederation." Does he believe that the will of the people should be respected?

At the same time, I would like to congratulate the hon. member in speaking about the GST and how unfairly it is applied to certain products. I hope he will continue his fight. He should get the help of all the members.

Mr. Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth): It is a very tricky question that the hon. member for Calgary Northeast has put to me, about whether Croatia has the right to secession. The democratically expressed will of the people could mean that it would have the right to secede if it did not affect the welfare, the outcome and indeed the entire viability of the country as a whole.

As I pointed out, there is a huge Serbian minority in Croatia which has, for obvious reasons, very real concerns about Croatia trying to secede and joining Europe. This is what the fight is all about.

To say that the Croatian people have the right to secede and the right to independence, well. Vice-President Mesic, the man who almost became President of Yugoslavia, has said that if he did not become president, he would work for Croatia's independence and secession.

I feel that if Croatia left Yugoslavia, it would be the end of Yugoslavia as we know it and that would be a tragedy. In the same way, if Quebec decided to leave Canada, it would be the end of Canada as we know it and that would be an even greater tragedy.

I really believe that if there is a will and a way for the states in Yugoslavia to co-operate in some sort of loose confederation and keep the country together, that is the best way to go.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, I was encouraged by the last couple of moments of the hon. member's intervention on the throne speech.

I wondered, for a little while, whether I was sitting in on a debate at an external affairs committee. I know that the hon. member is very interested in the affairs of Yugoslavia. I was under the mistaken impression that he was going to try to relate that, in one way or another, to the throne speech. But, he recovered and he talked about the independence of members, addressing himself to the unfair imposition of the GST, but stopping just short by noting only one unjust application of the GST. I would have hoped that he would have gone further. I also would have hoped that he would have elaborated even further on the question of government financing of industries in various parts of the country, willy-nilly on an *ad hoc* basis, without putting forward an appropriate industrial strategy.

• (1820)

I was mildly encouraged because, quite frankly, on hearing of the troubles of Yugoslavia and eastern Europe and the Balkans themselves, I wondered whether in fact he was going to, at the same time, avail himself of the opening that the government had presented to him by saying that the throne speech accomplished one very important factor, which was to free all hon. members so that they could give the appropriate advice to this House and to the government. In that way, he could avoid such problems by looking at the inequities and the wide open vacuums, the caverns of emptiness in the throne speech by telling this House and members on this side just what it is that his government would do specifically, not only what but how they would solve the problems that they have outlined as a result of the enormous dirth of educational abilities that his government has outlined.

What would he do specifically to alleviate some of the problems that we noted, and as he has noted in his good report on Yugoslavia and other parts of the world, with respect to immigration? Are we going to have, as he would suggest, an industrial policy designed to get us out of the doldrums into which his government has driven this country? Is he going to address, by using the kind of independence that he says he would like for all members of this House, the position that would give us the kind of wealth and security and unity that all Canadians crave today?

Why did he forgo the opportunity to avail himself of the enormous occasion presented to him in this speech by diverting to Yugoslavia?

Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, that was one heck of a speech. If I could have the unanimous consent of the House to continue for another 40 minutes, I might be able to address some of the issues that the hon. member has raised.

Let me just say this. This is the government which is allowing members of Parliament the freedom and independence to speak out even if it happens to embarrass the government or even if it happens to go against the government. I never noticed that happening in previous governments, particularly the one in which the hon. member represents now. I think that is something to be applauded. I think the Speech from the Throne has made a wonderful move for this House to be able to give us, as individual members of Parliament, backbenchers, on behalf of our constituents, total freedom to speak out and I have done that on a couple of issues.

Sometime, Mr. Speaker, when I have the chance and when you will give me an extra 20 or 30 minutes in front of the hon. member, I would be delighted to answer his questions.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I want to applaud the member for Hamilton—Wentworth on his comments, particularly the sensitivity that he has shown towards women in his remarks. It is not the first time that this member has shown that kind of enlightened attitude towards women. I am pleased to know he is working towards removing the GST from feminine hygiene products such as tampons and sanitary napkins.

I raised this in the House of Commons before the GST was passed and I have written to the minister and have not had a satisfactory response. I would ask the member whether he would also work towards removing the GST from birth control products. In an age when sexually transmitted diseases are rampant in this society, I believe that the GST should be removed from condoms. Even some provinces do not tax these products.

Mr. Scott: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her comments. It is a very worth-while suggestion. I am sure that officials in the Department of Finance and the Minister of Finance will hear those representations.

I stress and emphasize that the removal of the GST on feminine hygiene products is related directly to health. This is definitely a health issue. I would like the Department of Finance to respond to that first. I am sure they will take your representations into consideration. I do, and I will make the point.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. The hon. member for Winnipeg—St. James.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, it certainly is a privilege for me to take part in this debate on the throne speech. I appreciate the opportunity to put a few thoughts and concerns on the parliamentary record.

The hon. member for Hamilton—Wentworth can certainly count on my support in his efforts to remove the GST from feminine hygiene products. I would also hope that the hon. member for Hamilton—Wentworth would support the efforts of many, many Canadians, millions of Canadians, to have the GST removed from reading materials. After all, we live in an age of increased awareness about the need for education. In the opinion of this side of the House, the GST is a barrier. It is a barrier to reading, a barrier to education. The sooner it is removed from reading materials the better.

As we discuss the throne speech that was delivered this week, it reminds me of some observations that we made some weeks ago when we were thinking about this particular event, the delivery of the throne speech. There were a lot of commentators in Canada saying that the throne speech was to be this government's renaissance, this government's renewal. This was the document that was going to signal to all Canadians that this government was going to turn a corner. It was going to stop some of its bad old ways and adopt some new ideas, some new plans to give Canadians some hope, to give Canadians some plans to get us out of the recession.

I have looked at and listened to the throne speech and I would have to say, humbly, that it is empty. It was nothing more than a lot of rhetoric. Nothing more than a lot of words.

After you listened to the throne speech, would you want Brian Mulroney as Prime Minister for four more years? I doubt that many Canadians would answer yes to

that question. Only a pretty devoted Tory could answer that question in the affirmative.

Let us just take the national unity issue, for example. Are we farther along on the road toward national unity than we were before Brian Mulroney became Prime Minister of Canada? Not on your life. This country is in a mess. There are few Canadians who can recall so much disunity, so much doubt about our future. It is because of a Prime Minister who acted like a fool and was thinking more about himself and about power than he was about his country.

There was a referendum in the province of Quebec in 1980 and federalism won. The Constitution was patriated shortly thereafter.

• (1830)

In fact, the Prime Minister supported Mr. Trudeau at the time. There was no suggestion from Brian Mulroney then that Quebecers were humiliated. That is the word that the Prime Minister has used, that Quebecers were humiliated by the patriation process. It certainly was not his notion then, but somehow it is now. He was the man who went from coast to coast to coast in this country saying that if Meech Lake is defeated it is a rejection of Quebecers, something that could not be further from the truth. Yet that is what the Prime Minister said.

Is it little wonder we have so much disunity in this country? Is it little wonder there is so much grave concern for the future of this country? It is because we have had a Prime Minister who, to use that cliché that has been used so many times, rolled the dice once too often.

I worry that he is the kind of man who is apt to do it again. He is a man who will put his own political interest ahead of that of Canadians, ahead of that of this country. That is deplorable.

We were hoping on this side of the House that there would be some kind of plan. I am still on the issue of national unity. We were hoping the throne speech would contain some kind of plan to deal with the national unity problem head on. What did we get? Just more promises of talk, more promises of studies, more promises of commissions. That is not what this country needs now. This country needs leadership, firm leadership because we are in perilous times.

We cannot just fool around, dither, stall and wait until next fall for some kind of government plan. The clock is moving and we should not be waiting around.

On the issue of national unity, would we want the Prime Minister for another four years? The answer is a clear no.

Let us look at the issue of the economy. Remember how the Conservatives offered so much hope? We went through the recession in the early eighties. Not only did we have a recession, but the debt piled up. We had a deficit and the Tories came along and said: "There will be a Renaissance. There will be a renewal of the economy. Elect us and just watch us. See how we turn the economy around". A lot of Canadians bought into that. They elected the Conservatives. They elected Brian Mulroney.

Now it is almost seven years later and the economic despair that Canadians feel rivals the despair that was felt by our parents and our grandparents back in the so–called dirty thirties. Look at the figures: 1.5 million Canadians unemployed. Those are depression figures. Just in the last little while 19,000 Canadians have lost their assets through bankruptcy. Children are going hungry in this country, children are going to bed hungry every night.

Yet it was this government who said: "Give us a chance and we will revive the economy". They talked about the deficit and they talked about the debt.

We all know that the debt has doubled since 1984. People wonder where the the government spends all the money.

They increase taxes, they increase the debt 100 per cent, and they ask: what do they get for it? What do they see? How they howl about the deficit. How they bemoan the deficit. Very little happens, very little happens. It is a conundrum. It certainly is a conundrum for almost all Canadians, a government that says that a deficit is so pernicious to the economy that it really blocks our hopes and dreams for a better Canada, and yet it just sits there. It does very little about it.

It makes you wonder and it certainly makes you cynical. I have come to believe that this government would like to have the deficit there, perhaps forever, because it is the stick it uses to beat us over the head. It is the government's *raison d'être*. Everything it does is all in the name of deficit reduction. It goes ahead and destroys our public institutions, our democratic institutions and

destroys Canadians' ability to have a better economy, all in the name of deficit reduction. We get the destruction, but we never get the deficit down. It makes you wonder, does it not?

God forbid if we ever had this government for another 10 or 20 years. My guess is that if it were here for another 10 or 20 years we would still have its deficit. It has absolutely no credibility whatsoever when it comes to deficit reduction, none, absolutely none.

Remember the former Minister of Finance, now the Minister for International Trade and some other things, and how we had to have high interest rates to beat down inflation, to wring inflation out of the economy? We have noticed in the past few weeks a reversal. Now we have to have lower interest rates. So what is it? Is it high interest rates that Michael Wilson espouses? Is that what he embraces? Or is it now lower interest rates?

There is the high dollar. The former finance minister, who preaches an economic philosophy that is supposed to be the be-all and end-all to our problems, creates a high dollar which is a barrier and an impediment to our exporters. How many business people in this country have asked for a lower dollar? How many business people have asked for lower interest rates? The government does not listen, except now in the last few weeks when there has apparently been this conversion on the part of the government, on the part of the former finance minister, and I suppose on the part of the current finance minister that we need lower interest rates.

I ask the question again: Would we really want the Prime Minister for another four years? The answer from this side is no. I notice that the good Minister of Justice would like to have him for another four years. I think she should reflect on that. I think it is a poor reflection of her judgment.

• (1840)

It seems to me that based on this throne speech this government is jaded, it is exhausted, it has no ideas, it is drifting and it is stalling. It is in stall and it has lost absolutely all moral authority to govern.

Canadians have said that in spades. They do not want this government around any more. Just look at the polls. They do not want this government any more. The sooner they can get rid of it, the happier they will be.

Medicare has been eroded by this government. It is the cornerstone of our social programs—my guess is that 95 to 99 per cent of Canadians support it—and yet there is no mention of medicare in the throne speech. In the last session of the House, we on this side put forward a motion asking the government to reaffirm its support of medicare. It said "no".

It voted against that motion. Now we find—given its negative vote on the motion, and it should not come as any great surprise—that there is no mention of medicare in the throne speech.

I come from western Canada. There is no mention of Senate reform. I think that the Prime Minister alluded to some kind of Senate reform. He was very vague in his remarks this afternoon but in the throne speech there was no suggestion of an elected Senate; none whatsoever.

Western Canadians are demanding a greater voice. They are demanding equality. That is what they want. They want a change in their parliamentary institutions. Western Canadians want an elected Senate right now. What do we get from this government? Zero.

Western Canadians will disapprove of any government that continues to bury its head in the sand.

I could not find the word "agriculture" in the throne speech, and yet down on the farm times have not been tougher.

An hon. member: You should have tried farming in 1980 and 1981, or in 1979.

Mr. Harvard: Try it in 1991.

An hon. member: They are trying it.

Mr. Harvard: They are trying, and you are not helping. What do you do? You open up the borders to our wheat.

There are many wheat organizations in this country that said: "Keep the wheat out." You would not listen because you are so bloody arrogant. You never listen. You are despicable. Absolutely true.

Farmers do not want American wheat.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There is going to be an opportunity for questions and comments very shortly. The hon. member still has two minutes left in his speech.

Mr. Harvard: The reason American wheat is allowed into Canada is because of that poorly negotiated free trade agreement.

We have had a wheat board in this country for more than 50 years; a very good agency working on behalf of farmers. This government, through its policies, will likely destroy that agency.

The Wheat Board has served Canadian prairie farmers extremely well and yet this government says: "We will let American wheat in and we will put the Canadian Wheat Board at risk."

That is the kind of thank you that Canadian farmers get from this government.

Let me just say something in my last couple of moments. It concerns the credibility of this government and, in particular, the credibility of the Prime Minister. There is no credibility. The government is now telling us that ministers, including the first minister, knew nothing about the Iraqi ambassador being allowed into Canada. If you can believe that, you can believe any kind of preposterous story.

What does this government say in the throne speech? The throne speech talks about a learning culture being the cornerstone of this government's agenda for prosperity and yet it is this government that has cut some $160 billion from transfer payments. The government has the gall to say that in the throne speech.

I have just one more thing to say but I will leave it there because I know I am out of time.

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make a few comments. I know my hon. colleague across the aisle would very much like to put forward a credible debate, so I would just like to suggest a few changes in dates.

He started his address talking about the referendum in 1980 in the province of Quebec, one which all Canadians who valued the future of the country supported. The Prime Minister of the day made it appear that if Quebec citizens made a decision to stay within Canada, he would then address some of the concerns and the outstanding grievances of the province of Quebec. That was in 1980. That same Prime Minister, just so the member opposite recalls, brought home and developed a Constitution in Canada and presented it without the signature of the province of Quebec, the very province representing the very citizens that in 1980 that Prime Minister had told: "We will address your concerns in the future."

The Prime Minister today, Brian Mulroney, addressed those concerns and will continue to work to address those concerns.

We can speak briefly about the notwithstanding clause. It has been identified by Manitobans, the province that the hon. member comes from, as something they do not like because it allowed the province of Quebec to implement legislation which we all find difficult to understand. That was put forward in the Constitution created by the previous Prime Minister, Mr. Trudeau, and the member sitting opposite, who supports him and tries to glorify him in his absence.

We have, in the Speech from the Throne, the identification of a future. We have, at the present time, commissions, such as the Spicer commission, talking to Canadians. We have the Beaudoin–Edwards commission from the House of Commons and the Senate talking to Canadians. We have put forward another opportunity for people to express themselves.

I want to take just a second to respond to the member's comments regarding leadership. There are examples of leadership, some are very recent. Let us talk about what took place in the Persian Gulf and the leadership that was necessary at that time and was shown by Brian Mulroney, both nationally and internationally.

Let us contrast that leadership to the leadership shown by the leader of his party who identified the need, but as soon as it became difficult said: "Canadian men and women serving and providing world security should be returned home." Then, in 48 hours, he reversed that decision and said: "Well, they are there now, they may as well stay." That is not the leadership that the Canadian people want. I think the hon. member understands that there is a contrast and the present Prime Minister stands as a leader.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Winnipeg—St. James. Before the hon. member answers the question, I would like to say that the hon. member for Sudbury will be recognized, the hon. mem-

ber for Cambridge and the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur. Please use discretion.

• (1850)

Mr. Harvard: Mr. Speaker, I will touch briefly on two or three areas raised by the hon. Minister of Agriculture.

This man talks about leadership and yet we have a Prime Minister who has redefined leadership as being a slave to George Bush.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Harvard: That is his definition of leadership. It is very reasonable to believe that it was George Bush—they never want to hear the truth, they just howl and bark like dogs, that is what they do— and the White House which wanted the Iraqi Ambassador to come to Canada and not to their country. Guess what? The Prime Minister of Canada says: "Yes, we will bring him in".

The hon. Minister of Agriculture speaks of the events of the early 1980s. He conveniently does not tell the House who the premier of Quebec was back in 1981 and 1982. It was a chap by the name of René Levèsque, who would have never signed his signature to any document that would have recognized the success of Canada and certainly the success of federalism.

One more thing. The hon. Minister of Agriculture speaks of the notwithstanding clause. Again he conveniently forgets to tell us who pushed the notwithstanding clause. It was one of his Conservative lodge brothers, Sterling Lyon, then premier of Manitoba. He attacks the notwithstanding clause as I do. The Prime Minister attacks the notwithstanding clause, yet when it came to Meech Lake did the Prime Minister, Mr. Brian Mulroney, try to have the notwithstanding clause removed?

An hon. member: Of course not.

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on a very spirited speech.

When I sit in this great Chamber and someone speaks and gets that kind of reaction from the other side of the House we know how uncomfortable they are feeling. They ought to be very uncomfortable.

Congratulations to my colleague.

I have a question for my colleague. I listened to the Speech from the Throne. I have an excerpt and it shows the lack of reality surrounding this government. It says, and I am quoting from *Hansard*, page 3, May 13, 1991:

> The Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement has helped to secure the Canadian economy in difficult times.

Where are they getting this idea? Today we have truckers blocking highways everywhere, complaining about the lack of jobs, the lack of a level playing field. That is very symptomatic of what is going on across the nation. There is a loss of jobs, a loss of anything that we might have had that was good.

I ask my colleague where are we going and what can we do for the people of Canada if this government will not listen?

Mr. Harvard: Mr. Speaker, there is no hope that this government will change the free trade agreement. It made a mistake. It made the mistake more than two years ago and it seems more than happy to live with that mistake.

If this government found any positive figures whatsoever, any positive numbers to support the free trade agreement, it would be hollering from the roof tops every minute of every day. The fact of the matter is that there are no positive results. There are no positive figures. They are negative.

Somewhere between 300,000 and 400,000 jobs have been lost. Plants have been closed. Hundreds and hundreds of businesses have been closed. So there is no hope. What we need is a new government and the sooner Canadians get it the better.

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, last week the province of Ontario came out with a budget and I would like the member to remember these simple numbers. Two years ago the province of Ontario had a balanced budget. Now they want to run a budget of $9.7 billion, $10 billion, and $9 billion and $8 billion, and $8 billion for the next four years. The premier of that province defends it by saying that today they are only paying 11 cents of the tax dollar toward the debt and they can keep it under control.

In 1968 when Prime Minister Perfect took over, we had a balanced budget and the federal government was paying 12 cents of every dollar on the debt. At that time

he and his finance ministers started to run deficits, and at the end of the reign it was 32 cents of every tax dollar that was being used to pay down the debt.

I know the hon. member will give me a very straight answer. Is he telling me that the policy of the Liberal Party is to build the economy by continuing to build up deficits? He seems to be suggesting that the policies of Prime Minister Perfect are exactly the policies Premier Rae is following in Ontario.

Mr. Harvard: I am glad that the hon. member from Ontario has taken note that Ontario had a balanced budget a couple of years ago. My memory tells me that it was a Liberal government.

But, no, I will answer him honestly, it is not the policy of this party to build prosperity on deficits. That is not our policy.

Let me tell you this, Mr. Speaker. This government for more than six years had a golden opportunity to deal with the deficit. It had a golden opportunity to deal with the debt and it failed. It failed miserably. And what do we see today? More bankruptcies, more despair, more unemployment, more closure of plants—that is what we got from this government. We do not have to take any lessons from these people.

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the learning culture in the throne speech. Does my hon. colleague agree with me that when we talk about learning culture it is just a use of words rather than action? If we look at the action of the government in the past on education, we see that it has placed the GST on books and magazines, which is actually a tax on learning. It has increased postal rates on community newspapers. It has taxed student loans. It has made cuts in transfer payments which are to post-secondary education so it has increased the cost for education. In my estimation it is a historic failure.

I am wondering if my colleague could comment on this learning culture that the Prime Minister wants to institute.

Mr. Harvard: I alluded to this matter toward the end of my speech, Mr. Speaker. The government talks about a learning culture and yet this is the government that has taken, on four separate occasions for a total of $160 billion, out of transfer payments. It has destroyed our public institutions so I ask the question: "Who is going to finance the reduction in literacy in this country?" We have a serious problem with respect to illiteracy but it has diminished our public institutions to such an extent that we cannot cope any more.

It is the same thing with education, exactly the same thing. It is just more hypocrisy from this government.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today, and I thank the House for giving me this opportunity. I believe this Speech from the Throne was one of the most important this government has presented and I think that it meets the aspirations and expectations of the Canadian people as to what we want to become.

Mr. Speaker, I represent the marvelous riding of Argenteuil—Papineau, as you know. There are 55 municipalities within my riding, from Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes, at one extremity, to Plaisance, in the Petite Nation area, at the other with Morin Heights and Saint-Adolphe-d'Howard to the north. Culture is febrile in my riding which I would describe as a microcosm of Quebec society and perhaps our Canadian society. Indeed, it is predominantly French-speaking, although a substantial English-speaking minority lives in the Lachute area, in the north and centre of the riding. As a matter of fact, those are people I come across regularly and they have been living in harmony with the francophone community forever.

• (1900)

Of course, it happens that we have some minor of problems communication, but friendship, or the neighborhood spirit as we say, makes for good relations. We too have our share of marginal elements who would like to sever our connections with the rest of Canada or to force the people of Quebec to take actions much more centered on one issue. As the saying goes, it is not a matter of the head but of the heart. So, for my constituents, the whole constitutional issue is very much a matter of the heart.

I think they have been deeply hurt by the failure of Meech. That is what I hear when I tour the riding anyway. I consult my constituents as much as I can and let them know for instance when I have breakfast with some of them as I do sometimes—be it only for my personal satisfaction—that I would rather spend seven

days a week in my riding meeting and discussing with them, but that duty calls in Ottawa.

What I am told on such occasions, Mr. Speaker, is that they want respect. The French Canadians want us, their fellow citizens, to respect the fact that they are French-speaking and want to live in harmony in the predominantly English-speaking North-American culture. I think that the English-speaking community in my riding misundertood, and certainly did not quite stomach—I have to mention this to give an accurate account of what they tell me, the Quebec sign law, Bill 178. They saw it as an attack on their personal and individual rights while, for their francophone counterparts, it was merely a collective expression of the will to preserve their culture and to save whatever little French fact was left in North America.

Mr. Speaker, the men and women in my riding are also telling me that there is, of course, a world of difference between what is told and what actually happens. The constitutional debates have always been emotionally charged. That is nothing new! Take the 1980 referendum for instance. Just this past Tuesday, Mr. Speaker, people I considered as ardent nationalists and separatists were telling me that, with the passing of time, they are not so sure anymore that Quebec should separate, that separating would be a good thing for Quebecers. They have come to realize that, finally, every effort should be made to save this great country of ours.

We often forget to remind ourselves that our country is the second largest in the world, with its border stretching over 8,850 kilometers. That is huge. There is a saying, Mr. Speaker, according to which one cannot appreciate what one does not know. Often, we think that the people of Manitoba and Alberta must be quite tough. But that is not true. When we travel there, we feel very welcome. Some of my constituents visited Western Canada and they were delighted, and even surprised, by the reception they got.

Mr. Speaker, whenever I travel throughout Canada, I know I will be warmly greeted by the vast majority of Canadians. Quebecers have always had a strong personality. They are very open. They try very hard to speak English when English-speaking tourists stop them for information or directions. Quebecers are a very generous people. Everyone I met either in Atlantic or Western Canada have told me: There is a world of difference between what we hear and what really happen. Sometimes, we get a dangerously distorted picture simply because of some minor details.

Mr. Speaker, if I mention all this it is because I want to relate an incident which has affected my constituents very deeply. When a very small group of dissidents trampled the Quebec flag in the Sault Ste Marie area, I think it was, when—

An hon. member: In Brockville.

Mrs. Bourgault: I'm sorry. That incident took place in Brockville, yes, thank you. The CBC and the media showed us these pictures about 40 times. Put yourself in the place of Quebecers who had just been through all the episodes of the Meach Lake saga, who believed that Canada had finally said yes to Quebec, and who see on their television set, on the CBC, a small group of people soiling, trampling on and burning the Quebec flag.

Then, subliminally, when one sees it many times, one tends to think that the majority is acting that way.

Mr. Speaker, when I meet my constituents, I often tell them: Listen, you say that we should care about spending, that we spend too much, that we are wasting money. Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is true. The government machinery is indeed an administrative monster and I hope that in his Speech from the Throne the Prime Minister gave an inkling of great progress in that regard. That government machinery really has to be reformed, because the right hand in there does not know what the left hand is doing. The worst department, in my opinion, is the Revenue Department, the Taxation Department. If you owe money or you are to get some, you are dealing with two different stories, but in the last analysis the guy downstairs does not know what the guy upstairs is doing. It is totally absurd because they are dealing with the same taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, some things also are absolutely incredible. Recently, in my riding, in spite of very harsh budget cuts, we managed to convince the Minister of Transport to grant the municipality of Lachute a small sum of $80,000 to repair the municipal airport located a few kilometres from Mirabel, whose future possibilities are outstanding. But, believe it or not, since it was money coming from the federal government, Quebec had to go through an enormous amount of red tape in order to

enable the municipality to spend this small amount of $80,000 on repairs needed at the airport.

So, the Economic Development Board, the municipality of Lachute, the Chamber of Commerce, all these bodies want to know what is the reason for these anomalies because everybody, including foreign investors, is waiting for these repairs and because it is only a study.

Certain things should not be, Mr. Speaker, and our constituents have reason to complain about government, at all levels. I only mention those two points because there would be too many, and I would need all my time if I were to mention them all.

Also, when I ask my constituents: "Listen, you say that we do not make enough cuts, that we must make more cuts. It is insane, the deficit is way too high. Where will that lead us?" And I tell them: "Give me some examples where we could make cuts."

• (1910)

Mr. Boudria: Fine. Dear GST!

Mrs. Bourgault: There, I can tell you that our constituents are just like us. You know, governments really reflect society. We must also submit to soul-searching. We also find it difficult to decide where to cut. It is all very well to talk, but again when it is time to act, all is different. Where shall we cut?

It happens every time—let me digress a little—during the debate on GST, as a matter of fact, most of the business representatives, and I will give no percentages, came before the Committee on Finance studying the tax and said: "Yes, GST is excellent; it's a necessary evil, but you must apply it. Go ahead, there is no problem; tax on manufactured goods is not good for businesses, we agree. However, please exempt us for such or such a reason." So, at the end of the proceedings, we realized that most businesses wanted cuts, but not on them.

It's always the same situation, Mr. Speaker, everywhere. People are concerned with their daily activities, for you know that besides political ideologies, there is a daily life for our constituents and it is not easy. I witnessed plant closures in my riding and I can tell you that I was first to wonder if free trade was responsible for all that. Many of my constituents believed so. But, after meeting with people and speaking to them, I came to the conclusion that most of those closures were due to mismanagement, overexpansion; those were businesses which used to manage growth but suddenly were unable to manage downsizing. In brief, they were unable to stand up to the challenge.

However, our constituents realize that we are living in an extremely generous society and that we are so spoiled that we consume frantically, Mr. Speaker, me included. I do not say that only for others, I include myself in the picture. So we consumed so much that we did not ask ourselves if it was harmful to the environment, if natural resources were there forever without creating any problem. Our quality of life demands that we own two cars and that we go to restaurants at least twice a week. Anyway, you know, we consume a lot and we work twice as much. Where is the quality of life for the families?

Today, we talk about latch key children, those who arrive from school before their mothers get home from work. Why? It is often because the family needs money, consumes a lot, needs a lot of money to face its commitments. Finally, who suffers? It is the latch key children.

Mr. Speaker, where is our quality of life now? That is the question that I ask myself. When women, more often than not—I know that, nowadays, men are greatly involved in the issue of child care—but we must say that it is often women who have to face child care problems. These women work inside the home and outside the home and are exhausted. How do you think families can cope with that without any problem?

Mr. Speaker, we always say that we have the governments that we deserve. But what can we do individually, each and everyone, in our own backyard? What can we do at home to set an example? We say: If things are bad, the government is to blame. But we do not want to look at our own faults. What do we do? Do we consume too much? No. Do you know what we do, Mr. Speaker? We put our garbage on the sidewalk and we say: I don't care where this is going, as long as it is not in my backyard. A truck comes around and goes away with our garbage. But then, when we talk about waste management, sanitary landfills, and so on, we say: "Take that anywhere, but not in my backyard!"

You see, we have a conscience. I believe we should, all of us, ask ourselves a question: "Where are we going, and what can we do individually to prove that we can, too, tighten our belt?" We ask the government to cut, but we should be in a position to tell the government where to cut. Are we capable today, when we want services, more services, of saying that we will pay for them?

Mr. Speaker, time is running out, and I still have so many things to add that I would need more than the 20 minutes allowed. I know that I still have some time left, and I would like to come back to the Speech from the Throne. The government said that it would act on the education level. For some persons, it may look as if the gouvernment will intervene in matters under provincial jurisdiction. At first sight, when we look at it cooly, rapidly, we may think that it could be true. But if we analyse it further, we have to look at the clientele it will serve in the long run. This is aimed at illiterate people, people who cannot read nor write, and who are desperate.

So, if we consider the people this is designed for, we will be less inclined to think that it is a question of provincial jurisdiction. Lets take the case of the Canada Health Act for exemple. We have national standards, but this issue falls under provincial jurisdiction. Why not have national standards in education for literacy and the like, while this issue would still fall under provincial jurisdiction? It is something that I would like to know. Like every Quebecer, I fiercely defend my province's juristictions and I would not like an important federal interference in these areas.

The government also mentioned the native issue. Mr. Speaker, my riding went through a crisis last summer. I talked about it in my speech after the Oka crisis. The members of this House should not worry. In my opinion, there will not be another crisis this summer. I do not think so, because the Oka people has once again realized that a very small group—let us not be afraid of stating the facts as they are—a very small group of armed warriors hiding behind masks came to Oka against the will of a majority of Kanesatake citizens. What did they do? Four or five persons managed to attract the national medias' attention and thereafter, everyone thought that all Mohawks were like that. Such a parallel bears importance in relation to what I said about the Quebec flag.

So I must say no, Mr. Speaker, though the populations of Oka and Kanesatake have a hard time recovering from that serious crisis, they do not want another one, absolutely not, not even anything close to what happened last summer.

However, now that our eyes have thus been opened concerning the aboriginal question, my constituants and, I think, every Canadian man and woman, wants to know what sovereignty means. They ask me: "Mrs. Bourgault, does that mean that the warriors, the Mohawks will continue to illegally sell cigarettes and deal in illicit gambling? Is that what sovereignty means? While a few miles away, in Oka, I sell cigarettes and that Indian is also selling cigarettes. Will sovereignty mean that he will be able to sell his cheaper than mine?" Those are basic questions that our constituents ask.

It is the same thing with the administration of justice and family matters, for example. I think all members must have felt a tremendous sadness last week when once again we saw a case of violence against women, a woman who was killed by an ex-inmate and who was kept three days in her apartment. We cannot remain unmoved when we hear about such cases, and with the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, I hope we will find solutions. I hope we will go beyond talking and actually find concrete solutions and see how Canadian men and women, how we as a community can stop, can wipe out this incredible and intolerable violence being inflicted on women and children.

Mr. Speaker, I am interested in fiscal justice. There is a group called the alliance for fiscal justice, which has proved beyond a doubt that the tax system is more favourable for couples living common law with children, than for married couples. This is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I agree that we should change the way Ottawa works, as I said before, but the government and Canadian society must get together to analyse their needs and ensure that the government responds to the wishes of the citizens of this great federation, because, Mr. Speaker, my constituents tell me: It must be attractive. If you want us to stay in Canada—that is what Quebecers tell us—make it sound attractive. Prove that we can live and continue to prosper and be respected as francophones in Canada. If we do that, Mr. Speaker,

they will stay and give us one last chance. Thank you for your attention.

• (1920)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions or comments. The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully, as usual, to the remarks of my colleague and neighbour. The only thing that separates the riding of Glengarry-Prescott—Russell from the riding of Argenteuil—Papineau is the Perley bridge.

So I listened carefully to the hon. member's speech, in order to know more about the project to replace the Perley bridge. We know that progress has finally been made in that area, and I hoped to learn more about it today. I thought my colleague would take this opportunity to indicate publicly what kind of progress was made in that regard. My question will be another opportunity to give this information.

I have more comments. The hon. member told us that money was being wasted in some government sectors and she mentioned duplication in the National Revenue Department. She could not come up with a better example.

A few days ago, Canadians heard the news that the government ordered special pins to commemorate the first anniversary of the implementation of the GST. It spent $32,000 for GST pins. The first question that comes to mind is why should we remember the GST? Why commemorate this event?

If I were Conservative—I hope that never happens because it would probably be three times worse than being hit by lightning and it would also probably be just as fatal in terms of popularity—but if I were a Conservative, it seems to me that I would try to forget about the GST. I wonder why the Revenue Minister has decided to spend $32,000 in order for Canadians to remember it. Maybe the hon. member could tell us about it.

Finally, I apologize, Mr. Speaker, because I know that our colleague is anxious to answer those questions, but I would like to tell him about the trucking industry. The hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau is aware that there are many trucks here in Ottawa, as well as owners of trucks, businesses that have lost assets, and drivers that no longer have a job. I know that she knows a lot about the trucking and construction.

Therefore, I would like her to tell us what she thinks of the future of that industry. She might also want to tell us whether she thinks her government should take action to protect jobs in the trucking industry.

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from across the bridge asked me three questions.

To answer this question about the pins at the cost of $32 000, the only thing that would please me would be to know that it is a Quebec company that has been given the contract for these pins, but I did not see them yet. For this reason, I do not know what to tell him. Yes, Perhaps it seems incredible, but it could be that the government had a little surplus somewhere and that he wanted to encourage a Canadian company to produce pins for $32 000. That's the only logical explanation that comes to mind.

Regarding Perley bridge, Mr. Speaker, that is obviously what I would like but, of course, I know there will not be a new bridge built before the next election. On the other hand, I would like my colleague and I to be able to announce that the construction of the bridge will start on such and such day. The government is deeply committed and he knows it. Environmental studies, the preliminary study has already begun, but once again it is a question of— Imagine three governments: Ontario, Quebec and the federal government negotiating a cost-sharing agreement for the construction of an inter-provincial bridge, while we all know that it is already difficult to find time to negotiate between two persons. Here, three governments are involved in negotiations. It has been a long process; there was an election in Ontario.

But I am very optimistic about the outcome of Perley bridge and again, I know that my colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell is very much involved and interested and I thank him for the support he is giving me in this matter.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says that I know well the trucking industry. I don't know where he heard that. There are companies that own trucks in my riding and there are all kinds of views about that, but I understand

the truckers from Quebec and the rest of Canada that have problems with this whole question.

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, first let me convey my appreciation for the heartfelt comments of the member from *la belle province*, Quebec, regarding culture and language and the sensitivity of all regions of our country to the fact that we all must work harder to understand one another. We must understand that no matter where you come from in this country, it is unique, it is beautiful, and we all must understand each other better in order to work and live with each other. I hope that spirit of understanding and co-operation will continue during the course of the debate.

Where we differ, of course, is with respect to her comments on the economy. I am a little concerned that the member wants to blame everyone else but her own government for some of the mismanagement of the economy.

While we all agree that the Speech from the Throne talks about being more competitive, investing more in people in terms of education, illiteracy and training, one must look at the past record of this government in order to view whether or not the Speech from the Throne really reflects not only their good words but whether or not those words will be turned into action. One could surely be very suspicious about the fact that the words might be fine but the actions in the past have not been there, and whether or not they will be there in the future surely is suspect.

In light of the fact that her House leader has indicated that the back bench of her party will be allowed an awful lot more freedom, with greater input into the governmental system and the parliamentary system, I wonder if she can comment on whether in fact her government really will stick with its word with respect to allowing the back bench of the government to bring forward some good ideas as to how we can straighten out the economy in terms of some of the concerns that she mentioned. Obviously, rhetoric is not what this country needs any more, it is action and action now.

Mrs. Bourgault: Mr. Speaker, right after being elected, I was named to this committee on the reform of the House of Commons. I am one of those who believes that from time to time we should be capable of voting against a proposition of the government, and at the same time members of the opposition should be allowed to vote with the government on other occasions.

I certainly agree with more freedom in Parliament. My hon. friend says we want to blame everybody else but ourselves. Fair enough, I agree with that; maybe we, as citizens of this great country, want to blame everybody else but ourselves. So maybe I am an elected member of Parliament representing constituents who are saying that "It is not my fault, it is your fault". We should think of stopping that sort of belief and bring forward some tough new proposals that will keep this country as economically viable as it should be.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to congratulate the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau who certainly spoke from her heart in this House. However, I want to ask her a question about what she said with regard to Quebec because she is very interested in Quebec matters. She made me shiver when, speaking about education, she said she was concerned at first when she heard that the federal government wanted to get involved in education but that she felt reassured when she listened to the arguments put forward by others, and realized that it was a good thing for the illeterates, etc.

I can hardly believe that. She even referred to "national standards". I am convinced that the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau didn't come up herself with the idea that the federal government could set national standards in education. She knows that Maurice Duplessis would be turning in his grave if there were such national standards.

So, I want to know what she really thinks. I know that she thought about that question. Yes or no, should the government of Canada infringe on Quebec exclusive jurisdiction over education?

• (1930)

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted I managed to give the hon. member the shivers with what I said here in the House.

What I meant when I referred to national standards in education—as they say, let's not get carried away, we have to look at this in the perspective of responding to a

serious national problem: the number of Canadian men and women who are illiterate.

Now, whether a more national standard is the answer—I am being very careful, so that my constituents and Quebecers generally won't think I agree with federal involvement in provincial jurisdictions—on the other hand, I am trying to consider the target population, in other words, people who cannot read. I think that with the help of the federal government and the provinces, we could deal with this matter by negotiating an agreement that would be for this particular group only.

So that is what I had in mind. However, all this is still up in the air. We don't know the details of the proposal mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. I would be delighted to discuss the matter with the hon. member as soon as we have more details.

[*English*]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate this evening in the time left allotted to me in the throne speech debate.

After having read the document, any Canadian who viewed the debate thus far or read the media could easily draw the conclusion that at the very least, the government was consistent with its record since 1984. It was consistent in the sense of unfulfilled expectations and broken promises.

It was only last week, before the House resumed, that the House leader on the government side said that this throne speech was going to be the most important throne speech in the history of the country, and therefore it was the government itself that elevated the expectations on behalf of Canadians, thinking there were going to be some remedies to the problems and difficulties embracing and afflicting Canadians from coast to coast.

As has been done time in and time out, the Canadian people and Canada have been let down. They had raised the stakes and all that Canadians have received through this throne speech is a document filled with very empty and general platitudes. Not only was it a heightened expectation, but somehow this was supposed to be the second track of how the government was going to usher in "the new agenda."

The first track was with a reshuffling of cabinet some days ago, a reshuffling of the same cards in the same deck. It was a case of the same old tired faces being reshuffled into new positions. If you were a business person and your executives had failed in their departments, I do not think there would be too many business owners today in Canada that would not only not remove those individuals, but in fact promote them.

The second prong of the new agenda was to be this throne speech, probably for the country and, politically speaking, for the Conservative Party. What we have in the pages of the throne speech read by His Excellency the Governor General, is simply a reflection of a very tired, a very insensitive and a very unimaginative government. Its fatigue is colossal, one that has crippled them into trying to crystallize Canadians' aspirations and dreams across the land.

How do we judge a throne speech? One way that the success of any throne speech delivered in this place ought to be measured is how Canadians, average Canadians, relate to this document. That is to say that we should not be engulfed in reading a throne speech for the purposes of members of Parliament, senators and the national media.

Somehow the throne speech has to have meaning to Canadians on the streets of Canada.

When a laid-off construction worker in York West looks at or hears about this document, what does it mean to that laid-off construction worker? What does this document mean to a plant that is either downsizing or about to be shut down on Toryork Avenue in my riding?

What does it mean to a university student who, after completing exams at the end of last month, graduates and is about to seek his or her place in Canada? Does it move a nation? Does it have a sense of purpose? Does it give definition or clarity to a direction of Canada? Does it serve to right the wrongs in the last number of years?

Does it say: "Maybe some policies we ushered in, perhaps with the best of intentions, has not worked? We are prepared to have the strength and the courage of a government to say so, to recognize it and to put something different in its place".

The throne speech does none of the above. The average Canadian who may or may not have a job cannot take solace from this throne speech. If the average

Canadian cannot identify with a throne speech, then why do we have the pomp and the ceremony? Why do we spend hours debating a document that 200 feet from Parliament means very little?

It is an abuse of our democratic institution if it has no meaning at the base of our country.

Talking about the aspirations of the average Canadian, one can quickly and very generically summarize the two great challenges facing our country at this time, the issue of national unity, and the issue of the faltering economy and the recession in which Canadians find themselves.

On national unity, you pick up the throne speech and you search for the answers. There are not any. The response of the Prime Minister on behalf of his government on the question of national unity is delay.

What he proposes in the throne speech is the creation of another committee that will not be mandated until September. To make matters worse, that committee will be given a lifetime of another five months to report back to this Parliament and to this government.

It will not be until January or February of 1992 that the national Government of Canada will say anything definitive about our Constitution when, in fact, the Government of Quebec, to its own credit because it is taking care of its own house, is already making it very precise on when the potential dates of a referendum will be.

We have a national government, mandated to speak for the country of 26 million Canadians, which is unable to say anything definitively until February 1992. That is a shame and irresponsibility at its height.

If the fragile state of the nation was not as bad as it is, then perhaps a bit of time and consultations would have been legitimate and very much warranted.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you: In the midst of a national unity crisis of sorts, we will not hear anything from this government until February 1992. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that it is not because Canadians ought not to be consulted. I am very confident of what I am picking up among Canadians.

They are absolutely sick and tired of being studied to death by this government. Whether it is the issue of unity, whether it is the issue of economy or whether it is the issue of trucking, this government simply hides behind the word "study".

• (1940)

On the question of national unity, we have had a number of committees and commissions, provincial and federal, travelling across the country. Canadians are saying to this government: "It is time for our country to be rallied. It is time for our country to be rallied to a point of strength and confidence, not to be rallied to a point of study, indifference and indecisiveness". That is not national leadership. That is only a manifestation of an absence of national leadership and national purpose.

This is the failure of the government. Let us make it perfectly and crystal clear. Let us not have Canadians lose hope in themselves and in their country because we have a team on the other side that cannot shoot straight. Let us not have the failures of the government be the failures of Canada.

That is why my leader, my caucus and my party decided to try to rally that confidence of Canadians. We put out a challenge to the government. We have initiated through a series of speeches across the country a nine point program, a vision of the country that we have asked the government to try to respond to, to try to kick-start a debate, to try to bring Canadians and wrap the strands together. My friends, unless Canadians are confident in themselves and of this country, we will be unable to come to grips with the challenges and the problems that confront us.

We did not wait for a committee to report. We did not wait to appoint our members on that committee. We did not wait for a white paper, a black paper, a yellow paper. My leader did what he does best. He spoke frankly on behalf of this country. He has also given the opportunity to Canadians to ratify through a national referendum.

Yes, a referendum can be divisive. My leader clearly was at the forefront of the last referendum in Quebec in 1980. However, this party also believes that if we are going to get a referendum in Quebec, then what is wrong with extending that opportunity to the other Canadians across the country? What is wrong with not giving a stake to the 26 million shareholders who equally own a piece of this country called Canada? There is nothing wrong

for those 26 million shareholders on a given day to mark their ballot on behalf of Canada.

Therefore, not only do we speak of a vision of this country, a program for constitutional reform, but we have not dithered or dallied: Do we have a referendum, do we have an election, do we have a constituency assembly? We have said: "Give those people, those shareholders, an opportunity at the end of the day to speak for themselves and for their country".

I challenge the Prime Minister and his government not to wait, not to study, not to fiddle while anger, jobs and national unity burn, but to act as they were elected to do. If the Conservatives are unable to act responsibly, if they are unable to provide the leadership, then they do not deserve the responsibility of sitting to the right of the Speaker. They should vacate and vacate quickly.

The other challenge is economic vitality. We have a recession made in Canada by Conservatives. We have the situation where there is a high dollar, high interest rates, plant closings across the country, jobs lost and lost permanently, jobs that will not come back. We have structural changes to make in the face of world change. What does this throne speech say of those realities facing Canadians? Absolutely nothing.

Once again I return to the premise of my argument. If this throne speech does not mean anything for that unemployed Canadians, then the throne speech has failed and failed miserably.

I see that you are signalling me, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to continuing tomorrow.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member will have seven minutes, plus ten minutes questions and comments tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock.

It being 7.45 p.m., it is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 55 to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the amendment to the amendment.

The question is on the amendment to the amendment, standing in the name of Mr. Langdon. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment to the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the amendment to the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Call in the members.

The House divided on the amendment to the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 1)

YEAS

Members

Allmand	*Althouse*
Anawak	*Arseneault*
Assad	*Axworthy* (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Bellemare
Benjamin	Berger
Bevilacqua	Black
Blackburn (Brant)	Blaikie
Blondin	Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Boudria	Breaugh
Brewin	Caccia
Callbeck	Campbell (South West Nova)
Chrétien	Clancy
de Jong	Dingwall
Duceppe	Edmonston
Ferguson	Finestone
Fisher	Flis
Fontana	Foster
Funk	Gagliano
Gauthier	Gérin
Grey (Beaver River)	Harb
Harvard	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Heap	Hopkins
Hovdebo	Hunter
Jordan	Karpoff
Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Kindy
Kristiansen	Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)	Lapierre
Lee	MacAulay
MacLellan	MacWilliam
Marchi	Marleau
McCurdy	McGuire
McLaughlin	Mifflin
Milliken	Mitchell
Murphy	Nault
Nunziata	Nystrom
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Parent	Parker
Peterson	Phinney
Pickard	Plamondon
Proud	Prud'homme
Rideout	Riis
Robinson	Rocheleau
Rodriguez	Rompkey
Samson	Simmons
Speller	Stewart
Stupich	Taylor
Tobin	Vanclief
Volpe	Waddell
Walker	Wappel
Whittaker	Wood
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—104

NAYS

Members

Bird	Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault	Boyer
Browes	Cadieux
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)	Cardiff
Chadwick	Champagne (Champlain)
Charest	Clark (Yellowhead)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Clifford
Cole	Collins
Cook	Cooper
Corbeil	Corbett
Couture	Crosbie (St. John's West)
Danis	Darling
de Cotret	Della Noce
Desjardins	Dick
Domm	Dorin
Duplessis	Edwards
Epp	Fee
Feltham	Ferland
Fontaine	Fretz
Friesen	Gibeau
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Guilbault
Gustafson	Halliday
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hawkes
Hicks	Hogue
Holtmann	Horner
Horning	Hudon
Hughes	Jacques
James	Jelinek
Johnson	Joncas
Jourdenais	Kempling
Koury	Landry
Langlois	Larrivée
Layton	Lewis
Loiselle	Lopez
MacDonald (Rosedale)	MacDougall (Timiskaming)
MacKay	Malone
Marin	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mazankowski
McCreath	McDermid
McDougall (St. Paul's)	McKnight
Merrithew	Mitges
Monteith	Moore
Mulroney	Nicholson
Oberle	O'Kurley
Plourde	Porter
Pronovost	Redway
Reimer	Ricard
Richardson	Roy-Arcelin
Saint-Julien	Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)	Shields
Siddon	Sobeski
Soetens	Stevenson
Tardif	Tétreault
Thacker	Thompson
Thorkelson	Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)	Turner (Halton—Peel)
Valcourt	Van de Walle
Vankoughnet	Vézina
Vien	White
Wilbee	Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard—129	

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Crosby (Halifax West)	MacDonald (Dartmouth)

• (2010)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the amendment to the amendment lost.

It being 8.15 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at ten o'clock pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 8.15 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, May 16, 1991

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

CANADIAN NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

PRESENTATION OF FIRST REPORT

Mr. Bob Hicks (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the pleasure to present to the House, in both official languages, the first report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association.

* * *

CANADA–EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

PRESENTATION OF REPORT

Mr. Terry Clifford (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canada–Europe Parliamentary Association attending the visit to Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, March 14 to March 26.

• (1010)

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to add, on behalf of my colleagues in the House of Commons who were on that visit, the recommendation that the Canadian government urge the use of United Nations mediation facilities in Yugoslavia, through the good offices of the Secretary General, should the need arise.

We see this as a vital element in ensuring a peaceful, democratic future for all of Yugoslavia, whatever political choices are made.

The opportunities are great for Canada in terms of assisting both Bulgaria and Yugoslavia with their economic and democratic plights. We urge the opening of an embassy in Bulgaria, with a strong trade presence immediately, to press on as partners in the western industrialized nations the need to focus on the plight of the Bulgarian economy as it struggles to restructure. We urge to direct our trade and other officials to give a high priority to assistance, especially in the agricultural sector, to Bulgaria.

We want to alert our trade officials here in Canada to tell Canadian companies that Yugoslavia is virtually a free market and that there are tremendous opportunities for Canadians in hydro engineering and telecommunications.

* * *

NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–2, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act.

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

* * *

FEDERAL REAL PROPERTY ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–3, an act respecting the acquisition, administration and disposition of real property by the Government of Canada.

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

* * *

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–202, an act respecting a national day of remembrance and action on violence against women.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this Private Members' bill. This bill is a way to mark in a meaningful and respectful way the massacre on December 6, 1989, of 14 young women in Montreal.

This day could also be a day of action around the issue of violence against women, although every day should be a day of action against violence against women. This could be a special day in order to ensure that this terrible plight in our society is eradicated.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Robert Wenman (Fraser Valley West) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-203, an act to amend the Criminal Code (terminally ill persons).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill is about life, about the quality of life. Life in a free nation is about choices made first in birth and in youth largely by our mothers, hopefully our fathers, and perhaps our communities. As we become mature adults, the choices become more and more our own individual choices, made in conjunction with our own conscience and our God.

I respect the informed and subjective decision of doctors and the state but the decision relating to the quality of my life and to the nature of my death are important enough that I would prefer that my own will, the will of my designate or my family and my God, have legal standing and precedence over and above the decisions of doctors and the state.

That is what this bill is about and I look forward to debating it in the House.

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

* * *

ATOMIC ENERGY CONTROL ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of my colleague, the member for Winnipeg Transcona, I ask for consent of the House to introduce the bill to amend the Atomic Energy Control Act. The Clerks at the table worked very hard to be able to expedite the introduction of this bill, and my colleague has been inadvertently delayed. I ask for consent of the House that I introduce it in his absence.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): So ordered.

Ms. Hunter (for Mr. Blaikie) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-204, an act to amend the Atomic Energy Control Act.

She said: Mr. Speaker, this is an important bill and it is an important day to introduce this bill. Sixty-one years ago today the mine that provided the nuclear material for the bombings that occurred in Nagasaki, Japan, was discovered. It is an important day and it is an important subject. I know that my colleague will be speaking extensively and urging all members of this House to support this bill.

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

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I will be moving two motions today, one relating to the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare and the other to the commonly referred to Beaudoin-Edwards committee. The President of the Treasury Board will then be making a motion regarding the reference of the estimates to the various committees.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The parliamentary secretary needs unanimous consent. Is there consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): No consent. Point of order, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I am very surprised that you heard a no because there were discussions on these matters at the House leaders' meetings and there was an

agreement to proceed on these issues. Perhaps you could ask the question again. I cannot believe there was a no.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There is no unanimous consent.

* * *

• (1020)

PETITIONS

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and indeed a privilege to present a petition on behalf of constituents from all the communities in the North Thompson Valley of British Columbia, including Blue River, Clear Water, Barrie and Little Fort as well as Logan Lake, Chase, Westwold, Monte Creek, Monte Lake, Red Lake, Pritchard, Savona and the great city of Kamloops.

These constituents are concerned that the government has cut back on funding for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police resulting in a major loss to the province of British Columbia.

The petitioners point out that the consequences of these cuts have been the reduction and erosion of police service, effectiveness and protection. They also say that the results of these cuts have been the reduction of training, patrols and travelling expenses for the RCMP serving our communities.

The petitioners point out that the federal government is uncompromising in its negotiations with its provincial counterparts by maintaining that their share of funding will be reduced as of March 31, 1991, resulting in taxpayers having to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars more in most communities in British Columbia, to say nothing of the reduction in police protection.

The petitioners are urging the Government of Canada to consider restoring proper funding to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police so that it can fulfil its mandate and role as the only visible police force for communities across B.C. and so that it may remain a viable symbol of Canadian unity.

[*Translation*]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Douglas Young (Acadie—Bathurst): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to table in the House a petition signed by residents of Haut-Sheila, Pont-Lafrance and Leech who continue to protest the injustice caused by the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax.

Mr. Speaker, these people feel that the financial burden resulting from the GST continues to increase unemployment in the region, and they ask the government to reconsider this entirely unjustified tax.

* * *

[*English*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from Wednesday, May 15, consideration of the motion of Mr. Pronovost for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his Speech at the opening of the session; and of the amendment thereto of Mr. Chrétien (p. 24).

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, like other colleagues I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak today on the debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne which took place at the opening of the Third Session of the thirty-fourth Parliament.

I am not one who speaks often in the House, being convinced and persuaded that repeating what has already been said many times before is perhaps a waste of time.

I feel that in this Speech from the Throne there is a particular paragraph in which I think has not been duly recognized by many people, certainly not by the media. I would like to participate largely for that reason.

I would like to congratulate my two colleagues, one from St. Maurice and the other from Regina—Wascana, who moved and seconded the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. Each did this in a most eloquent fashion and should be commended.

We should also note that one is a francophone from Quebec and the other an anglophone from Saskatchewan. I think we should not overlook the fact that it is possible in this country for people who have goodwill and who are willing to look at the issues in an objective way to come together and talk and act for the benefit of this country as a whole.

That was the main *raison d'être* or the main issue raised in this Speech from the Throne; the one we are debating at the present time.

There were three main headings or general topics that constituted the Speech from the Throne on this particular occasion.

The first was the issue and subject of Canadian unity. The second was that of "Participating in Prosperity" and the third was "Changing the Way in which Ottawa Works". I would like to address all three of those to a greater or lesser degree, but from the somewhat unique position as a member and chairman of the previous Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons. As you know, the committees have all been dissolved with the prorogation of Parliament earlier this week, and we now await these committees being re-established. But I would like to speak from the perspective of having served on that committee and more recently as chairman for a number of years.

In the course of doing this, I want to look at the Speech from the Throne and view it in a number of ways, but particularly in how it addresses a large segment of the people of Canada, namely those who are disabled. I should inform colleagues in the House that that represents about 13 per cent of Canadians. There are many of us, of course, who feel fine and are fit at the present time. But most of us, sooner or later, are going to be subjected to being included in that group of 13 per cent that are disabled. I think we should, for that reason, give this further consideration and perhaps more than it has had over the course of the years.

I am pleased to see that my colleague and former chairman of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons, the hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore, speaking earlier in this debate, made reference to a very important paragraph in the Speech from the Throne that I want to deal with as well. That interesting paragraph comes under the heading of "Participating in Prosperity". When one takes a cursory look at the Speech from the Throne, one might wonder indeed how a few of the three or four social issues that are mentioned, would come under that rubric or under that heading of "Participating in Prosperity", but in fact they do.

I would like at this point to quote from the Speech from the Throne the particular paragraph that I am referring to, because as I said earlier not much mention has been made of this in the last several days. I am quoting now.

> My government will lay before you proposals for programs and policies to remove the barriers still faced by disabled Canadians to full participation in Canada's political life and economic prosperity. The government plans to implement a five-year strategy that will resolve issues such as access to employment, training, housing and transportation, public sensitivity and community integration.

As I mentioned earlier, I do regret the fact that there has been relatively little attention paid to this in some newspaper stories, other than where they list a series of headings from the Speech from the Throne. We do see mention of this reference to disabled people, but it is not picked up as a news item or as a story or something that somebody in the journalistic field wants to talk about or elaborate on. Virtually the same is true here in the House of Commons. I would suggest we will hear very little about this. We will hear a lot about the national unity issue and the economic problems that we are having, the need for prosperity, but perhaps not very much about this subject of the disabled and how they relate to the over-all picture.

I am not sure why that situation prevails. I might suggest that possibly the subject of disabled people is not sufficiently controversial although if you are a disabled person you might not quite agree with that. It may be that the people who are looking and writing about the

Speech from the Throne do not really realize the significance of this particular paragraph.

It is obvious to everyone that the speech does address the two main issues that I have alluded to, namely the national unity issue and the issue of the economy or the future prosperity of this country. It does this in an interesting way. It links the two issues together and shows how the one is essential for the success of the other. I think we are seeing a lot written about that now, and that is indeed appropriate.

I think that while disability might be considered a social issue by most people, as I have indicated earlier, a little thought about the subject would suggest to one that it has its own significance regarding the headings of unity and prosperity.

• (1030)

There is a connotation in this paragraph that the issue of the problems faced by disabled people relates to the subject of unity and also relates to the over-all picture of the economy and prosperity in this country. I will want to elaborate on that before I finish.

Before doing that, I also want to quote another short paragraph from the Speech from the Throne. It appears in the first introductory page of the speech, before we launch into the specifics of unity. There are a number of words in it I want to touch on as being particularly significant in several ways. The paragraph reads as follows:

> This session will be a turning point in Canadian history.

It is going to be a turning point, but it is a turning point for those who are disabled as well. For the first time, we find a confirmation and a commitment by the government that it is now going to have a five year strategy to deal with the needs, the problems of access and so on of disabled people.

While it may be a turning point in general for Canadians and for Canada, it is also a turning point, I would submit, for disabled people. The paragraph continues:

> Let no one doubt the seriousness of the challenges we face as a country.

If any group in this country faces a challenge it is the disabled community. They have been recognized as being disabled. They have, in the past, been set aside and overlooked. We are now seeing an attempt made by government and by the committee of this House to address those challenges that they are facing and try to help them to overcome them.

The paragraph goes on to say:

> You will have the responsibility and the opportunity to forge an historic accommodation that embraces all Canadians,—

We do, indeed, have a responsibility. I would submit we also have an opportunity now, through this Speech from the Throne, to do exactly that, to make this historic accommodation.

The word "accommodation" brings to mind a couple of points. First of all, if we are going to have national unity in this country, various groups have to learn to better accommodate one another. I would also submit that it raises in the minds of those of us involved with disabled people the fact that they are looking and seeking for the term which is referred to as "reasonable accommodation", added to the Canadian Human Rights Act. At the present time, there is no requirement for employers, for example, to supply reasonable accommodation for disabled people. I was pleased to see this very word used in the Speech from the Throne and, of course, as it says here, it has to embrace all Canadians. For a change, we can assume then that among all these Canadians will be those who are disabled.

The throne speech goes on to say:

> —overcomes division and discord and charts a course for prosperity for generations to come.

Indeed, we are looking at prosperity not only for those of us who are able-bodied Canadians, but also prosperity for those who are disabled because they form part of the over-all picture of all Canadians.

I am pleased that we can see that kind of wording in the Speech from the Throne and we should compliment the government for taking that position.

The Speech from the Throne serves to focus, as I have suggested previously, on the bonds and the ties between the subject areas of unity and prosperity and how one is necessary for the other. That makes a great deal of sense and I am sure much has and will be said about that in the course of this debate.

The speech goes on, under the heading of "Participating in Prosperity", to address the need to consider, in addition to disabled people, other social issues as well. I just want to acknowledge the fact that it does indicate the need to address the issue of education, the role and needs of aboriginal peoples in this country and the issue of children. This arises, to some extent, from the

considerable involvement that Canada had, through the Prime Minister playing a leading role at the UN conference on children last fall.

There are other social issues, but I want to, by and large, confine my remarks to the one dealing with the disabled people. Like the issue of disabled people, these areas that I have alluded to relate closely to economic prosperity and unity issues. They also transcend the traditional controversial and divisive issues of language, culture and so on.

At this point it would be appropriate to indicate that the work of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons is the type of work that transcends some of the divisive areas we have in this country. For example, discussions are taking place whereby the committee will plan to visit Quebec and look at the problems disabled people have there. That is helping to bridge a gap between the two language issues within this country.

We also have in mind, after having done it 10 years ago, a visit to the native peoples of Canada and try to understand better their needs *vis-à-vis* disabled persons, but by doing so we are also bridging gaps that lie between the aboriginal people at the present time and the rest of us in this country.

The history of the standing committee that I alluded to is interesting. I would like just to comment a little bit on that committee and the work that it has done in the past. Before I do that, I want also to acknowledge the fact that the third item that we are dealing with in the Speech from the Throne, namely the changing of the way Ottawa works, is also well exhibited in what the standing committee has been able to do over the last 10 years and even prior to when it became actually a standing committee.

It shows how this issue of unity can be seen to work on Parliament Hill among political parties, and a brief resumé of some of the work of the committee will illustrate that.

Those hon. members who have been around for a while will recall that the late Hon. Walter Dinsdale was probably the first and the main champion of disabled people in this country. He proposed for a number of years that there should be a study made of the needs of disabled people. Finally, in 1979, during the Clark government, agreement was reached to have such a committee established, but that government fell before the committee could be set up. The defeat led to a change in government, but not a change in the desire to have this committee move ahead. Under the Trudeau government at that time, the Special Committee on Disabled and Handicapped People was struck, chaired by David Smith, at that time an MP from Toronto.

Mr. Smith fashioned a very excellent, non-partisan committee. The style of functioning was essentially non-partisan which led to the committee being able to come up with the unanimous report entitled "Obstacles". It was so well that received it went through three printings because of the demand for it.

I cannot help but mention, again alluding to the issue of unity, the fact that the only surviving member of the House now of that original committee is the hon. member for Beaches—Woodbine. I want to acknowledge the fact that he has been a prime example of how we can work together as members of a committee in a non-partisan fashion for the good of the people of Canada, in this particular case, for the good of those who are disabled.

I just want to acknowledge that fact because I think altogether too often we find partisanship prevailing. In my view, the people of Canada are becoming a little tired of that, but there are examples in this House where that does not have to happen.

The committee went on after having presented its report on "Obstacles" to go through many other changes and has presented many other reports over the years. I want to allude to the fact that in 1985 it became a subcommittee and was under the chairmanship of the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore. That committee made several reports.

One of the interesting things that happened in 1987 was the acceptance by the Speaker of the House of Commons, who decided it was appropriate to establish a task force on disabled and handicapped on Parliament Hill. He came up with a very voluminous report indicating the changes that needed to take place on the Hill and set an example for government departments and agencies to do more themselves on behalf of the people of

Canada. I am proud to think that our Speaker was able to take the lead in that regard.

• (1040)

Following that, in 1988, the committee assumed the full status of a standing committee and since then is known as the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons. It is interesting to look at the terms of reference of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons. They are unique terms of references. No other committee has precisely these terms. I say this in reference to the changing patterns of work here on the Hill.

Reading from the Standing Orders of the House of Commons of May 1991, page 75, Item 108(3)(b)(ii), the terms of reference state:

> (ii) the proposing, promoting, monitoring and assessing of initiatives aimed at the integration and equality of disabled persons in all sectors of Canadian society;

We have that unique opportunity of proposing, promoting, monitoring and assessing. I want to suggest that it has given the committee an opportunity which has not always existed in the past and it does suggest a move to make the standing committees and the ordinary members of Parliament much more effective.

The other thing that has happened because of the ability of the committee to propose and to monitor and to be advocates on behalf of disabled people, is the fact that we shall be entering the fourth National Access Awareness Week two weeks from this week. I would like to pay tribute to the fact that this has been something that has been accomplished over the last four years by a collaborative effort by a number of groups in this country including the Federation of Canadian Municipalities that have combined with others to produce the Five Star Community Awards that are presented during National Access Awareness Week. These include about ten of the leading companies in Canada. I will not read them all because of the shortage of time.

I see my time is running out. I want to remind members that two weeks from yesterday, this fourth National Access Awareness Week is going to be held here in Canada and we are going to recognize that on the Hill when the standing committee is going to co-host, along with the Speaker of the House of Commons, a reception in the Railway Committee Room, to which I hope all will attend. At that particular reception we will be bringing to the attention of members Independence '92, which is going to be taking place in Vancouver next year and will represent the culmination of the UN Decade of the Disabled.

I would like to say a lot more about this subject. I know my time is up and I will reserve further comments until a later date.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, as a parliamentarian and a Quebecer, I was very disappointed by the Speech from the Throne.

Instead of a global vision of our country, I heard only words devoid of logic, rhetoric devoid of substance. Instead of finding substance, especially in the kind of action to be taken by the government, I heard only promises. Not promises for today, Mr. Speaker, not promises for tomorrow, but promises for the year 2000. I find that incredible.

Instead of showing sensitivity in the Speech from the Throne— we must understand that what Canadians are looking for in this Speech is whether the government is aware of the problems of the unemployed, of women who want daycare, of consumers who are seeking better protection, and workers who are seeking better protection as well. These people want a government that is sensitive to their problems, and instead, all the government does is urge us to be more competitive.

To be competitive, however, means that as a worker you are well paid. It means that as a trucker—like our truckers outside—you are competing on a level playing field. But that is not the case.

The government wants all Canadians and Quebecers to be more competitive. Exactly what does that mean? I think it means the government wants us to take a cut in pay and work more.

I wonder, however, how cutting people's pay and making them work longer hours is going to make us more competitive. I know that the people in my riding, don't agree. In my riding, people say that the work they do is not a problem, because in Quebec people have always been productive. That is not the problem.

The reason we are not competitive enough—and I quote the *Wall Street Journal*, which is probably the Tory government's bible—is the way we manage the Canadian economy. In fact, the former Minister of Finance—I haven't heard any more about this but it's true—was called the worst Minister of Finance of any of the world's developed countries. And that is saying a lot! The worst in the world, and this from the *Wall Street Journal*! In Canada, we know how to do things. We know how to distinguish ourselves. Just look at the former Minister of Finance who was called the world's worst Finance minister!

When we talk about—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Edmonston: I see members on the other side are wide awake. They aren't late this morning. They are bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. That's good.

When we talk about the hypocrisy and lack of truthfulness of this government, I have yet to hear the government say: Sure, we made mistakes; sure, we lied to you about the GST; we misled you about tax reform. I have not heard them say anything of the kind. Instead of admitting his mistakes, the Prime Minister used the Speech from the Throne to brag: I did not make any mistakes, and I made some difficult decisions. Good grief, they were not difficult decisions, they were the wrong decisions! That is why he got this slap in the face from the *Wall Street Journal*, because the government has been making the wrong decisions about the economy for the past six years.

I realize my conservative colleagues are upset because I am blaming them. I agree they cannot be expected to take all the blame, because in 1984 they inherited an incredible deficit which was the result of the incompetence and arrogance of the former Liberal government. I remember. I realize that is how it all started. But as angered as I was by what happened under the previous government, it is totally unrelated to what is happening now under this government. The Liberal arrogance and incompetence has been replaced by a corporate agenda calling for the Conservatives to do certain things to please our friends the banks and big businesses. That is what we got for trying to boost our economy somewhat when we were deep into a "made in Canada" recession. Again, Canada has the know how. This government surely knows how to plunge us deep into a recession.

• (1050)

There is more, Mr. Speaker. After plunging us into a deep and severe recession, the government has the gall to blame us Canadians for contributing to this recession. How is that?

An hon. member: That is the Tory way!

Mr. Edmonston: True. That is the Tory way of doing things. They blamed us for this recession. They said that we do not work enough, that we are greedy and spoiled. Quite frankly, it takes a lot of gall to say something like that!

Now, we are facing three national problems requiring direct and immediate action. These are, unemployment, unfair taxation and national unity.

[*English*]

This government's corporate agenda of high interest rates, high taxes and a high Canadian dollar has put millions of Canadians out of work. Free trade and unemployment insurance cuts together ensure that these jobs will never return and that the government's safety net for the jobless has wider gaps than ever.

If you do not believe there are gaps, come to my riding of Chambly and listen to people who have had to sell their homes because they lost their jobs, who had to move out of their community, who have to shop across the border. The government is making us nomadic shoppers, driving us away from our own country with its own taxation policies. Go to your ridings and listen to the people.

Montreal, Quebec, my own home town, has 12.5 per cent unemployment, the highest unemployment in Canada. That is my town and this is my country. I do not believe that the one-third of the caucus who are from Quebec can say they defend Quebec's interests while allowing 12.5 per cent unemployment to continue. That is not defending Quebec's interests.

Allow me to speak on the second national crisis we are facing. I call that unfair taxation. That is right, unfair taxation. You heard me.

Today the average, middle-class Canadian family is being taxed out of existence. When more than 50 cents out of every dollar is grabbed by the government what incentive is there to build for the future? What incentive is there to save? What incentive do we have to believe in Canada?

A fair Canada? Not with unfair taxation.

We have heard the lies and the hypocrisy about taxation in this country for years. I am not telling Canadians anything new when I recall that the former finance minister said: "Hey, the GST is great, it is going to be a visible tax". Ha, ha. Wrong.

A visible tax. Did you see it? I didn't see it. Most places say: "Our fee, our price, includes GST". That is not very visible.

Also, we heard another—I have to watch my language here because I know I must not be unparliamentary—error from Mr. Wilson, another error from the former Minister of Finance. He said: "the GST will be revenue neutral". We do not hear that any more. Revenue neutral, my eye. It is a cash cow and he knows it.

Mr. Heap: And he got out of the job.

Mr. Edmonston: Yes, Mr. Wilson did get out of the job. I want to recall what he said, though. Mr. Wilson, the former finance minister, said that we, the middle-class taxpayers, would probably have to pay about $300 more because of the GST. He said: "If you want to help this deficit, bring it down, that is what is necessary".

Well, I'll be darned. The latest figures show that it is closer to $600. That is double.

Ms. Hunter: The gouge and screw tax.

Mr. Edmonston: Double what they promised us. I mean, how wrong can you be?

The government says it has been cutting costs to bring down taxes but we still have close to 40 ministries, about double what we had two decades ago. Government workers had their wages cut, but senior government officials, the so-called mandarins—I never used the word mandarin before I came to Ottawa— and the workers for the Bank of Canada, had a real sweetheart deal. They received their increases a couple of days before the wage freezes and the wage cuts.

Some hon. members: Shame, shame.

Mr. Edmonston: Canadians see that. Good old John Crow and his Bank of Canada slipped themselves a nice bundle of extra cash just before the wage freeze.

Mr. Heap: They knew what was coming.

Ms. Hunter: They looked after themselves.

Mr. Edmonston: Sure, they knew. I spoke earlier about this government making Canadians nomadic shoppers across the border. This is what is happening. There is an increase of about 22 per cent. That is incredible. We want to support our communities, we want to support the businesses in our communities, but the government is making it impossible for us. It knows it.

The problem is that the parliamentarians on the other side will probably not be here after the next election. Unfortunately, because I believe that most of the people believe that they owe them an explanation. The government has never given them an explanation for all of these problems—and it is not in the throne speech.

This wasn't always a problem, this high unfair taxation. Canada was not always like that. In the fifties, according to Statistics Canada, for every revenue dollar the federal government collected about 49 cents was from the average taxpayer and about 51 cents from corporations. Do you know what it is now, do you know? I don't hear my colleagues from the other side. I will tell you what it is. We, the consumer, the aggrieved taxpayer, are being charged right now for every Revenue Canada dollar—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has three minutes left and then there will be questions and comments.

Mr. Edmonston: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the questions and comment. I would just like to make the point that at one time every tax dollar average Canadians paid represented about 50 per cent of revenue and corporations represented about 50 per cent whereas today the average taxpayer contributes 85 cents of every tax dollar received by Revenue Canada. Corporations pay about 15 per cent. Check the figures. Fifteen per cent. The corporations' contribution to the average tax dollar received by Ottawa is almost the same as the Conservatives are right now in the Gallup poll.

• (1100)

That is scandalous.

Besides talking about unfair taxation, I would like to talk a little about Canadian unity. This government, with help from Liberal flip-flops, has been the major cause of disunity in our country.

Take a look at the Reform Party and at the Bloc Quebecois and tell me if you do not see orphans from the Conservatives and from the Liberals who can no longer deal with their own parties.

They chased them out. They would not allow them to speak their own mind. What they are doing is kicking the whole system down. They are saying: "We do not want anything to do with you."

I know we have the Bloc Quebecois in back of us, but I will tell you something: I would rather see separatists who are separatists and who say they are than people who are but say they are not and belong to a major party. I would rather see people who are not more hypocritical than the hypocrites I see on the other side. I know it hurts them to hear that, but that is the point I would like to make.

I think I should apologize a bit for being over-exhuberant. This throne speech did make me mad because I promised the people in my riding that they would see something that would give them some hope. Instead, I see nothing in this throne speech but despair.

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, the throne speech outlines a plan and we will see detailed legislation.

Recently, in the province of Ontario, we had the first NDP socialist budget, supported by the NDP federal party. There are some interesting numbers in it because they talk about, for example, taxation of corporations.

The Ontario budget in 1989 projected that $4.7 billion would be collected from corporations. In 1991–92, the NDP government is anticipating collecting $3.1 billion, that is $1.6 billion less from corporations.

You talk about taxing corporations more and yet the first NDP socialist government seems to recognize that corporations do make a contribution. Maybe, you would be curious and explain that.

The premier of Ontario defends the budget. He is saying: "Although we are going to have a deficit of $38 billion over the next four years, it now only costs 11 cents of each Ontario tax dollar to pay for that debt".

In 1968, when the federal Liberals moved from balanced budgets to running deficits, it was 12 cents on the dollar. By the end of the reign in 1984, the federal taxpayer was paying 32 cents on the dollar.

When you get on that slippery slope of deficits, it is just deferred taxation. The province of Ontario, with an 8 per cent retail sales tax, collects $8 billion. When it presented the budget it said: "We are going to have an $8 billion deficit."

It did not tell the Ontario taxpayer to pay for these programs. It really should be a 16 per cent provincial sales tax if we want to balance the budget.

Would the hon. member please explain to me how a budget like that helps to create an economy and get it growing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, allow me at least to explain briefly what I think happened in Ontario.

Ontario inherited a deficit. When the provincial Liberals were defeated and the New Democrats came to power, the Ontario Liberals were less than candid in saying that there was a $200 million surplus. Do you remember that? I find such a lie unacceptable.

Finally, the New Democrat government decided to invest in the people in spite of the recession. Of course, there will be a deficit. But I think it is much too early to say that the Ontario deficit will hurt the people. I suggest it is an investment in people.

The Tories have their way of doing things but, if I remember correctly, there were deficits too in the days of the famous former Premier of Ontario, Mr. Bill Davis, were there not?

An hon. member: A very small one!

Mr. Edmonston: A very small one, granted! In any case, let me tell you about what we are doing in Quebec. We too have a deficit. I would not be surprised at all if every province in this country has a deficit to some extent because they do not want the public pay for the problems caused by the recession. Now, you can argue about the size of the deficit but I believe—in the *Toronto Star* I saw an article by Bill Walker defending the latest Ontario budget—saying that Mr. Rae had no choice but to help the people of Ontario.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Crowfoot and then the hon. member for Calgary Southeast has a question, so govern yourself accordingly.

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I presume it was for convenience that the hon. member decided not to answer the previous question as to why it is corporations are being taxed less.

The Ontario government has increased expenditures in Ontario in the last provincial budget by 13 per cent. It has not just increased the deficit, it has tripled the deficit. That government tripled the deficit in a single fell swoop.

I want to ask the hon. member if the Ontario government ever intends to pay it back. If it does, then how is it going to do it except through taxes? Today he basically talked about taxes as if somehow it were something that was imposed by this government at this time. He ought to know that the only reason for taxes there is because of the history of how they came to be in the first place. His party is exactly on the same route of upward pressure on inflation and upward pressure on interest rates. Because it governs the largest population province in Canada, the Ontario government bears a burden to all other parts of the country because Ontario affects the national economy far more significantly than any other province. It has a duty to Canadians elsewhere who are trying to manage the economy of the country more prudently.

Mr. Edmonston: I do not think Conservatives who have been chased out of Ontario need to give me any lessons about a prudent economy.

An hon. member: Right on.

Mr. Edmonston: I do not have any lessons to learn from a party that has fallen to third in the polls in its own province. I think the province of Ontario told the Conservatives what it thought about their so-called "prudent" management of the economy.

Let me talk about their corporation taxes. I think that is important. I do not think Canadians want to gouge big business any more than they want to be gouged themselves. The key word here and a word the Conservative Party keeps having trouble with is "fairness". It is called being fair and Canadians want that fairness.

Look at the figures from Statistics Canada regarding the dollar that the average Canadian spends and that Revenue Canada collects. Eighty-five cents of every dollar of taxes comes from the average Canadian and only 15 cents comes from corporations. I am talking on a federal level here, primarily.

An hon. member: Is that fair?

Mr. Edmonston: I find that unfair. You can tell me about Ontario. You can tell me about Quebec. The figures speak for themselves and that is why, presently, the government is moving toward a single digit in the polls. People do not trust it and they are tired of unfairness.

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I just want to comment briefly. It is not like me to comment on any NDP economic statement, because its credibility is questionable in the light of economics.

• (1110)

Look at the experience of NDP governments: the devastation caused to B.C. by that hiccup of history, the Barrett government, and the Ontario government. I could not say it any better than the Calgary Chamber of Commerce when it issued a release in which Tom Cumming, its president, said:

> The Calgary Chamber of Commerce is concerned and disappointed with the recently announced budget of the Ontario government which projects a deficit of $9.7 billion in the fiscal year 1991-92".
>
> While the Calgary Chamber of Commerce normally does not comment on budgets in other provinces, it has elected to break tradition because the projected deficit is so huge and because of its implications for Canada in general. "Ontario is a major player in the Canadian economy. There is a strong likelihood—that this exploding expenditure in the Ontario government will have negative impacts upon interest rates, inflation and the value of the Canadian dollar at a time when Canada is struggling to be competitive."

These people understand the economy of Canada and understand the devastation caused by the Ontario NDP government, the kind of policies proposed by the member who has just spoken. We have an idea of the credibility of NDP economic performance and policies.

Even greater cause for concern is the Ontario government's projection of a continued deficit of over $8 billion per year for the next succeeding years which will take that province's debt from its current $42 billion to $77 billion. What this will do to the Canadian economy is preposterous just when we have turned it around to lower inflation and interest rates in this country; one

irresponsible government can go against 10 responsible governments and turn the whole mess around to the previous state, as NDP governments have in the past.

The Calgary Chamber of Commerce and other chambers across the country have been campaigning long and hard for fiscal responsibility on the part of all governments in light of the burgeoning direct debt load which now exceeds $550 billion. When many provincial governments and the federal government have been making progress in bringing their expenditures under the semblance of control in recognition of the growing fiscal crisis in Canada, it is especially disappointing to see one province so massively ignoring this problem.

It is also disappointing to hear the NDP continue these tired old lines about old ways of how to destroy an economy.

Mr. Edmonston: Mr. Speaker, I have just a final comment on the comments of my colleague who just spoke. I am really surprised. I think there are some statistics in what I had said. I tried to give some common sense facts and I tried to show the government where it could really regain the confidence of Canadians.

I know that sometimes the government side can be extremely sensitive to what I call common sense facts. Anyone who talks to the truckers, any consumer or anyone who deals with the every day world would agree with my presentation that this government is running this country straight into the ground.

I have one last comment. I hear these little snide remarks from the government side and sometimes from the Liberal side about which country are we talking about. I chose this country of Canada. I chose it as many of the other people chose this country. I do not really accept that kind of off the cuff remark about "which country are you talking about".

Finally, I just want to mention one thing. I wish that both the Liberals and the Conservatives in this House would not mistake Quebec nationalism for separatism. There is a big difference.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to address my fellow citizens today in the debate on the Speech from the Throne. Last Monday, the Governor General gave Canadians a clear message, one based on national unity, on the prosperity of the Canadian economy and on governmental efficiency.

Canada cannot continue to grow, prosper and develop without these three elements as part of a coherent whole. Mr. Speaker, Canada's unity involves the very existence of this great country, which was bequeathed to us by our fathers and mothers and is now lent to us by our children.

[*English*]

Canada cannot exist without retaining the integrity of its territory. This land has to stretch from the waters of the Atlantic Ocean to the waters of the Pacific Ocean and to the waters and icefields of the Arctic.

Canada has to include the rocky shores of Newfoundland, the rugged but grandiose expanses of Labrador, the beauty of the maritimes, the uniqueness of Quebec, the industrial structure of Ontario, the Great Lakes, the vast prairies, the mountains and beautiful coast of British Columbia. This country has to include the Yukon and its natural resources, the Northwest Territories and the Arctic. Without any one of these geographical areas, Canada is not a country.

Canada is also a country of diversified people.

[*Translation*]

The first native inhabitants, the first immigrants from continental Europe and the British Isles and all those who followed them have worked together to populate Canada. Take one of these people away and Canada is no longer a country.

Mr. Speaker, today we must look at the situation head on. Can we afford to take actions with unimaginable consequences? No, Mr. Speaker. We all have the responsibility to weigh carefully the significance and impact of the action we take. Breaking up the country and ending arrangements that have served the interests of Canadians and Quebecers well is too risky. Is it not wiser to continue our efforts to strengthen the country! Is it

not more logical to take new approaches that will lead to constitutional arrangements that are acceptable and profitable for all citizens of Canada? The answer to this question is yes.

Let us look together for arrangements that will let Canada continue on the road to greater prosperity. Our government's initiatives are a step in the right direction. The Citizens' Forum under Keith Spicer has done good work and continues to do so. This unique unprecedented initiative has enabled very many citizens to talk about their vision of Canada.

Mr. Lapierre: It was a farce!

Mr. Langlois: I hear the hon. member for Shefford, Mr. Speaker, say that the Citizens' Forum was a farce. I would simply remind the member for Shefford that the chairman of the Citizens' Forum is a great Canadian who has worked under several governments, including the former government of which the member for Shefford was a part.

The Citizens' Forum gave them a chance to talk about their vision of Canada for today and tomorrow.

[*English*]

The Beaudoin–Edwards commission has completed its consultation on the amending formula and will table its recommendation in a few weeks. The Speech from the Throne outlines the future steps that our government expects to take starting in the fall.

This round of constitutional initiative is for Canada.

[*Translation*]

The success of this series of initiatives by our government will lead Canadians and Quebecers to realize the importance of keeping the country together. The prosperity of the Canadian economy will also help ensure Canada's unity.

The Speech from the Throne presents Canadians with a progressive vision for the direction of the country's economy. Prosperity depends on competitiveness, the dynamism of Canadian businesses and the skill of Canadian workers. Since 1984, our government has implemented a whole series of measures to make Canadian businesses more competitive.

Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of this House and Canadians, let me mention some of them: The thorough full overhaul of the tax system; the free trade treaty with the United States; the revision of the Financial Institutions Act; the privatization of many Crown corporations including Air Canada and Petro–Canada; the sale to the private sector of government–controlled businesses; and the implementation of regional development programs in many parts of the country. That, Mr. Speaker, is a whole series of initiatives to strengthen the country's economy.

• (1120)

[*English*]

The Speech from the Throne proposes new and bold initiatives aimed at reinforcing our economic structure. I would like to quote the following from the Speech from the Throne:

> —my government will work with provincial governments to ensure that Canada becomes a single, integrated market from coast to coast to coast.

This proposed initiative will cause major changes in the Canadian way of doing business internally. It will mean the elimination of policies preventing provincial agencies from buying at lower cost in other provinces. It will mean the elimination of regulations that force Canadian suppliers to sell their products abroad instead of selling them in neighbouring provinces.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, this initiative will also eliminate employment practices that hurt Canadian workers.

That is an important courageous initiative that will also contribute to the country's prosperity.

Manpower training will also receive special attention. Our workers must adjust to technological change, new work methods and new concepts of management and production.

Bill C–21 now makes available funds so that we can considerably increase our efforts to improve the skill of our labour force.

Our small and medium sized businesses in Quebec face huge manpower problems. It is most urgent that our government and the Government of Quebec conclude agreements on labour force training.

This is not the time for discord and jurisdictional quarrels. Employers and workers need immediate strong actions and the federal government has an extremely important role to play in this field, even if the hon. member for Shefford does not agree, although when he

was on the government side, he could have influenced these decisions, but I must say that he did not do so.

The Speech from the Throne also announces our government's firm intention to increase its efforts in education. Together with all my colleagues from Quebec, I applaud this initiative. We members of Parliament from Quebec in Ottawa call on our provincial colleagues to react positively to this intention.

Together, let us tell the ministers responsible, both in Quebec and in Ottawa, to leave rhetoric aside and to think of the young people who drop out of high school. That is the problem, which must be attacked resolutely.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne reveals some horrifying figures: Three high school students in ten drop out before graduation—and in some regions of the country, it is four out of ten,—and four adults in ten neither read nor do arithmetic to function properly. These data justify immediate action that must not cease until the goals set are reached.

These goals are clearly set out in the Speech from the Throne: Cutting illiteracy rates in half; ensuring that ninety percent of Canadians attain high school diplomas; doubling the number of post-secondary graduates in mathematics, science and engineering; quadrupling the training provided by employers to their employees.

Let us join forces at every level of government to achieve these goals. The prosperity of our country depends on it. The need to improve the efficiency of the machinery of government is stated in the Speech from the Throne. That part of the Speech contains a list of proposed changes.

Now, it is up to the Parliamentarians, elected representatives and government officials to set up the appropriate mechanisms.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say again that the people from remote areas, who live far away from the governmental major decision-making centres are frustrated by what they perceive to be indifference on the part of civil servants in dealing with their problems. I must admit that, while this frustration is sometimes legitimate, most civil servants try to provide the best service possible to their clients.

The problem, in my opinion, is that the decision-making process is too concentrated at the upper echelons located far from the major centres.

Regional services do exist but, more often than not, decisions are made at the head office.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the efficiency of the machinery of government calls for a genuine decentralization of the administrative decision-making process. Departments must grant a greater autonomy to their regional managers.

Those are some of my comments on the Speech from the Throne opening the third session of the Thirty-Fourth Parliament of Canada.

If we work together toward achieving the goals set by the government, we will be gratified, by the end of this mandate, to see we have helped maintain and strenghten the integrity, unity and prosperity of Canada.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to what was said by the hon. member for Manicouagan, and I noticed more specifically his reference to regional development programs, which according to him—I don't want to put words into his mouth—but according to him, in any case, these programs had improved since the Progressive Conservative Party came to power.

Perhaps I may describe the following situation for the hon. member and then ask him to comment on the impact of regional development programs since his government came to power, and more specifically in the part of the country I represent, in Eastern Ontario, where the unemployment rate today is almost as high as in certain areas in Newfoundland. For instance, in Hawkesbury, which is in my riding, the unemployment rate is up to 15 or 16 per cent. In Cornwall the unemployment rate is even higher. Pembroke, Renfrew and other regions, with the exception of the National Capital region, also have very high unemployment.

Before 1984, the CIRB program, which was designed to find new industries for regions dependent on the textile industry, was abolished by the present government.

We also had the IRDP, the Industrial and Regional Development Program, which was active in my region and many others as well, which was also abolished by the government opposite.

There was a federal provincial agreement between Canada and Ontario, the subsidiary agreement for Eastern Ontario, to help regions like mine.

Does the hon. member still think regional development programs have improved since the Tories came to power?

Mr. Charles Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I found the comments by the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell most interesting. I would like to point out to the hon. member that in the part of Quebec I represent, regional development agreements signed by our government with the government of Quebec focus on industrial development tourism and developing the region's own resources.

I wish I were able to comment on the situation in Eastern Ontario and the riding he represents. However, at one time, because the business I worked for had made a number of acquisitions in his riding, I was in that particular area to do business. We found that business people in the area were very dynamic and that in addition to being very dynamic, they, and small businesses in this part of Ontario were technologically very advanced.

If the hon. member feels that further efforts should be made by the federal government in his riding, I would ask him to make the requisite submissions to the minister. As parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, I should be delighted to be of assistance, if necessary. However, I can say that in the part of Quebec I represent, these regional development programs are working very well. They have made it possible to attract new investment and create new jobs, and they have helped the fisheries and tourism industry to make considerable progress. I would therefore urge the hon. member to look at these results and see whether it would be possible to implement the same measures in his own riding in Ontario.

• (1130)

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member for Manicouagan a few questions, particularly as he is a conservative member for Quebec who for all practical purposes, does not care about Quebec.

I would like to ask him whether he agrees, as his speech seems to indicate, with the fact that the federal government is intruding directly in the field of education and vocational training?

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that at the time of the signing of the Constitution of 1867, the Fathers of Confederation had left education to the provinces, which were given exclusive power in that field.

Despite the present constitutional upheaval, the federal government, in its Speech from the Throne that we are currently analyzing, plans to intrude directly in that field.

I would like to know whether the hon. member for Manicouagan agrees with such an intrusion. Would he say it as categorically?

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, does he agree with the fact that the Speech from the Throne is now talking about a "unique" society rather than "distinct" as it was in the Meech Lake Accord and as was agreed by the eleven Prime Ministers. Is the member for Manicouagan in agreement with the Speech from the Throne which describes Quebec as a unique society?

My third point, Mr. Speaker, deals with the fact that the Speech from the Throne is proposing a legislation allowing for a consultation of Canadian citizens on the Constitution, through a referendum or a constituent assembly. Is the hon. member for Manicouagan in agreement with the leader of the opposition who says that a referendum should be held, throughout Canada, before the referendum in Quebec, that is before June 1992 or October 1992?

Mr. Charles Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to answer the questions asked by the hon. member who just spoke—

Mr. Rocheleau: for Hull–Aylmer.

Mr. Langlois: For Hull–Aylmer, thank you. Mr. Speaker, it is hard to remember where the hon. member is from, since he has sat in various places in this House, it is a bit tricky. So, please, forgive me.

Mr. Speaker, in answer to my colleague's third question, the Throne Speech does say that Canadian men and women will be invited to take part in the debate, and that will happen through extensive consultations, which have already begun with the Citizens' Forum and the Beau-

doin-Edwards Commission and will continue this autumn with the creation of the committee, as announced in the Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, there was no mention of a referendum in the Throne Speech, nor is it included in the government's proposals, and I think it would be wise and well-advised to realize that a whole series of consultations will have to take place before we decide exactly what mechanisms will be used to amend the Canadian Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, I am quite content with the expression "unique society" used in the Throne Speech, since it acknowledges the fact that Quebec is in a unique and very particular situation, as one of the founding nations, with its own characteristics, its own language, its own legal institutions, and its own education system. That is the way, Mr. Speaker, that the unique character of Quebec society should be recognized.

Thirdly, the Throne Speech specifies that the federal government intends to interfere, with provincial consent and cooperation, in education and job training.

My honourable colleague should reread the Throne Speech very carefully. He would see, Mr. Speaker, right there in the Throne Speech, that the federal government is ready to get involved in these areas "with provincial endorsement and cooperation".

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on this very important occasion in the life of this Parliament, which is to debate the new blueprint put forward by the government.

This is one of the signal hallmark events in the life of any parliamentary session. It should establish for all Canadians the opportunity to know where we are going, to begin to put together the kind of plan and formulation of goals that are going to be essential to deal with the kind of world we live in.

As I read and listened to the throne speech and to the debate, I wondered if we were really engaged in a serious exercise. I thought really the whole object of the government was to build up a tourist industry in Canada by convincing Canadians they do not have to go to Florida to go to Disneyland or Fantasyland. They only have to come to Ottawa and look at the performance of this government. They do not have to go down to Orlando, Florida to see Dumbo and Goofy, they can look at the front benches of the government in the last few days to understand what kind of fantasy world is being built here in Ottawa.

The government talks about a prosperous Canada, and it talks about it sort of based on the free trade agreement and all the new economic initiatives. The reality of Canada is 100 metres in front of this building where truckers are protesting, as they are across Canada, because they are losing their jobs and they are fighting for their economic survival. The government says: "We will study the problem."

What can be more of a fairy tale than that enormous gap between the reality that every one sees as we walk in this building in the last days, and when we listen to members on the opposite side or the ministers who say: "We are going to build a prosperous Canada."

The government talks about caring for our children. Our children are our most important asset. The reality is, as I see in my riding, that 40 or 50 per cent of the food banks are occupied by children and their families because they cannot get enough to eat at home. Their welfare payments or their income is not enough to buy them the basic staples of our society.

Is there anything in the throne speech—although I hear a comment from the minister that yes, we are. We are going to have another study. We are going to have another committee. The government is turning Canada into one big university symposium. The only people who are going to get jobs out of this are the researchers and the appointees to new royal commissions, new committees and new study teams.

What goes on in the reality of Canada as it now exists is that we have the shame and tragedy of close to half a million children starving in this country. I have not heard any real commitment to action based upon that harsh, difficult and incredibly insensitive reality.

As a critic for external affairs, I looked again at the throne speech and have listened with some anticipation to what the government said about the world we live in. It says Canada will once again defend its interests in this world of a global economy. The harsh reality, again, is seen on the hills of Turkey and Iran where there are still over one million Kurdish refugees. It is seen in the depleted, tragic wastelands of Bangladesh, Sudan, Soma-

lia and Ethiopia. That is the harsh reality of the world we live in.

What does our government have to say about it? What initiatives are we going to take? What roles are we going to perform? If you listen to the throne speech, we are going to do what we have been doing up to now, which is nothing.

We fought a war just a few months ago in the gulf where we were prepared to spend close to $1 billion. We said it was a great fight for democracy and for the rule of law. It was a great opportunity to show that there will be now a new sense of international responsibility and collective security. A billion dollars to fight a war.

We had war cabinets meeting every day, and the cameras were whirling. We had the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs coming out and declaring the important initiatives. Canada was going to fight for a reduction in the arms trade. Canada was going to propose economic development. Canada was going to take the leadership in reforming the United Nations.

• (1140)

Is there anything in the throne speech about that? Did you read anything about what we are doing now? The arms trade is going on in the Middle East. They have just negotiated a sale of $25 billion. I did not hear anybody from the Canadian government objecting to that initiative. I did not hear anybody in the Canadian government in this new world order saying to our allies in Europe, the United States or others: "Hey, stop selling arms". That is what the Prime Minister said we were going to do during the war. But somehow we have forgotten about that obligation.

I see the tragedy taking place in the aftermath of the war; the consequences of the war, the total destruction in the countries, the refugees hanging out in the hills. Where is the incredible mobilization of Canada that we saw during the war? Where is the peace cabinet that should be mobilized to bring the resources of this country together to help these people? Is that not equally important?

I do not see any commitment in the throne speech. I do not see any initiative by the Canadian government. I do not see any action being promised. It is a total absence and omission.

Instead, it fired some 300 people from the Department of External Affairs, people who were working on proposals to deal with the spread of arms; people who were working on UN reform. These people who were working on these very initiatives no longer have jobs.

Of course, the new minister of external affairs has set an incredibly new launch in her tenure as a minister by totally denying her responsibility for the action of the department and is trying to lay the blame on civil servants. What kind of performance is this government going to expect from its prime public servants when it has trespassed upon the fundamental, essential, value of ministerial accountability. It is a great way to start the new world order from a Canadian point of view by telling your department it can hang out to dry. That is an awfully good way for this government to start leading its new interventions in the world with a minister, who in a cowardly way, refuses to take responsibility for what that department does. That is a great way to get started.

Once again we are back in the world of fantasy land. We are back living in a world that really does not exist. The government side is weaving and spinning in a world of make believe, of magic. Unfortunately, the only people who believe it are the members of the government, because nobody else out there does. Nobody else believes there is a real commitment to action. No one else believes there really is a plan in mind.

The harsh reality is that when it comes to dealing with the problems of Canada and the problems of the world, this government is bankrupt of ideas. It has nothing to offer except more study, more examination, more review, more inquiries, nothing that would give any sense that it knows where it is going. There is no blueprint here. All we have is a prescription for navel gazing, hoping somehow that there will be some magical turn of events because it does not know how to control matters any longer.

What is sad about it is that it has not learned from its mistakes. It has not learned that there are serious fundamental problems in this whole trade arrangement with the United States that is leading to enormous losses of jobs in steel, automobiles, food processing and agricul-

ture. Jobs are being lost every day because we did not negotiate the right deal.

However, the government does not say: "Well, okay, we have had a couple of years to see how it is going. Here is how we can change it. Here is how we can renegotiate it. Here is how we can improve upon it. Here is what we should do about it". It says; "Hey, it is wonderful".

Tell the unemployed workers in the steel mills or the food processing plants how wonderful it is and they will tell you that once again you are living a great lie.

The harsh reality again is that there is no sense of realism about what it is doing. Instead it promises that it is now going to renegotiate a deal with Mexico, for North American free trade, but without knowing why, without knowing where it wants to go, without knowing what kind of conditions.

President Bush at least had the good sense to set certain objectives, dealing with social, environmental and labour problems. We have not had a word, a whisper. There is nothing in the throne speech to show that we have learned any lessons about how to deal with the difficult world of international trade.

Again, dealing with the incredibly important problem of national unity, we have a promise for another committee to study the works of other committees, who were studying the works of other committees. We are sort of beginning to chase our tail on this issue. The Prime Minister says one thing and then another. We may have a referendum, we may not have a referendum, we may have this, we may have that. We have no sense of where we are going.

As a westerner I am surprised and extremely disappointed, that when discussing changing how Ottawa works, the whole fundamental question of Senate reform was totally ignored.

I would like to read into the record a statement by Gordon Robertson, one of the most senior and respected public servants in this country for many long years. I quote from his book *A House Divided* where he wrote: "Agreement on the Senate was the key to Confederation in 1867. Agreement on its reform could be the key to the impasse that today threatens the renewal of our federalism for the future."

One of the most important and admired public servants who has studied the Constitution says the key to the impasse of trying to find reconciliation between east and west, of giving the regions the feeling that they belong in a full sense, is Senate reform.

I looked closely at the throne speech, I used a microscope, I changed my glasses, I examined it, perused it. There is not one word about our willingness, our preparation to change the Senate. It is totally ignored. Yet I know that last month during the parliamentary break when I travelled throughout western Canada as chairman of a committee of our own caucus on constitutional matters it came up in every single meeting. It has the same symbolic importance in western Canada as the issue of a distinct or unique society has in Quebec. The same feeling of providing a recognition of belonging.

Yet, a throne speech which tries to set out the new blueprint for federalism completely misses the point.

There has to be Senate reform. It is a way of righting the imbalances, inequities and inequalities that have existed in federalism since its inception. There is not one federal state in the world that does not have a second chamber which works effectively to represent regional interests.

Through quirks of history ours does not. It is not an elected body, it does not have the credibility or the legitimacy of being democratically elected by the people. Therefore, its ability to provide a check and balance upon the role of the executive, which is dictated to by the majority of members from the heavily populated provinces, is constantly undermined. We see it repeated time and time again in many decisions, I don't have to place in the record of the House that history. It is seen and felt in a palpable way.

There are all kinds of proposals around. Mr. Robertson, in his book, discusses all of them and comes up with what I think is a pretty fair proposal, an elected Senate that has effective powers to provide checks and balances, that can say yes or no to appointments to Crown agencies, to Crown boards, to various appointments. It could provide protection for language and culture at the national level, rather than relying simply on provincial powers.

There could be an election based upon proportional representation to ensure that minorities are reflected in that body. The elections could be staggered every two years in a six-year term to create a kind of mini-election

to test the government so it would have to be conscious of changes in the mood of the public and their concerns.

There are some good ideas around, ideas that we have promoted. The 1986 resolution, passed at our own policy convention, set out a very clear statement of our commitment to that reform. There is nothing from the government on that crucial issue.

I say to the new Minister of Constitutional Affairs, who is from western Canada, that no one should know better than he how important it is that Senate reform become part of the package. I am not saying this in a partisan sense. I am simply saying there will be no agreement on any new constitutional package until we have a commitment and agreement that we will pursue Senate reform based upon a democratic election, upon effective powers, and making it more equal.

• (1150)

That has to be the hallmark of any new proposal. It is something that is important because in western Canada we recognize the importance of reorganizing and restructuring our own arrangements.

A week or so ago I put out a proposal saying that the prairie provinces have to come together in some form of union. They have to begin merging and integrating many of the economic activities of the prairie region, such as telecommunications, training, and transportation. We are small and do not have the same kind of critical mass, resources, and people and as a result we have to begin combining our resources and combining our energies to make it work. There are similar proposals in the Atlantic provinces for the same thing.

We are prepared to restructure this country. It is important. We recognize the crucial challenges in the global economy. It is not going to happen until there is a willingness at the federal level to make changes. That means not just dealing with Senate reform but reforming many of the regulatory bodies of the federal government to make them work at a regional level, and ensuring that transportation is tailored and blueprinted to the concerns of that region.

It means using some of the regional development funds, instead of using them as slush funds for individual businesses, to start rebuilding the infrastructure, the training facilities, and the schools of those regions so they can get up to par, so they can begin to improve those areas.

There is an awful lot more reform and remodelling that has to be done than simply having another committee go to work on it. On the crucial question of constitutional amendment, we could use the Victoria formula. A prairie union could provide its own veto for that part of the world and ensure that westerners do not feel they are being left out, like they are second class citizens in their own country.

Those are the kinds of proposals I would have expected in a throne speech that said we are at a crossroads, a turning point. I would have expected a clear, unmistakable agenda of action, proposing how to deal with problems of the world, how to deal with our own economic problems, and how to deal with regional problems.

That was not in it. Instead, we have a brochure from Disneyland outlining how to pretend what is going on as opposed to getting down to work, getting down to action.

I know my time is about through—I would love to be able to spend more hours with you, and I know that you would love that as well. The message we are really trying to give is that we all recognize the importance of breaking out of conventional ways of putting our heads to work, of coming up with ideas that Canadians can really understand and that indicate the political system is working well. Credibility and belief in the political system will not be achieved by tinkering with a little bit of machinery. It is going to come about by clearly demonstrating that the people they elect know where they are going, can provide some leadership, have a sense of purpose, and know what the blueprint should be. If that is the criteria for leadership then the throne speech is an abysmal failure.

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my hon. friend on such a compassionate speech. I am sure that all Canadians share in the disillusionment that he expressed with the lack of depth and commitment this government has shown in this throne speech. The most accurate reading I could make of his interpretation of the speech was that there was a total lack of commitment on the part of the government. It was a promise that they will continue to

offer Canadians what they have been offering them for the past several years.

In other words, Canadians, the government is saying: "You had better like what we have been doing to you for the past several years because that is our commitment to you for the future. That is what we are going to be doing to you for years to come." The time period, of course, will probably be limited to about two years.

I wonder if the hon. member would just react to that rather simplistic view, perhaps, of the throne speech. Do you think it is an accurate one? Do you think this government was really saying to Canadians: "We hope you like what we have been giving you because that is what we are going to continue to give you and continue to do to you?"

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, it only shows how many prescient people there are in this country that they would be able to provide such a highly accurate appraisal.

There is another comment that came to mind as the member for Leeds—Grenville was speaking. It reminded me back when I was a graduate student and one of my professors commented upon a certain political statement and said: "the poor gentleman is lecturing on navigation while the ship is going down". I think that is a pretty accurate description of what this throne speech is about.

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask a question that comes from the Canada West Foundation. The member in his speech talked about the free trade agreement. The foundation said that Canada's merchandise trade with the U.S. jumped to $17.4 billion last year, up from $14.2 billion in 1988. More impressively, direct investment in Canada exceeded Canadian direct investment in other countries by $4.3 billion in 1990, the first time in a decade that there has been a net inflow of funds. In 1988, just before free trade, there was an outflow of $2.5 billion.

Looking at only the flow of direct investment between Canada and the United States, there was a similar reversal. In 1990 Canada attracted $800 million more in direct U.S. investment than the U.S. did in Canada, and in 1988 the U.S. had attracted $3.8 billion more. This suggests that overseas investors see Canada as an increasingly attractive place.

This information comes from the Canada West Foundation. I remind the member for Winnipeg South Centre that this was put together by a business consultant based in Winnipeg who concluded in his report: "Despite the bad economic news of 1990, including confirmation of a recession, export sales to the U.S. have been a shining star. Export growth has been driven by high-tech sectors while traditional main exports, such as autos, metal, forestry have slowed. The bottom line is that Canadian trade with the U.S. has been basically business as usual".

This comes from western Canada, part of the country that he represents. It seems to differ with the partisan comments that he has suggested. I would like him to comment on these particular numbers.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I was not conscious that my remarks were particularly partisan, but I am very pleased to respond to the question. It was totally non-partisan and objective as we well know, as has been my tradition in this House over the past 12 or 13 years.

The member points out figures provided by the Canada West Foundation. I think he might more accurately look at some of the figures provided by agents of Statistics Canada. They point out that we have the highest current account deficit in the history of this country, close to $20 billion. The net outflow of funds on dividends, profits, and intercorporate transfers is at its highest level ever. What is really happening in this country is that we are haemorrhaging in terms of flow of dollars outward.

Also, let us take a look at direct investment figures. If we break them down in their particulars, we find that a large proportion of direct investment is going into takeovers and acquisitions. I think the last figure provided by Statistics Canada was close to 95 per cent. It is not going into new investments or new businesses. It is going into taking over Canadian companies which are not able to survive.

It is also important to point out in terms of those figures that one of the reasons there is an inflow is that we have a God-awful, unacceptable, high rate of interest and high dollar. They have to be kept propped up in order to bring in money to replace that which is flowing out. In order to replace what is being haemorrhaged, we

have to provide an unnatural pool of money for blood transfusions. That is the real problem.

It is only, as our leader said in his opening speech, when we have a more realistic economic policy that we can begin to get our economic house in order. Then we will not have to rely upon all that direct investment, simply short-term Treasury bill investments, to prop up the economy. We know we are in a vicious circle caused by much of the openings that took place under that trade agreement.

Third, I ask the hon. gentleman—and I know he is a serious member of Parliament—to step across the lawn and talk to the truckers today and see how they feel about the economic policies of this government. He should go down to the food processing plants that have been closed in Portage la Prairie, the steel plants in southwestern Ontario or auto parts plants.

There is one basic fallacy in the comments the member made, and I am sure he made it mistakenly. He said: "We may be selling a little bit more high-tech but, after all, things like agriculture, fish, auto parts—all these other things—are not doing so well any more". I will tell you why they are not doing so well. It is because of that trade agreement. We lost control of our resources, and those other industries that he mentioned happened to be the backbone of the industry of Canada.

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Has the honorable member for Shefford a question or a comment?

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Of course I would like to direct a question to the honorable member who has just resumed his seat. He talked about Senate reform as being a crucial issue whithout which no constitutional reform could be acceptable, for him and his party, I guess.

I believe, I heard him mention the traditional triple "E", but I would like for him to elaborate on equal representation in the Senate. He said: We want it to be more equal. His leader, every time, avoid stating his party's position about the question of equality in the Senate. Would every province have the same number of senators? I would like to know the honorable member's opinion on the matter.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I would especially like to know what he thinks of the federal government's role in the field of education and vocational training. I know he is an expert in this area and I would like to hear what he has to say on these two issues.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I am very happy that the honorable member acknowledges the importance of a Senate reform.

In my opinion, it is crucial to find a formula which would provide for a more equal representation, by region and by province. I think it would be a worthwile subject to be considered by this House because we have received several proposals for a report from Mr. Robertson, the Senate and the House of Commons over the last three or four years.

Several proposals have been put forward for consideration but I think it is the government's responsibility to come up with a formula to be looked at by the other members of Parliament.

But is its importance symbolic? You, your group that is, has said that it was important to recognize Quebec as a distinct society. It is important for your region, but the same applies to the western regions. It is absolutely essential. I think it is a proposal which should be incorporated in a formula concerning the role of Canada, as my leader has said when he spoke with debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

As for the formula, I am prepared to consider several options, several proposals, but the principle of equality is what matters.

[*English*]

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. I am always impressed by the position taken by that member on the issue of the free trade agreement. Tragically I am now under the impression, since he has been removed as the trade critic, that the position espoused by the former leader of the Liberal Party on the free trade and the Mexico connection has been changed by the Liberal Party.

Will your party or will it not abrogate the existing free trade agreement? What is your position on Canada participating with Mexico in those new talks?

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am always pleased at the opportunity of helping my hon. friend from British Columbia to clarify his thoughts.

It is one of the more difficult tasks one faces in the House of Commons, but I am certainly prepared to undertake it at any opportunity.

It is clear—and I think our leader has said it in his response to the Speech from the Throne and on other occasions—that the trade agreement is not working for Canada and it must be renegotiated.

Mr. Barrett: Renegotiated, that is absurd.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): How else do you do it? The member says it is absurd, but the fact of the matter is that there is an agreement in place. It means in order to change it, to abrogate it, you have to work under that agreement. It is an international document and therefore you have to make your proposals. That is clearly what I have said.

Second, on the question of the Mexico round, unfortunately the round has started. Our own party in this House of Commons, with our trade critic and others, again put the proposition very clearly to government members that they should not enter into any of these kinds of discussions until they meet certain conditions.

The government has not met any of them and it should not be there. What I would suggest to the hon. member is that what is really crucial at this time is for us to recognize what is going on. The trade patterns in the world are really being dominated by the hub and spoke strategy that the Americans are following. It is really incumbent upon the next Government of Canada, which we will be, to provide an alternative to that strategy, to open up trade—particularly in the western hemisphere—to get a new set of trade relationships—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by expressing my congratulations to the member for Saint-Maurice and the member for Regina—Wascana for the excellent way in which they began this debate.

This session of Parliament will be more important than most, perhaps more important than any before it. During this time, our country will either agree to go ahead or decide to close down. That determines our obligations today. As all the leaders in this House have said, this is not about the preferences of a party or the agenda of a government. The only agenda is Canada. That has never been a partisan purpose before and it will not be now.

Those of us sitting here are far from perfect, as individuals or as a Parliament. Whatever our past failings, we are determined that we shall not fail Canada. I understand fully that the non-partisan approach requires the government to involve all of Parliament in basic decisions. That is why the Prime Minister stated explicitly yesterday our willingness to accept sensible proposals from any party or parliamentarian. That is why I began my new responsibilities by reaching out deliberately to Canadians who had felt excluded in the past—native leaders, northerners, western Canadians. We have an obligation to listen, to learn and to lead, and I know we must do all three if we are to succeed.

No individual, party or government is going to compel Canada to continue. Canadians must decide whether we wish to keep our country. That is a decision for all of us.

Elected members of this House have an extra obligation. We have to ensure that the issues are clear, that the stakes are understood, and that Canadians have the chance to consider every reasonable proposal to renew and to save this country. We will need a lot of help in that work. We cannot lock ourselves into old ways which Canadians no longer respect or trust.

Neither should we lightly put aside our parliamentary process which has earned its legitimacy through 124 years of Canadian experience. Parliament needs to be reformed, not abandoned, and on behalf of the government I am prepared to consider any serious proposal any member might make as to how we involve Canadians who are not elected.

Involving them does not mean that we should step aside from our most basic responsibilities. None of us would deny that this country is in crisis. This crisis can also be an opportunity, a new beginning, a journey of liberation from the worst of our past and a freedom to build upon the best within all of us. I believe that Canadians across this country are beginning to see it that way too.

They are beyond simple despair at how things have gone wrong, and are wondering how to help set things right. This is a time for this country to reflect on our past and get to know it, to reflect on our present and decide

how to improve it, and to look ahead to our future to determine how best to achieve it together.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, our plan consists of four separate phases. Phase one is nearing its conclusion. By July 1, we will have received the reports of the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future and the Special Joint Committee on the Process for Amending the Constitution of Canada. Both have done a good job, and the government will examine their conclusions with all the attention and care the views of Canadians deserve.

The next step will be the tabling of a set of proposals on how to reform the country. These proposals will be detailed, they will be specific and they will be published. They will not remain in the private domain, known only to a chosen few. All Canadians will know our vision of the future.

• (1210)

These proposals will not be final. However, during the third phase, Canadians will have a chance to tell us what they think. A joint committee of Parliament will meet Canadians across the country to hear their views. The committee will hold public hearings, not to discuss the country's future in genenral but to discuss specific changes.

The committee's mission and purpose will be clearcut. It will be asked to consider concrete proposals for constitutional change. It will seek comments from Canadians and make recommendations to the government. The committee will have discussions with committees or similar groups of members of the various provincial and territorial legislatures, on how they will proceed and the witnesses they wish to invite. This will be more than just a matter of joint hearings. It will be a full-fledged association. The resulting dialogue can then be used to build a national consensus.

[*English*]

A major priority will be an intensive dialogue with the aboriginal community whose constitutional concerns must be addressed in this committee while simultaneously its economic and social concerns are the subject of a royal commission inquiry.

In the final step, we expect Parliament will propose reforms that will set this country on a sound and sure course for the next century. In order to leave open as many options as possible, this House will be asked to pass legislation which would enable the people of Canada to express themselves directly in a referendum.

It is not our preference nor is it our intention to seek to resolve complex, constitutional questions by way of referendum but we believe it is prudent for the federal government to have the full authority to conduct a Canadian referendum—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): —should that become the best way to achieve consensus on defining our future together.

We are prepared to consider other methods of consulting Canadians, including any proposals that might come from the mixed committee, the Beaudoin–Edwards committee.

I do not believe there has ever been a more open process put in place for the people of Canada to decide themselves the destiny of our country. I wish to turn to some of the tasks which I believe are in front of us in the months ahead.

First, this time constitutional change must address several issues simultaneously. This cannot be a Quebec round, an aboriginal round or a Senate round. We have to make progress on many fronts together. This must be a Canada round.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Second, we must be guided by a sense of both pragmatism and history. We want a country that works well and works together in one of the most challenging periods in world history.

The only way for our reforms to succeed is to respect the special nature of this country, including the objective reality that Quebec is a distinct society.

Third, the country must get to know itself better. The stories which suffuse our history are extraordinary. They are stories of achievement, of strength in the face of adversity, of a unity built on diversity. We do not tell those stories so we do not know them. Let us tell them again. Nostalgia will not hold this country together, but knowledge can.

We need to know our history, but we also need to get to know each other better. In Yellowknife last week, Mayor Pat McMahon brought a few people together to talk to me about Canada. One woman observed of Canada, and I quote her: "Everybody feels misunderstood". That says two things. First, misunderstanding is widespread but, second, for most of us the priority is to have others understand us. It is not a one way street.

If we want to keep and build this country, citizens everywhere must work at understanding why other Canadians have priorities different from their own. Quebecers must try to understand why western Canadians feel that institutions like the Senate must be changed fundamentally. Western Canadians must try to understand why recognition of a distinct society is so important to Quebec.

Those of us whose ancestors came to Canada from somewhere else must try to understand that aboriginal claims are about respect as much as they are about money.

Fourth, there is a real desire in this country for information. Canadians want to base their decisions on evidence and not on ideology. They are ready to move beyond accusation to deliberation. They want to know what unity gives them. They want to know what taking away unity would leave.

Sometimes I think we talk too much about our differences and too little about our common Canadian citizenship. I celebrate the diversity of this country, but the real strength of Canada is that we have made these different parts work together. That has required a basic respect for others that is not at all common in the world. We Canadians use our gifts of wealth and freedom to advance our neighbours' interests, not just our own. That sense of duty to a larger community is evident everywhere in Canada. We have to make more of that common Canadian citizenship.

[*Translation*]

According to any standard, we, as Canadians, have accomplished a great deal. We are free, we are prosperous, we are tolerant and we are educated. Taken individually, these qualities are exceptional. Together, they have made Canada a country that is both unafraid to tread uncharted paths and that cares for its people.

Mr. Speaker, it cannot be repeated often enough that the integrity of Canadian values is part and parcel to the integrity of this country. Canadians did not choose the path of mutual respect because they felt like it but because our diversity implies the mutual respect of our component parts, so that our relations can be peaceful and productive.

Canadians did not choose the path of tolerance because it was fashionable but because different cultures must work together if they are to survive.

Mr. Speaker, most Canadians have other, more pressing concerns and priorities than changing the Constitution. They have to look after the education of their children, maintain their prosperity and keep their neighbourhoods safe and clean. However, they must also keep pace with the rest of the world.

[*English*]

People can unplug their phones, countries cannot. While we are deciding whether Canada should continue, other countries are moving forward without us. What price are we paying for quarrelling at home while others are focusing on the future? What price are we paying while others are preoccupied with innovating, educating, changing and competing? Unlike Peter Sellers' last movie, countries do not succeed by just being there.

I am not saying that Canada should stay together just because some accountant or economist might say it makes sense. Canada is not a corporate merger but being poor is no foundation for doing anything. I do not know of one economic argument which says that being smaller means being better.

• (1220)

If there were such an argument, Europe would not be uniting. If there were such an argument, Asia would not be trading. If there were such an argument, Confederation would never have happened. Our ancestors would have seen a better life apart than they found together.

If that was the decision in the middle of the 19th century, when the global economy had barely begun, how on earth can it be different now when the global village is at our doorstep, and at our doorstep forever.

Whatever the options in the past, whatever the differences Canadians have had, our advantage in the future is to be together as one strong, large, effective country.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): I believe we have time. In 1864, Confederation was constructed in four short months between the conference in Quebec City and the conference in Charlottetown. Although our problems may be more complex, surely we can begin to save a country in the time it took to build one.

In 1865, George Brown, one of the Fathers of Confederation made a statement. He had not been a fan of Confederation, but he came to be a convert. He said, and I quote:

> We are endeavouring to adjust harmoniously greater difficulties than have plunged other countries into all the horrors of civil war. We are striving to settle forever issues hardly less momentous than those that have rent the United States of America, and are now exposing it to all the horrors of civil war. Have we not then great cause of thankfulness that we have found a better way for the solution of our troubles than that which has entailed in other countries, such deplorable results.

Canada is still the better way. The world knows it. Our ancestors knew it when they chose to come here from around the globe. Canadians know it today. It is our obligation to build that better way, not to discard it, knowing the value of our achievement and knowing that we can make it better still.

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, the minister had a very effective speech. As he put the four stages of the process before us, it certainly cleared up some of the concerns I have and I am sure other people have.

Having been on the Beaudoin—Edwards committee and knowing that everybody who came before us said that public participation was critical to the process, I had hoped the minister would come up with proposals that the public would have had a chance to discuss. I will ask about that again in my second question. But from that discussion, a new set of proposals, some reinforced or some discarded, and then more public participation after it had been looked at again.

I am wondering if there is to be a two-stage public participation in the process.

Second, I cannot believe that we have to wait until September to get the proposals. I think everybody in Canada knows that the Senate and Parliament have to be reformed. The Supreme Court could easily be, by bringing together the provinces to look at it. The distribution of powers does not need unanimity. There was not one expert who said it was the Constitution that was to blame. They said it was the process that was used around Meech. There was not one expert who did not point out that we had two amendments since the new Constitution was in place that passed, and only one failed.

I just cannot believe, with the government having a majority here and in the Senate, that we cannot get together and reform the institutions within our own jurisdiction this summer. I do not know any Canadians, since I crossed Canada, who felt that we were giving them leadership, from this place down to the people, in the areas that we have control over.

The other thing is the power of spending. That is something that the government can talk about and talk about immediately. I do not believe that you can roll the dice, come February, to the Allaire or the Bélanger–Campeau committees and not have time next fall to undo it. I know the feelings out there and I am sure the minister is well aware of the feelings right across Canada. There is a hope that we can come together in Canada and redefine ourselves but I do think there is a lot that could be done immediately to make that process a lot easier.

I am wondering if the minister would tell me why the proposals cannot be done, and some of the things done immediately.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): There is no question about two realities concerning public opinion: One is that there is a profound cynicism about existing institutions, and each of us will attribute that to different origins, but there is no question about the reality of it. There is also no question about the fact that that, if we simply succumb to it, it is corrosive, that could be destructive of this country. What we have to do is not succumb to criticisms of our institutions but to prove that by reforming them we can make them work better. That cynicism is there and we have to take account of it.

The second reality, flowing from the first, is that Canadians very much want to take part. Individual Canadians do, but so do some particular Canadian groups. The hon. member has been engaged in this process more intensively over the last few months than I have been but since my appointment to this portfolio I have, for example, made a point of meeting with native leaders, going to the north and speaking to people who see their interests not simply in terms of their own

particular interest, but also in terms of the regions they represent or the groups from which they come.

Speaking of public participation, we have two processes that end the July 1. The hon. member is part of the joint committee and we have the Spicer committee. There was a lot of scepticism about the Spicer committee but I think that process has engendered a great deal of participation and a lot of originality across the country.

Public consultation cannot stop. We all have obligations to carry it forward, and I have to find ways in which some of the work that was started by Spicer can be carried on. It is important that the next phase of public consultation not be about issues in general, but about specific proposals that can put things in a general context of reform. We are not talking here simply about changing institutions within the federal jurisdiction; we are talking about basic changes in Canada, including changes in the way we see ourselves and changes in attitude. There needs to be some over-all context within which we act and we are trying, hoping and expecting to have it ready for the fall. We expect to be able to put before this House in the fall an over-all position as to how these changes which we must pursue together can be put together to advance the country.

Then the discussion, the next phase of public participation, will be a phase which will allow individual Canadians to focus specifically upon particular proposals placed in a Canadian context that have been put forward by the government.

We will welcome amendments, changes and improvements in that process. We think that is the best way to take account of what is being done now and to ensure that Canadians have a constructive opportunity to help define the future of the country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I would like to recognize the hon. member for Parkdale and also the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre and the hon. member for Shefford, but I only have six minutes.

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin my remarks by congratulating the minister on his appointment to this portfolio and to wish him well. I hope that the esteem in which he is held in this country will bring a resolution.

Having said that, he knows what is coming next. The remarks in his speech were well-suited. He talked about reaching out to those who felt excluded, and as a member of the Beaudoin-Edwards committee, that was the over-riding theme. I caution and urge him and all of us to have the political courage as politicians to step back from this issue, look at it and take the condemnation of the Canadian people sincerely.

• (1230)

We deserve it. This is a wonderful country we have, and we are at the risk of losing it. As you, Sir, know better than most people, we have a wonderful country. People outside of this country are wondering what we are on about here when they are talking about issues of survival and here we are navel gazing.

That criticism is real. It is very sincere. Please do not dismiss a constituent assembly made up of politicians and those who have felt excluded. Please do not exclude that option, because that is something that I think is a balance. Please do not exclude that.

My second point is with respect to your reference to a Canadian referendum. Referenda have been divisive tools in Canada's history. My question is: What do you think would constitute a majority? Would Quebec need to have its referendum on the same issue? The west? The north? The aboriginal people? This is the complexity.

As one of the witnesses at the Beaudoin—Edwards committee hearings pointed out to the committee, any parliamentary reform is like a Rubik's cube. You change one thing and the whole thing changes. We in this place have to have the wisdom to be able to see what those changes will bring.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, first, on a referendum.

I have said publicly that in our view a referendum cannot be used to force any group of Canadians to do something that it does not want to do. We are in a situation in which the Government of Canada does not have the legal authority that we require for the kind of

consultation that might become necessary as we seek to achieve the broadest possible consensus in the country. We are not introducing it because we intend to use it; we are introducing it because we think we may have need for it and we think it would be prudent to have that in place.

With respect to the other question, I agree with the hon. member's comment about the force of Canadian opinion. I do not intend to reject in advance anything that might be proposed by the Beaudoin—Edwards committee.

Here is the challenge that I think we all have to look at in the next little while. We have a parliamentary system. It is heavily criticized, but it has served the country well for over a century. Churchill once called it the worst system of government in the world except for all the others, and that reality continues.

We have that base. How do we add to that base in this committee process to make all Canadians, particularly people who have felt excluded, feel more a part of the process? I have some ideas. Some of the proposals put in the throne speech are regarding working with legislators from the territories and from the provinces. That has never been done before. That is an innovation that may be helpful. There are others we are prepared to consider, and I say very sincerely that I would very much welcome practical proposals from any member of the House as to means in which we can combine the fundamental nature of a parliamentary committee with the necessity to involve people who felt excluded before.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, I wish to compliment the minister on his appointment and his new role and wish him well and success. He will be missed in the external affairs portfolio where we had a very close working relationship.

He is looking for proposals and I would like to toss this proposal to his committee. I was born and raised in Saskatchewan. I went to a one-room rural school. In Grade 1, the teacher made up her own rules. She had the entire school stand up—the entire school being 30 students—and salute the Canadian flag, which was a little different than the one beside you now.

We all had to salute the flag and we had to recite "I pledge allegiance to this flag and to the country for which it stands." I realized later that she had adopted a modified version of the American pledge to the flag.

In all the committee hearings that have been going on across the country, the one thing we are not hearing is: What does it mean to be a Canadian citizen?

As a Canadian citizen what are my obligations, what are my duties, to this country? Every group says: "What is in this for me? When you modify the Constitution, what would it give me". It is high time we turned this around and asked: "What can I do for my country?"

I would like to see that in the preamble to the Canadian Constitution where we talk about goals in education. Every student going through the school system, regardless of province or territory, should memorize such a pledge. I think the next generations would be proud to keep their various cultural backgrounds, but the one thing every Canadian would have in common is growing up saying: "I pledge allegiance to this flag and to the country for which it stands".

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, Grade 1 classes in Saskatchewan were larger than they were in Alberta.

We do not want to instruct people to salute our flag but create conditions where Canadians everywhere choose to celebrate our flag. We will need a great deal of help in this. I take it as part of the responsibilities that are now mine to try to evoke in Canada a much stronger and truer sense of Canadian citizenship, of common Canadian citizenship.

I agree with the member that it is essential, but it is something that we have to draw from the people rather than try to impose upon them. In this unusual time of real anguish in the country, when Canadians are genuinely concerned about the future of the country, we have a better prospect of doing that than we ever had before. We have to know more about our country. I am appalled at how little Canadians know about the history of this extraordinary country. I am appalled that anyone could think that a country like this is dull. The other day I was in Iqaluit. In the bright light of night Canadians were going out to the edge of the ice floes to hunt seals. At the same time in southern Canada, some of the best scientists any country anywhere in the world could develop were working on ways to move into the future of high technology.

We are a country that has everything. We do not know ourselves well enough and that is part of the reason we are in the difficulty we face now. I look forward to help from the House and from other Canadians to try to create a much more striking sense of a common Canadian citizenship.

Mr. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I know there is not much time and I want to respond to some of the comments made by the minister.

I quoted in my own speech the comment made by Gordon Robertson who, he knows, is a highly respected commentator on constitutional affairs. He said: "Agreement on the Senate was the key to Confederation in 1867. Agreement on its reform could be the key to the impasse that today threatens renewal of our federalism for the future."

In the throne speech there was no mention of Senate reform. The minister in the past has been slightly negative about the proposal and has rejected it. I want to know if the minister is prepared to say today that he will support an initiative to reform the Senate, to make it an elected body, a more equal body, and one that has effective powers. This would allow us to have a true federalism with a second chamber that could provide the balance that our country needs.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, I have never rejected Senate reform. It is important in this debate that we all read one another's statements carefully. I will read his carefully.

Not only will I support Senate reform, I will be proposing Senate reform as part of the proposals we bring forward. I would add to the observation that the hon. member made. Yes, I think there should be institutional reform, probably not just the Senate, because I think Canadians from our part of the country want more than just the Senate changed. In fact, there may be institutions more important than the Senate. The Senate has a great symbolic importance but there are also other urgent issues. We cannot this time, for example, ignore the concerns of Canadian aboriginal people. Those concerns too must be given the highest possible priority and we intend to do that.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for his speech, but throughout his statement, he somewhat trivialized the Quebec issue by saying: Listen, fundamentally, what Quebec wants is an emphasis on the distinct society, period. You know that is totally untrue and that Quebec's demands, even the traditional ones, go far beyond the concept of a distinct society.

What amazed me in the Throne Speech, since we are talking about that framework, is that how the minister, who should be sensitive to the Quebec symbol, namely in the area of education—and I don't need to remind him of the words of Maurice Duplessis and others—could allow his government to intrude in the area of education, which is the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces, particularly of Quebec? The minister is aware that, for example, on the issue of vocational training, in Quebec there is not a consensus but unanimity on the full repatriation of the whole issue of vocational training.

• (1240)

How can the minister explain to me today that his government, which wants to hold out its hand to Quebecers once again, is raising its fist instead?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): I will give two short answers, Mr. Speaker.

First, on the subject of education, it is clearly stated in the Speech from the Throne that we will fully and completely respect the provincial jurisdiction in that matter. But it is also true that the federal government already spends billions of dollars every year on education and that we are going through an education crisis in this country. This is an issue that will require greater cooperation between the various levels of government and, in fact, between all sectors of our society.

Second, in response to the allegation that I trivialized the Quebec issue, I want to tell the hon. member that I have been a member of this House for eighteen years. I came from Alberta and was unilingual. I learned French by myself and I can speak it. I am not a member of the French Academy, but I can speak the language rather efficiently. I am not the only one. There are several members—the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville is one, and so is the President, Mr. Fraser, to name a couple—who come from various parts of the country geographically remote from Quebec and who, since they were elected, have displayed a willingness to respect the uniqueness and distinctiveness of that province, not only

in words but by their actions. I have been active myself on national issues, in Quebec and elsewhere defending Quebec, throughout my career in this place.

I am not the one trivializing Quebec today, neither do I intend to trivialize its future. I want to secure a strong future for the people of Quebec and the way to achieve that is to be part of a large country, not a small one.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The time alloted to questions and comments has elapsed. On debate. The hon. member for Saint-Henri—Westmount.

[*English*]

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to intervene in this debate following the comments of the right hon. Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

I could not help but smile when I heard many of the remarks made by the minister. I heard him say that the federal government would put forward a proposal for constitutional change by September and that the government would not be tied to these changes, that it would welcome changes and improvements to the proposal.

I could not help but feel that we have come a long way from the seamless web, the ill-fated proposal that was debated in this House a year or two ago, which could not be changed, not one word, comma or period.

Yes, the minister has listened to his critics. Time will tell whether a leopard can truly change its spots. We will see whether this government will, indeed, speak for the national interest, not in the speeches that we are hearing today in this House but through the proposals it will table and its actions in the months ahead.

[*Translation*]

It is with interest that I listened yesterday to the Prime Minister's speech on the Constitution. I was glad to hear him finally admit that what matters is Canada and Canada above all.

After seven years, he admits that we now have to talk in favour of the national interest. He said, and I quote: "That the next round will be a Canadian round." Moreover, he talked about the need to create a national market for securities, and to exempt trust companies from the overregulation of eleven governments. His speech, like the one made by the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs, made me smile.

The Prime Minister finally listened to his critics. It was said a few years ago that he did not respect the national interest. Today, he is telling us that the national interest must be paramount. It was said that his role had been limited to that of an arbiter. Yesterday, the Prime Minister said that he must not act as an arbiter, that he must fight for the national interest.

The question, Mr. Speaker, is to know whether we can trust this new talk by the Prime Minister. Can we really trust him to keep his word? Will he really fight for the national interest this time? Time will tell. We will see in the coming months when the government will put forward its proposals on Constitutional reform and we will see it by its deeds, not by the words pronounced in this debate on the Speech from the Throne.

The Prime Minister also talked about economy and education. He listed a few problems that you are no doubt familiar with. Thirty per cent of high school students drop out before graduation. Forty per cent of adults cannot read nor count well enough to perform day-to-day tasks. The Canadian industry devotes to the training of workers only one half of what is devoted to it by the U.S. industry, one fifth by the Japanese industry and one eighth by the German industry.

The government now wants to set up national standards with regard to education. In the coming weeks, the government will table a discussion paper as a guide for the public debate, which should lead us to some solutions.

Today, seven years after being elected, the government is proposing a debate. What has the government done for seven years? Didn't it have the responsibility to take action in those areas, to give an example, to show leadership in the areas that it would now like to draw to the attention of Canadians through a debate?

The debate proposed by the government is an admission of failure. It is the admission, that we have lost seven years during which the government should have taken action to ensure that Canadians have access to quality education and that businesses in our country do enough research and development. On the contrary,

Mr. Speaker, we saw several measures that went against those objectives.

[*English*]

In the throne speech the government also says that it wants to develop "a learning culture". I am apprehensive about the use of the phrase "learning culture". For some time students of Canada's science and technology policy have taken to attributing our deficiencies in science and technology to our failure to develop a science culture or a research culture.

What is meant by that is a culture which values knowledge and education and which would place top priority on developing Canada's human resources. The very use of the word "culture" is an indication of the difficulty in changing directions. A cultural change, with all it implies, is seen as the necessary condition for building public support for policy changes and for ensuring that there is a real priority for these changes in the federal and provincial halls of power.

• (1250)

By definition, a cultural change is something that will take a long time. The idea that we need to develop a learning culture or a science culture has become an explanation for failure. When the government uses this phrase you have to ask yourself whether the need for a cultural change is not being used as an excuse for further inaction. This is the caution which I want to draw to the attention of Canadians.

Let us take a closer look at the proposal to establish Canada-wide goals in education. The government says it would like to see "Canada-wide goals established for the year 2000". Reading this literally, this appears to mean that the government would like to see these goals established by the year 2000. It is not saying that it will reach these goals by then, but that it will establish them by then. The government appears to be suggesting, in other words, that it will take nine more years to establish goals relating to education.

Is this what the government means? Is the government suggesting that it will take nine years to establish these goals? I cannot believe this is what the government is proposing.

I would hope that this statement will be clarified and that the Prime Minister will tell us that this is not what is intended but rather that these goals will be established shortly. I recognize it may take a year or two. The negotiations or the understanding that we have to arrive at about these goals should be part and parcel of the redefinition of the country that we are currently engaged in. Certainly these goals should be arrived at in the next year or two and we should start to take action aimed at reaching them.

Even with such a clarification, Canadians should understand that the throne speech is ambiguous. Many may think that the government is suggesting that we could reach those targets by the year 2000, that we could double the number of graduates in science and engineering and that we could reduce illiteracy substantially within a period of nine years. If that is what the government is suggesting, it is unrealistic. It is impossible to double the number of post-secondary graduates in mathematics, the sciences and engineering in such a short time, as has been amply demonstrated in study after study produced by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council.

In his speech yesterday the Prime Minister gave us a big lecture on the need for fiscal discipline. We in our party share the view of many Canadians that the federal fiscal deficit is a serious economic and political problem. Our leader notably did not make a single spending commitment in the leadership campaign. We agree that the federal fiscal deficit is a serious problem. We also agree that achieving low levels of inflation is an important objective. There is no disagreement with these objectives.

But we have to ask ourselves what is the government's record with respect to these objectives. The inflation rate today is about 7 per cent compared with 3.8 per cent inflation when the Conservatives first took office. The deficit is forecast to be $30.5 billion, which is $2 billion higher than the forecast in the budget a year ago. Contrast that with the statement of the former Minister of Finance in his first budget in 1985 that he would reduce the deficit by the end of the decade to $18 billion.

Before I go on, I just want to remind you again, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Finance missed the mark by the small sum of some $12.5 billion. He was predicting in his first budget that he would get the deficit down to $18 billion by the end of the decade. It is now $30.5 billion. He missed the mark by some $12.5 billion.

I find it quite outrageous to hear the Prime Minister giving us lectures about fiscal discipline and about the need to keep a budget when his government does not know the first thing about it.

It is precisely because of the government's failure to achieve the objectives it set for itself that many Canadians are having increasing doubts about the Conservatives' ability to manage the economy, to put it mildly.

While I agree that the federal fiscal deficit is a serious economic problem, it is not the source of our problems. The Canadian disease, if I may put it that way, relates to our inability to keep pace with global economic and technological change. After seven years this government must bear some responsibility for not leading the way.

I would like to read from an article published about a month and a half ago by the current chairman of the Science Council of Canada. She recited many of the sorry statistics that we have become so familiar with. She said: "We have lost a great deal of international competitive advantage we held some 30 or 40 years ago. Our standard of living has slipped accordingly and we have simply failed to anticipate environmental reality". She went on to say: "There is no use searching for a Canadian policy to cope with this crisis. We don't have a national policy".

The chairman of the Science Council of Canada is no slouch. When she says we do not have a national policy and there is no use searching for a Canadian policy, I think that Canadians by and large stand up and take notice. This is a statement that was not made eight or nine years ago. This was a statement made on March 31 of this year, seven years after this government took office, seven and eight years after the Prime Minister in the run-up to the 1984 election promised to correct the very ills which he is again talking about in this throne speech.

Canadians can no longer afford ambiguity in action and absence of national leadership. We cannot wait for changing attitudes. We cannot wait a generation. Difficult choices have to be made now. These choices say a lot about our country and its priorities.

For example, should we be investing in Hibernia or James Bay II or would we be better off investing the same kinds of resources in research and development? Canadians again should not have to wait a generation for answers to these questions.

We have a very practical example in the last day or two. The French company, Aerospatiale, wants to buy de Havilland. It is prepared to invest $1 billion in research and development, but it wants the government to pay for a substantial part of that investment. The Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade has said that funding will have to come out of existing programs. The head of the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada has said that the existing budget is already spread too thin, and it has been reduced by some 25 per cent in the past three or four years.

Where will the money come from? The minister of industry has said that there are no additional funds. It is clear that without additional government investment, we will not have research and development in Canada.

A 1986 study by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association demonstrated that when it comes to non-tax support for research and development, Canada is not in the same league as many of our competitors. It is not a question of ownership.

Pratt & Whitney in Montreal is a foreign-owned company and yet it is one of the most research intensive companies in Canada. We will find that it has entered into a number of memoranda of understanding with the government in which the government funds a good portion of its R and D. This is the same as every other country, whether we are talking about the United States, Japan, Germany, the Scandinavian countries or France.

I will call it one o'clock and I guess resume after three o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): You will have three minutes left, plus 10 minutes questions and comments.

It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this day.

The House took recess at 1 p.m.

S. O. 31

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

TRADE

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, I want to set the record straight. On Tuesday, the Minister of Agriculture led this House to believe that the Canadian Federation of Agriculture was in support of opening the Canadian border to U.S. wheat. This is not true. The CFA actually opposes opening the border. CFA president, Ralph Jespersen, said in a letter to the Prime Minister: "We have the opportunity to show one of the perpetrators of this devastating trade war, the United States, that the violations of trading rules cannot continue—.We ask that the provision requiring import licences be retained".

In other words, the CFA is opposed to opening the border to U.S. wheat. That is the truth. The government should know better and not twist the facts.

* * *

EXTRADITION

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, during the parliamentary break the American network ABC aired a *20/20* program that dealt with the case of one Charles Ng who is wanted in California to face charges in connection with a series of brutal slayings five years ago.

Mr. Ng is currently appealing his extradition to the U.S. from Canada.

The program was called "Refuge for Murderers" and that, unfortunately, is the way many Americans have come to view our country. It is embarrassing, frustrating and downright frightening the number of times that America's most wanted are shown on television and then subsequently found in Canada.

We cannot allow Canada to become a refuge for criminals. We need changes to our extradition act and we need them now.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, the Achilles heel of Canadian competitiveness is R and D. When the World Competitiveness Report looked at Canada, it saw that we spend a mere 1.3 per cent of GNP on science and ranked us sixteenth among our competitors.

When 400 elite policy-makers, many of them federal bureaucrats, were surveyed, they said our lack of R and D, the high dollar and high interest rates were self-inflicted wounds. They know that R and D is the key to the new products and processes that create jobs.

But the Prime Minister consistently ignores his own advisory board on science and technology when it asks him to live up to his 1984 promise to double Canadian R and D. So when the throne speech cites targets for education and training, but omits any mention whatsoever of research and development, it is dramatically significant and tragically clear. After seven years of jawboning, we will have no public policy to achieve targets for Canadian research and development. The implied policy of the Department of Finance has now become the explicit policy of the Department of Industry, Science, Technology and International Trade.

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, those who want Canada to survive in its present form are searching for those things we have in common. Those who think they will profit from the failure of Canada are underlining what divides us into regions and along the lines of language and culture, but there is one group of Canadians who have made the ultimate gesture in support of this great thing we call Canada. It is a group of men and women who actually fought in the name of this country in world wars, Korean conflicts, and the gulf conflict as well.

I rise today to salute them and the Royal Canadian Legion, which has mounted a public campaign in the name of national unity. The Legion realizes well that this goes beyond the bounds of partisan politics, and is taking the initiative in reminding us all of what is at stake.

The Legion has been a supporter of a strong central government in the past. But the Legion also knows that changing times demand changing attitudes. When the question is put whether Canada can change or must fragment, the Legion's answer is clear: we must change.

I would ask all those Canadians who are busy building walls in this country, walls to keep their own intolerance strong, to look toward the Legion. There is the real vision of Canada.

* * *

ROUTE CANADA

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, the plight of former Route Canada employees continues five years after the government sold this trucking company to a man who could not even get a credit card.

Two thousand workers were left without jobs. Creditors lost $60 million. Many former employees lives were shattered when they lost their homes, their livelihoods and their dignity.

Still the government refuses to launch an investigation into this dirty deal. The RCMP has been investigating the case for almost three years. Surely it has some answers by now.

Canadian taxpayers and former employees have a right to know what the RCMP has discovered.

Right now there are hundreds more truckers outside our door who understand what former Route Canada employees have been living through. They feel betrayed and sacrificed by this government to the interests of big business.

I call on the government today to show some compassion for compensating these former employees of Route Canada, to launch an investigation into its sale and to bring forward the RCMP investigation.

* * *

[*Translation*]

LIBERTÉ COMPANY

Mr. Fernand Jourdenais (La Prairie): Mr. Speaker, following an exclusive agreement between Liberté and Vnikmi (the USSR milk products national research institute) and the Licensintorg firm in Moscow, kefir, a product originally from the Caucasus Mountains, is now available on the Canadian market.

Kefir is the most popular milk product in the USSR, and for centuries, mythical properties have been attributed to it. According to legend, people from the Caucasus Mountains, who drink kefir from their early childhood, are amongst the longest living human being in the world.

Japanese researchers confirmed that kefir acts on the immune system. The Liberté company is considering supporting medical research on kefir.

Liberté, which has been established for many years in Brossard, in my constituency, is proud to be one of the first small enterprises in North America to establish economic ties with a Soviet Union company, and to offer to North American consumers a popular product that is so distinctively Russian, as much so as vodka and caviar.

Congratulations to that successful enterprise, and to its president, Abe Gomel. I say to all Canadians, bon appétit and enjoy!

* * *

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Gus Mitges (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker, each year the gradual undermining of the age old practice of breast feeding by bottle feeding with processed cow's milk causes many cases of illness, malnutrition, allergies and at least one million infant deaths.

Breast fed babies absorb antibodies against major diseases from their mother's milk, suffer fewer allergies, enjoy better jaw and teeth development and are more contented.

The World Health Organization concerned with the constant undermining of breast feeding by companies in the manufacture of breast milk substitutes, and which constantly inundate hospitals, doctors, mothers, and others with free samples of their products, has instituted the international code of marketing regarding breast milk substitutes.

The code calls upon all hospitals, doctors and medical personnel and others to stop the distribution of baby formulae as well as to stop the distribution of literature advertising breast milk substitutes.

Therefore, I call on the government to support the World Health Organization in its endeavours to enhance and encourage breast feeding which would result in better health and protection to all babies in our country.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to the entire class of Royal Canadian Mounted Police constables, who graduated this week at the RCMP recruit training detachment in Regina. All of them are proud to wear the uniform of a great police force, with a tradition of honour and service almost as old as Canada. Among them was Constable Baltej Dhillon, the first Canadian of Sikh faith to wear the regulation turban, which itself has a long and proud tradition associated with service to the Crown within the Commonwealth.

I also congratulate the RCMP which polices ours, the third largest country in the world, for uniform adaptations to accommodate religious and native Canadian sensitivities. To all of the graduates and to Constable Dhillon, I extend best wishes for successful careers in the RCMP.

* * *

[*Translation*]

RADIO WEATHER SERVICE

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, for months, the farmers of Abitibi—Témiscamingue have been asking the Conservative government to set up a 24-hour-a-day radio weather service.

Today I am proud to tell them that indeed the federal Minister of the Environment, the Hon. Jean Charest, will soon announce that our great region will be served by a high-frequency radio weather service, using Communication Québec's sites in Chibougamau, Mont Vidéo Barraute, Ville-Marie and Aiguebelle Park, not far from Rouyn-Noranda.

That is the excellent work of Environment Canada officials in Montreal and Val-d'Or.

The 24-hour-a-day radio weather service will be monitored in Val-d'Or by the Environment Canada regional office.

Mr. Speaker, within a few weeks, the farmers, fishermen, hunters, aviators and all the people of Abitibi—Témiscamingue can tune in to the weather service.

* * *

• (1410)

[*English*]

INUK VIDEO

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday evening here on Parliament Hill I had the pleasure of attending the *premiere* of the first Inuk music video. I would like to thank the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and his department for their sponsorship and support.

I want to pay special tribute to the talent of a young Inuk singer-songwriter, Susan Aglukark, who is from the small community of Arviat in the Northwest Territories.

In her video entitled *Searching*, Susan shows and sings of the anguish young Inuit people face in trying to come to terms with both their traditional culture and heritage and the fast-paced urban life found in southern Canadian cities.

Her message is a powerful and moving one. Despite the difficulties that may be experienced, never lose sight of who you are and where you are from. With this inner knowledge, strength and courage, all obstacles can be overcome.

Canadians may see Susan's video on *MuchMusic*.

Congratulations, Susan.

* * *

WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

Mr. Lee Clark (Brandon—Souris): Mr. Speaker, I rise once again to speak on behalf of weekly newspaper publishers in Brandon-Souris and their more distant subscribers and to ask both the newly appointed Minister of Communications and Culture and the Minister responsible for Canada Post to reconsider the decision to terminate certain federal government subsidies to weekly newspapers as of June 1.

Weekly newspapers are an integral part of rural Canada. In fact, they personify in a very real sense the communities in which they are located as they publish

the sort of local news which the dailies would never deign to do.

Moreover, they are an important link with their former residents who have often moved to our cities and, as such, they constitute a bridge between rural and urban Canada.

In the name of rural Canada, therefore, I ask both ministers, as well as the newly appointed Minister of Agriculture, who I hope will emerge in a very real sense as the minister responsible for rural Canada to re-examine this issue prior June 1.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, municipalities throughout British Columbia have been without a contract for RCMP services since March 31, when the federal government refused to renew previous agreements.

The former Solicitor General has attempted to coerce B.C. to sign a new agreement which would see the federal contribution reduced at the expense of the province and its municipalities.

The over-all cost increase would translate into over $12 million a year for municipalities and $27 million a year for British Columbia as a whole.

As a result, B.C. municipalities will see their policing costs soar from 10 per cent to 25 per cent. These are costs B.C. taxpayers simply cannot afford.

The situation cannot persist.

My B.C. colleagues and I urge the government to resume negotiations and immediately enter into an interim agreement with the province. In western Canada, the RCMP is a visible symbol of Canadianism. Its contribution to national unity goes far beyond dollars and cents.

* * *

INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, the elimination of interprovincial trade barriers is a goal of this government. Why? Trade barriers within Canada make us less competitive, thus costing Canadians jobs and opportunities.

For example, in the field of agriculture, there are 167 regulations. The European Community, with 12 nations, is more open in terms of agricultural trade than we are within a single country.

The existing system rewards inefficiencies.

According to the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, the elimination of interprovincial trade barriers would put $5 billion into the pockets of Canadians.

I believe that the creation of a single Canadian market goes hand-in-hand with national unity because it is by working together that we build a stronger more prosperous Canada.

* * *

CROSS-BORDER SHOPPING

Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce to all members a new commentary in the House of Commons entitled the Cross-Border Report.

The Cross-Border Report will not be convoluted or multi-topical. Rather, it will focus on one issue; cross-border shopping. Yet, I know that all members will find the report of interest. It is at the front line of our efforts to be competitive.

Cross-border shopping is a multi-faceted phenomenon dealing essentially with why the Canadian consumer finds an incentive to shop in the United States.

The exodus is fostered by a number of motivational factors, including the strength of the Canadian dollar, differences in distribution channels and mark-ups between our countries, the non-collection of provincial sales tax and the applicable duty and taxes at the border. There is aggressive U.S. marketing and advertising, as well as a free trade mentality luring the Canadian consumer. The means to address these factors lies not with one but a number of players, including all three levels of government, business and labour.

Stay tuned for the next edition in a series of many of the Cross-Border Report.

FISHERIES

Mr. Cid Samson (Timmins—Chapleau): Today some 8,000 fishermen along the northeast coast of Newfoundland and Labrador lose their unemployment insurance benefits. However, they cannot start their fishing season because the ice conditions are so severe that they cannot get to their fishing grounds. They cannot even set up their gear. Because of this, 8,000 fishing families have no source of income as of today.

The matter was brought to the federal government's attention some 10 days ago, and fishermen are still waiting for action. The thousands of Newfoundlanders affected desperately need help. They do not need foot-dragging or a royal commission to solve their problem. What these people need is a short-term solution for a short-term problem.

I am calling on the Minister of Employment and Immigration and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to sit down immediately with the representatives of the fishermen and work out an emergency program.

* * *

STELCO INC.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Revenue Canada has just reimbursed Stelco Inc. $7.4 million in duties paid to the government because the department granted relief from customs duties a few years ago on importations of continuous casting system to three of its competitors.

The reason, and I quote:

> —is because no one at Revenue Canada checked to see if the imported goods were actually eligible for the break on customs duties; in fact, they were not. That error is costing Canadian taxpayers some $30 million.

Aside from focusing on the level of qualifications and, in fact, competence of the revenue officials responsible, it is important to remember that the minister is ultimately responsible and accountable for the operations of his department. Taxpayers footing the bill for the errors of his department have a right to explanations that the minister should make available to this House. Specifically:

1. What competitive disadvantage earned Stelco the $7.4 million?

2. What tests for verification of suffering did the cabinet apply in its decision?

3. Are there other companies on the list for more moneys?

4. Finally, what specific structural and operational guarantees are being put in place to ensure that costly errors will not happen again?

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. We are very pleased that the Minister of Transport has finally agreed to meet with the truckers to discuss the serious problems affecting them, but I want to ask the Prime Minister this: Does he intend to allow his minister to act quickly, because the truckers and their families are in a desperate situation, the industry is completely collapsing and thousands of jobs are being lost every week?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport did not wait until today to meet with the people involved in transportation. On Monday, I met some representatives of the Coalition of Independent Owners. On Tuesday, I met a representative of the Truckers' Association. In the coming days, I will also meet other representatives. The Department of Transport, through the previous minister last year, was very actively involved with this problem which, it must never be forgotten, is under both federal and provincial jurisdiction, I think, and we will do everything necessary. With the agreement of all concerned, Mr. Speaker, we have set up the studies required to find solutions and once we have completely identified the problems to the satisfaction of all concerned, we will take the action required to deal with the situation.

[*English*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the problem of truckers—and we saw that yesterday—the Prime Minister likes to blame the government of Ontario and the premier of Ontario likes to blame the federal government. While

the two stand there and blame each other, the lives of thousands of truckers are going down the drain.

I want to ask the Prime Minister when he will stop passing the buck, take his responsibility and solve this very serious problem.

• (1420)

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I assure the Leader of the Opposition that we will not follow his favourite manner of resolving problems, going back and forth. We accepted the fact last year that this was a problem of dual jurisdiction between the provinces and the federal government. We are prepared to accept our share and we are looking at ways to resolve the problems.

No one should forget the fact that the provincial government of Ontario, through the Liberal administration as well as the NDP administration, decided over the past 12 years to increase the tax on diesel fuel by 10 cents and only 7.1 cents on regular fuels. I do not think that it is really helping the trucking industry.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the truckers have shown good faith today. Traffic is moving again on the 401. Now is the time for the Prime Minister to show that he has faith in the trucking industry of Canada.

Will the Prime Minister, himself a former trucker, agree to meet the truckers today—he should not be afraid of them, he knows them well—and do something to cure this problem and make sure that the trucking industry can compete with the American trucking industry?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, this government over the years has taken measures not only to help the truckers but the over-all industry in Canada by trying to recuperate from the very poor financial administration of the previous government over the last 16 years.

We have indicated to the owner-operators that we are sympathetic to their cause. Yesterday afternoon, I met with the wives of the truckers and this morning for one hour and a half I met with representatives of the truckers. We have discussed the problem at length. We have identified the major problems. We will continue to work in conjunction with them to try to arrive at a proper solution.

We are not looking, as did the previous administration, to a quick-fix solution.

* * *

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. Yesterday in the House, the Secretary of State for External Affairs said that the report that she and her colleague had released speaks for itself and tells everything we are supposed to know about the Al-Mashat affair. However, within 24 hours we know just how misleading, incomplete and inaccurate this report really is.

The former Canadian ambassador, Mr. Gotlieb, in an interview presented last night indicated clearly that the matter was under consideration several weeks before Mr. Chretién, the Associate Under-Secretary, was informed of the matter as contained in the report.

It is also not explained why the orders given by Mr. Tellier, the Clerk of the Privy Council, were ignored and whose orders from higher up countermanded those particular instructions. In other words, this report does not deal with the truth.

I want to ask the Prime Minister, rather than scapegoating public officials, will he not recognize that the only decent and credible thing to do, to give some veracity to this affair which is disturbing many Canadians, is to hold a public inquiry where all those concerned will appear and can be properly examined?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I want to present this again yet today, since the hon. member is having some difficulty understanding what is actually before his very eyes. Number one, all of the information regarding this situation is out and was made public. The second point is that ministers took the responsibility to ensure that the information went public and that that information to date has not been contradicted.

The third point I would like to make is that this minister and members of this government are quite prepared to appear before a parliamentary committee.

Parliamentary committees have the right to examine facts, and I would welcome an investigation like that by a parliamentary committee. I am quite prepared to appear before it with my officials. I stand by everything that these ministers have done and continue to do.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, we will welcome and certainly accept the offer of the minister to appear before a committee as soon as that committee is established.

There is also a missing link. We know, for example, that in a statement in the report, it is clearly said that the chief of staff of the former minister of external affairs had a copy of the memorandum. His minister was in town, and somehow he did not receive it.

We also find it incredible to believe that on the intervention of a former deputy minister and Canadian ambassador, the former secretary of state would not have known about that serious intervention.

We also find it it difficult to note that the Under-Secretary of External Affairs would not know. My question is this. Considering the missing links, can we get a commitment from the Prime Minister that he will instruct the former Secretary of State for External Affairs to appear before the committee to be examined and to answer those questions so we can find out what really went on?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, first of all let us be clear on another point, that is that ministers did not know before the fact. That remains clear and has not been contradicted.

Second, I have already said that ministers will be available to appear before the committee. I will be there with officials. The committee has the right to ask anyone it wants to come and appear before that committee.

* * *

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

It is clear that the deregulation of the transportation industry policy has been a disaster for truckers and for Canadian families and small businesses.

I want to point out to the Prime Minister and to this House that this was a policy in 1984—we have had lots of promises about what deregulation will do for truckers and for the transportation industry—when the former Liberal transport minister, the member for Winnipeg South Centre, promised that deregulation of the trucking industry would bring jobs. He also said that management will have to improve "but the good trucking companies will do very well".

The then opposition critic from Vegreville agreed with this. Now that minister, the Minister of Finance, said that deregulation would bring innovation and efficiency.

I say to the now Minister of Finance, tell that to the truckers outside this House. Neither the Liberals nor the Tory government listened to the truckers because the Canadian Trucking Association said it would create chaos. It has.

I ask the Prime Minister what he is prepared to do to enhance Canadian jobs in the trucking industry now.

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the NDP is true to herself in blaming all the problems of this world on free trade, deregulation and all these other fantasies.

Deregulation, free trade and the GST are all measures courageously taken by this government to improve the lot of all Canadians. The trucking industry, as other industries, is going through at the present time through a difficult situation. We understand it. We sympathize with the people, and we are in fact doing everything we can to help them out of this situation.

We started that last year by getting all the state orders together to try to analyse what the exact problems were and not to deal with perceptions but with realities, and to examine the problems as they are, to find proper solutions, not on a quick-fix basis but on a long-term basis to ensure that they will have proper jobs for many years to come.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): The minister should get out of Ottawa. Go and talk to Canadians who are losing jobs every day. He will see that deregulation has brought the trucking industry misery, the trade deal has simply brought Canadians despair and he should be talking to Canadians about that.

• (1430)

It is clear to Canadians that truckers are losing their jobs from coast to coast to coast, as are many Canadians in the manufacturing sector and in the farming industry.

Will the minister immediately bring in new regulations that will put the Canadian trucking industry on a level playing field with their U.S. counterparts, do it now, and do it today?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I said yesterday and I will repeat today, it is precisely to make it possible to have a level playing field that last year we instituted the task force to examine the situation so that we can talk about realities, facts, and not perceptions.

We are living up to this commitment. As I said before, I met yesterday with the wives of the truckers. I met this morning for an hour and a half with the truckers themselves. We have explored avenues, but there is no quick fix in this situation just as there are no quick fixes in other situations.

This government is taking the courageous way of improving the economy of this country so that our citizens and their children will have a viable country to live in.

Perhaps the leader of the NDP would like to speak to her counterparts in the Ontario government. According to *The Toronto Star* the NDP will not drop new taxes on diesel fuel, which are crippling the transportation industry in this country.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, when this government revises deregulation, gets rid of it, brings in some new regulations, brings in some real tax reform, takes care of the GST, what I will do is talk to my counterparts and your counterparts in Alberta and Saskatchewan and Manitoba who have the same problems.

[*Translation*]

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. McLaughlin: We were talking to a trucker this morning and he told us that, once all his bills are paid this year, he will have earned only $917.

Mr. Speaker, we have truckers demonstrating today, but many more Canadians are having a hard time providing for their families. And not only are this government's road transport policies to blame, but so is all the rest: free trade, the GST and the interest rates that are still way too high.

When is the government finally going to do something for the Canadian workers across the country?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the leader of the NDP that instead of trying to score easy political points on a difficult situation, she should try to work with the independent truckers and the government to find appropriate solutions to the problem.

It does not help at all to repeat unthruths as she did earlier in her speech on free trade, since trucking is not affected at all by free trade. And the GST is not to blame either. On the contrary, the GST brought a 2.5 cents per litre reduction on gas, thereby cutting operating costs in the trucking industry.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[*English*]

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister will know that ministerial responsibility is of paramount importance in the kind of government we have in this country.

It is clear, Mr. Speaker, that the former minister of external affairs was fully aware of the goings-on with respect to Al-Mashat on February 27, 1991. It was also clear that the former minister's chief of staff, an experienced lawyer and an experienced parliamentarian had all of the information contained in the document on or about March 14, 1991. Will the Prime Minister instruct the former minister of external affairs to appear before the parliamentary committee, as the minister of external affairs has now agreed to do. Will the Prime Minister give that undertaking?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the former minister of external affairs does not have to take any lessons in integrity from the member opposite.

The former minister of external affairs is one of the leading parliamentarians in the House of Commons. I know he will, as the minister has already indicated, respond to any request from the House or a committee of the House of Commons. He has always acted accord-

ing to the traditions of the House of Commons and will continue to do so.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Prime Minister has yet to provide all of the memorada requested on the floor of this House of Commons. It is clear to date that the former minister of external affairs has not given a detailed account of his involvement in this particular case.

The facts are unbelievable to Canadians and the Canadian people are suspicious of the integrity of the government's information.

I ask the right hon. Prime Minister if he will give us a clear undertaking that the former minister of external affairs, all other ministers, chiefs of staff and the appropriate officials will appear before the parliamentary committee? Will the Prime Minister give us the undertaking today?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member clearly is not listening to the responses. Both the Prime Minister and I have said that we are prepared for full disclosure within a parliamentary committee, based on the traditions of parliamentary practice. That is the place to look at this issue. Ministers were the ones who accepted the responsibility by asking for a report and making the information public.

The hon. member can read this just as anybody else can. The committee can ask officials. We will encourage officials to go. We have spoken together to say that we will be frank within the context of a parliamentary committee, just as we have been in asking for an inquiry. It was ministers of this government who asked for an inquiry and we will continue to do so.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

For 124 years the Public Service of Canada has worked side by side with governments, carrying out the will of Parliament. Now the Prime Minister is destroying the Public Service, blaming public servants for the mistakes of the government in the Al-Mashat case and dragging them into the political arena with no voice to defend themselves.

Will the Prime Minister listen to the criticism, for instance, of Gordon Robertson and will he apologize to the Public Service for the terrible damage he has done, or will he go on dismantling the nation by dismantling the Public Service?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that question is unworthy of an answer, inasmuch as the hon. member, by asking it, has impugned the integrity of the Public Service of Canada.

Let me just say that by asking such a malicious and misleading question, the hon. member has impugned the integrity of the Public Service of Canada. Let me say that this government has worked effectively and well, at all times consistent with parliamentary traditions, with the Public Service of Canada and will continue to do so for many, many more years.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is also for the Prime Minister. In case the Prime Minister does not know, the Public Service certainly knows who is impugning their integrity.

The very foundation of a non-partisan Public Service is being ripped away when ministers and the Prime Minister refuse to take responsibility for their actions. In this case, that is what they are doing. Great public service leaders of the past, the Gordon Robertsons—

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry, but I must remind hon. members that preambles are not a place to make a speech. Would the hon. member please put her question.

• (1440)

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, given that the people who have made the Public Service great would not have put up with this attack on the Public Service, why is the Prime Minister hiding, and allowing ministers to hide behind public servants who have no opportunity to defend themselves? Why is he politicizing the Public Service?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, clearly this government is not impugning the Public Service. As I pointed out yesterday, the circumstances in this case were extraordi-

nary in that ministers were not informed. Ministers accept—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Questions are being asked. Ministers of course are being asked to give their answers and I know that all hon. members would want to hear the minister.

Ms. McDougall: Having taken full responsibility for this case, which the Minister of Employment and Immigration did when he and I together asked for an inquiry, we committed ourselves to produce a report, which we did.

The two officials involved could have been identified by their title. There are precedents for this. There have been names of public servants released before under situations that were equally extraordinary. We promised a full report. We gave a full report. The full report included the two names.

* * *

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, the minister said that the government promised a full report but Canadians were deeply concerned to learn that two influential lobbyists, John Godfrey and Allan Gotlieb, apparently made representations on behalf of former Iraqi ambassador Al-Mashat on February 27.

In view of the fact that both Godfrey and Gotlieb stated that they were told that an inquiry was already under way before February 27, does the minister stand by her statement that there was no action at all in this before February 27. How does the minister explain the statement in her full report that it was on March 4 that "telephone calls were made by two Canadian acquaintances of Al-Mashat". Who made those calls on March 4 when the two calls by Godfrey and Gotlieb were on February 27? What other representations were made on behalf of ambassador Al-Mashat?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the point is that representations were made on behalf of Mr. Al-Mashat to officials within the Department of External Affairs. That is public knowledge. We made that knowledge public.

The fact that calls were made to officials does not negate the fact that ministers were not informed before the fact. We produced a full report. We are suggesting that a parliamentary inquiry can answer other questions.

I do not see why the hon. member is so exercised when he can ask these questions in committee.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, the minister of course missed the point of the difference between the 27th of February and the 4th of March. Read the report.

My supplementary question is for the same minister. In view of the fact that sometime earlier she and her colleague the Secretary of State for External Affairs had turned down another application for an Iraqi diplomat, why was it that this minister on the 16th of April, when she found out that Al-Mashat had been allowed into Canada, did not say one word to the then Secretary of State for External Affairs? Why did she order no inquiry whatsoever? Why did she say nothing to her successor? Why is this minister stonewalling, blaming public servants? Why will she not come clean with Canadians?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, when I found out about the situation well after the fact, I did send a note to my department, as it then was, saying that I disagreed with the process and the substance. Any department that I have ever worked in has always taken any note from me seriously and produced a report. I asked for a report and that report was in the process of being generated.

When that report was generated it would have been shared with any relevant person.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, after she "scraped herself off the ceiling", as she is quoted as saying, I wonder if she left her tongue up there. Because the former minister of immigration knew all about the Al-Mashat affair on April 5, yet the Prime Minister was not told until April 30—25 days later.

Does the Prime Minister truly believe it proper that the former minister of immigration, upon learning of the Al-Mashat affair, decided not to tell either the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for External Affairs or even her successor to the Ministry of Immigration about this entire matter?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the opposition is accusing us of confusing dates. The hon. member has just used the wrong date himself. I found out on April 16. I initiated an inquiry within my department. That is what responsible ministers do and that is what I did.

An inquiry was instituted later. That is what responsible ministers do; they try and ascertain the facts. That is what they try and do and that is what I did, and that is what other ministers did when they found out.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): April 5 or April 16. She adds fuel to her own fire. It even took longer. She didn't even bother telling the Prime Minister in the additional two or three weeks.

So we have to come back to the original question: the minister knew. The minister knew for weeks, and after she peeled herself off the ceiling, why did she not tell the Prime Minister? She did not tell the Prime Minister during that whole time.

Mr. Prime Minister, do you find it right that your now external affairs minister—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member knows that questions have to be put through the chair. I know that may seem very archaic in some respects, but it probably helps the general decorum of the House.

Does the hon. minister want to respond? Well, the hon. member for Hamilton West has a question. I am sure the hon. member will put it very briefly.

Mr. Keyes: The question is, did the Prime Minister believe it proper that the former minister of immigration, upon learning of the Al-Mashat affair decided not to tell either the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, or even her successor at immigration about this entire matter?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): When the minister of immigration, as she then was, found out about this affair, she instituted an inquiry within the Department of Immigration in order to have some facts on which to proceed.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has put a question to the minister and I am sure that hon. members would want to give the hon. minister the courtesy of listening to her reply.

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Speaker, I believe I have responded. I have told the House that when I found out I instituted action within my department. I think that is what responsible ministers do. The minister of immigration is the one who is responsible for people coming into the country. I instituted an inquiry within my department. I stand by that and I think that is what responsible ministers do do; they ascertain the facts before they start spreading rumours around.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1450)

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, responsible ministers know what is going on in their departments. Canadians find it unbelievable that three ministers of the Crown were kept in the dark for months before they were told that the Iraqi ambassador to Washington was seeking permission to enter Canada as a landed immigrant.

We are pleased that an inquiry will take place, and we accept the undertaking of the Prime Minister that the former Secretary of State for External Affairs, the former Minister of Employment and Immigration and the former Solicitor General will be appearing before the committee to give evidence.

I would also like the Prime Minister to give his undertaking that Mr. Raymond Chrétien, Mr. David Daubney, Mr. Paul Tellier and Mr. Reid Morden will also appear before the committee to defend themselves. If the government is truly interested in getting to the truth of this matter then it will have all relevant witnesses appear before the committee.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that the hon. member would have known by now what is the responsibility of committees of this House and their chairmen. It is up to the committee to invite whomever it wants to have appear before the committee.

I have made a commitment that those of us who are involved will appear before this committee. That is a committee matter.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): The committee can invite the Queen, but that does not mean she is going to appear. I would like an undertaking from the Prime Minister to have the civil servants who were directly involved in this matter to appear before the committee.

If the Prime Minister refuses, the only conclusion we can draw is that the government really is not interested in getting to the truth of the matter. Have these officials appear so they can defend themselves against the accusations made by their political bosses.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's problem is that he has nowhere to go now that we have said that people will appear before a committee.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, the Federal Court of Canada, trial division, today ruled that the cabinet broke the law on October 12, 1990 in exempting Alcan's Kemano 2 project from the public environmental assessment process. The court also struck down the September 14, 1987 backroom deal between the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Alcan, which is the basis upon which construction of this immense project is now proceeding.

I would like to ask the Minister of the Environment to assure this House that a panel will be set up immediately and that he will assure all Canadians that all major projects from this point on will undergo an environmental assessment before they proceed, not after construction begins?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I understand the ruling that my friend from Skeena refers to came out this morning. I think it would only be a normal course of action for us to look at it and then act accordingly.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I think most people would have had time to read it by now. It is the first ruling in the history of Canada of the Federal Court finding that the cabinet had broken the law in exempting a major project.

I would like to ask the Minister of the Environment if he could assure this House that all major projects from this point on will undergo an assessment first and will he immediately set up a panel to look into Alcan's Kemano 2 project?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how the member deals with these matters. I know that on this side of the House, as far as we are concerned, the ruling came out today. We will take a reasonable period of time to make ourselves familiar with it.

By listening to the member, I am not sure, but he seems to want to indicate that we have not read it. We want to take time to read it. I am not sure from listening to him today whether he has read the ruling either.

* * *

EDUCATION

Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Science and it pertains to the educational initiatives outlined in the Speech from the Throne.

In the throne speech, we heard that our government is committed to increasing the number of high school graduates, cutting the illiteracy rate, increasing the amount of employee training, as well as increasing post-secondary graduates in math, science and engineering.

Can the minister apprise this House what our government is doing to increase the number of graduates in the fields of math, science and engineering?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, one of the cornerstones of our efforts to increase the number of students in math, science and engineering is, of course, the Canada Scholarship Program which was announced by the Prime Minister in 1988. Under that program, 9,000 scholarships have been issued to students from high school into first year in these particular subjects.

As well, we have a number of programs. The latest one, announced by the Council of Science and Technology Ministers of Canada just last week was "Innovators in the School". We expect by August of this year to have every part of this country involved in sending scientists and engineers into all of the public and high schools to talk about careers in those particular subjects.

I would hope that by the time this program is finished we will have some 25,000 people, qualified scientists and engineers, moving into the schools to talk about that particular issue.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

One of my constituents, Mr. Sadhu Singh, died 18 days ago. His sister, now in India, wishes to attend the funeral but was denied a visitor's visa, apparently for fear she would not return, even though her husband and two children are not joining her at the funeral.

My repeated representations to the minister's office and the minister himself have failed to move them.

Could the minister explain to this House how Mohamed Al-Mashat, spokesman for a murderer, can be hastily ushered into Canada as a landed immigrant, while this grieving woman is refused a visitor's visa to see her brother one last time?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I share the hon. member's preoccupation with his constituent. It is true that the hon. member has made representations. An official of this government, posted in the country in question, has refused a visitor's visa for this women. Upon receiving the representation of the hon. member, I placed an immediate inquiry to the post overseas in order that I be informed as to why this has happened. Surely, I cannot overrule an official in the Public Service—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

An hon. member: That is outrageous.

Mr. Valcourt: May I can complete my answer, Mr. Speaker.

• (1500)

The reason is that I cannot interfere with the decision of the public officials unless and until I know why he was refused. The minute I receive this information—and we have conveyed that to the hon. member—and know why he was refused, I can exercise my discretion and authorize that person to come to Canada for the funeral in question.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, it has been more than a week since I made my representation to the minister.

Mr. Speaker: That may very well have been, but I would ask the hon. member, given the time, to put the question directly to the minister, please.

Mr. Pagtakhan: Mr. Speaker, the body of Mr. Singh cannot wait for three more weeks in a Winnipeg funeral home. Neither his sister nor the Singh family can wait and grieve indefinitely.

Where is the heart of this minister? I ask him to act now. Issue a permit, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, it is all right to stand up here and say those great things.

He was not even able to give me the name, the date of birth, or address of the person we want.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Valcourt: As soon as I receive the information, I will be able to make a decision. I will do it at that time, and not before.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the members' attention, the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Luis Alberto Lacalle Herrara, President of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I direct my regular question to the government House leader regarding the proposed activities for tomorrow and next week.

While he is on his feet, perhaps the government House leader can indicate to the House when the parliamentary committee, which has been given an undertaking by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, will meet. Can he give us the date of that particular hearing?

Are there undertakings that the former Secretary of State for External Affairs, the former Solicitor General, the present Secretary of State for External Affairs, the

present Solicitor General, all officials from the relevant departments including David Daubney, Mr. Chrétien as well as Paul Tellier, and all other officials will appear before that parliamentary committee?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, in terms of business, there will be the continuation of the throne speech today.

Tomorrow is an allotted day. Monday is a holiday. There will be the continuation of the throne speech on Tuesday and Wednesday. I will talk about other business after that.

As the hon. member knows, the management committee, which is also the striking committee, is looking at the membership of these committees.

I can assure you that we are very anxious to have that committee meet as early as possible. We are very anxious to have ministers and officials appear and very anxious to show how outrageous the charges of the Opposition are, and to get the truth out. We are anxious to do it.

I would ask the hon. member to get his Whip to meet right now to strike that committee so we can put an end to this outrageous nonsense we see in the House.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. government House leader for his undertaking that the former Secretary of State for External Affairs, the former Solicitor General, the present Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Solicitor General, all of their relevant officials as deemed by the committee, the former chief of staff, Mr. Tellier as well as all other officials will be involved.

I want to assure the government House leader that we will be able to move very quickly on this matter, within a matter of minutes upon departing the Chamber here. I thank the government House leader.

Mr. Andre: I would like to compliment the House leader of the Liberal Party on his cute lawyer tricks. I would suggest to him that he could show a little more respect for commitments given many times today. Several times, the questions kept coming back again and again and again with pejorative and out of order preambles.

I am anxious to put an end to those. That is why we are anxious for this committee to meet.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

I have listened to this discussion with great interest. The government House leader is calling into question whether or not questions put by members opposite were properly in order, and in doing so is questioning the role of the Chair and whether the Chair is performing in a proper fashion during Question Period.

That cannot be allowed to stand if there is to be proper order in this place.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, as we know from the rules that were adopted some time ago, it is no longer appropriate during Question Period to raise points of order.

I listened to what the hon. member had to say. I wonder if the hon. member would have the courtesy to listen to what I have to say.

Mr. Speaker: Some weeks ago we had a discussion that I think resembled the discussion that is about to take place. Surely to goodness it is appropriate that we have that discussion with a certain calm and respect for each other.

The hon. minister has the floor and I am sure we all want to hear what he has to say.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Excuse me for just a minute. One of the constant complaints in this place is that sometimes a member on either side goes beyond what is appropriate. I hope hon. members will recognize that if, when an hon. member is recognized to speak, other members shout at him or shout at her, they are going to get a response equal to the kind of epithet that is thrown at them.

I would ask hon. members that if we are going to have a discussion about the conduct of this place, which I think the public frankly wants us to have, let us try to have it in a civilized way.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, as I was indicating, citation 359 of Beauchesne, fifth edition, lays out the strictures on oral questions. There are numerous examples here, but let me give—

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: I certainly will recognize the hon. member for Hamilton East, but surely she rises on a point of order. I want to facilitate the functions of the House and the minister hardly got started. However, I will hear the hon. member for Hamilton East for a moment.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I am seeking some guidance from the Chair. At the beginning of this discussion after Question Period, the question revolved around the composition of the parliamentary committee and who would appear.

The House leader on the government side, by attempting to edit in a rather particular fashion the activities and questions that were posed during Question Period, is in fact calling into question the judgment of the Chair.

Question period is over and we are now on House business. The specific business of the House right now is to determine whether the terms of reference of the parliamentary committee that has been agreed to will include the civil servant, Mr. Raymond Chrétien, and also the chief of staff, who were fingered by the government. That question has not been answered. That is the issue of the order of business of the House, not an attempt by the House leader on the government side to browbeat the Chair. We will not put up with the browbeating of the Chair.

• (1510)

An hon. member: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: I think I have to say very quietly and as gently as I can that I certainly have not had the sense that I am being browbeaten.

The hon. minister may continue his response.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, in response to earlier questions about whether questions are out of order, I make the point that Section 359 of Beauchesne's fifth edition, which lays out what questions should be or should not be says:

> (2) The question must be brief. A preamble need not exceed one carefully drawn sentence.
>
> (3) The question ought to seek information and, therefore, cannot be based on a hypothesis, cannot seek an opinion, either legal or otherwise, and must not suggest its own answer, be argumentative or make representations.

I quite understand the difficulty in enforcing these strictures in Beauchesne, in that after they are made cannot be retracted. In the age of television and so on, they are out. Therefore, it is fair and appropriate that the ministry reply to the accusations, innuendo and so on that are contained in the preambles.

The point I would make is in response to a suggestion in the last session by the House leader of the Liberal Party, that Question Period be examined in terms of the length of preambles, the length of answers and the method. It is a very valid one and I am hoping that the new management committee will take this under advisement.

Mr. Speaker: All of what the hon. minister has said is of great interest to this Chamber. But there is an appropriate way, after discussion, to bring these matters to a committee, to bring these matters to the Chair and if necessary to bring these matters into the Chamber. Surely what we are dealing with here—and I want to try to get back to what we really are dealing with—is a question put by the hon. House leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition on the question of what is the business which is forthcoming.

I think we should come back to that and I think we should get that resolved.

Mr. Andre: I completed my remarks when I was shouted down by the other side again.

An hon. member: If he wants a debate, he will have it. Keep acting like this. We are not easily bullied, I can tell you that.

Mr. Speaker: There is a fundamental tradition in this place that your Speaker, and I am your servant, has to maintain order. There is a reason for that. If we do not maintain reasonable order, we cannot have free speech.

I would ask hon. members to let us get through the next few minutes without making comments from wherever hon. members may be sitting and, in the absence of being recognized, to make a contribution.

Let us try to get back to the business which was quite legitimately raised, and hear the hon. minister.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, said on several occasions in response to questions during Question Period that she welcomes, looks forward to and anticipates appearing before the committee with—and please listen carefully—all relevant officials or past ministers or ministers in

order to assure everybody concerned that there is no substance whatsoever to the suggestions of impropriety about the ministry that have been laid today. We are anxious to do that. There is no need to repeat the list. As answered in Question Period several times, all relevant officials will be before committee.

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the minister for giving us the assurance that the parliamentary committee that will look into this matter will hear the ministers who were in any way connected with this case.

However, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, perhaps inadvertently, made it seem less than certain when, during Question Period, she said the committee was master of its procedure. The minister knows perfectly well that the majority of the committee's membership will consist of government members. To ensure that all the proper procedures are followed—and I appreciate the reply the minister just gave, because I think he has given us the assurance the ministers will appear before the committee, and I think that is quite satisfactory—according to members on this side of the House, there are two people, who should be heard if they wish to be heard. The committee should at least hear the two senior officials whose judgment was impugned by some ministers, namely, Mr. Daubney and Mr. Chrétien.

If these two officials are willing to appear before the committee, we want to have the assurance that the government majority will not prevent them from appearing and answering questions. Do we have that assurance?

[*English*]

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, again motives are being impugned, suggesting that somehow there will be an attempt to avoid implementing what I have just said the government is anxious to implement: that all relevant officials will be allowed to appear.

I also said earlier, perhaps the hon. member did not hear me, that we are not just willing but also anxious to get this matter before committee. It is unfortunate that the hon. member would have to impugn or suggest that somehow we are going to use the Conservative majority to try and avoid this. We would all be better off if we would stop making these accusations of cover-up and so on and let the facts speak for themselves.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I think I can add something that would end this discussion to everyone's satisfaction.

The Government House leader indicated that he is anxious to see this matter go to committee. We all are. We have all agreed that an existing matter before the health committee ought to continue. We have agreed to expeditiously reconstitute the existing health committee to deal with that issue and then we will move on to dealing with the committees later.

I suggest, in that same mode of communication and co-operation, that to facilitate this committee hearing we should agree that the existing committee simply be extended to deal with this matter and we can do that later today.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, there is one slight inaccuracy in what the House leader of the New Democratic Party said and it is that we had agreed to reconstitute that committee. There was an attempt by my parliamentary secretary, the member of Parliament for Peace River, to get agreement. Unanimous agreement was denied by the Liberal Party among others.

We have not had that agreement. As I indicated, he should not get anxious and he should not make accusations of tardiness. We are anxious to proceed with this committee. The whips can meet and agree to the membership. As soon as they are available that committee can meet at an earlier date. I can assure you that the officials in question will not escape to Brazil and be unavailable for consultations if it happens—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Cape Breton on a short point I hope.

• (1520)

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): A lot has been said and a lot of motives have been imputed by the hon. member opposite. I, for one, respect the rulings of the chair and the decisions of the chair, whatever that may be.

However, some things have to be attended to. The hon. government House leader has said, I think unfairly, that we in this party somehow denied unanimous consent for the health committee and the Beaudoin-Edwards committee to continue.

I want to make it perfectly clear that we give our full consent. However, I was informed by the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader that tomorrow we would have a discussion, because he wanted to link certain other items to that. That was my understanding.

Now, that may be incorrect. All of a sudden the government comes with a motion today, not informing the opposition House leader. We deny that liability. To show good faith, I state clearly on behalf of my party that we give unanimous consent to the reinstating of the Beaudoin–Edwards committee, of the health and welfare committee, and we would also give unanimous consent, now, on the floor of the House of Commons, to reinstate forthwith the Standing Committee on External Affairs.

I do not see anything wrong with that. I just wanted to clarify that for the members of the House.

Finally, the government House leader, in response to my question, raised—

An hon. member: Oh, he is walking out of the House now, he is walking out of the House. How insulting!

Mr. Dingwall: —a question about the tone and the content of Question Period. You, quite rightly, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam is rising on a point of order. I, of course, will hear him. I am listening to the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond, but I will hear the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I have been waiting here for 20 minutes to put a simple question on House business. The hon. members can surely shorten their comments into one or two sentences. This debate that is going on is absurd.

Now the government House leader has left the House. I ask them to wind up their discussion and do it sensibly, and let the rest of us put our questions.

Mr. Dingwall: I am sorry that the hon. member is offended, and perhaps quite rightly so, by the time it is taking in terms of regular House business questions. However, I want to inform the hon. member that a lot of information is being put on the table which is totally inaccurate and it has to be corrected now and forthwith.

In response to my question, the government House leader made interventions with regard to the tone and content of Question Period. Members on this side of the House quite rightly believed from what he had said that he was attacking the Chair. The Chair responded and said it did not believe that was the case. We will accept the ruling of the Chair. I wish to give notice to the Chair that on many occasions, the government House leader has availed himself of the opportunity to run off at the mouth, and to refer to certain provisions in Beauchesne to show that we are doing something wrong.

I want to make it perfectly clear that if we are in breach of the rules this should be brought to the attention of the House and the Speaker should deal with it forthwith. You have not, Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge, ruled any of our questions out of order or improper at any time.

We have made the offer to discuss with opposition parties, as well as the government, the timing of Question Period, and more importantly, the timing of the responses of government ministers. That is what we gave to the government House leader.

Let us not have a repeat of the government House leader rising in his place to castigate members on this side of the House who legitimately ask questions regarding House business, or coming forward during Question Period on the undertakings of the Prime Minister and the minister of external affairs on very, very important matters that involve the state.

I would ask, Mr. Speaker, for your affirmation that we on this side of the House have conducted ourselves within the boundaries of Beauchesne, within the boundaries of the Standing Orders. The matter should rest there.

Mr. Speaker: I must say I have listened with great interest to the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond. I think that he has probably resolved the matter, at least for this afternoon, on a very sensible basis. Hon. members should always try, as he insists that his own colleagues have done, to contain the enthusiasm, sometimes the very great passion, that is brought to this place within the bounds of the rules, as set out in the various editions of Beauchesne.

The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam rises again and I will of course hear my hon. friend.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I know you have to be polite to those two members, so I will put it a different way. I have a question—

Mr. Speaker: No, no. I want to make something very clear, I have to be polite to all hon. members, including the hon. member who is rising now. I would hope that the hon. member who is rising now will be polite to all hon. members in this Chamber.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I have a question on House business, a somewhat easier question perhaps. Since the minister has left the House I will put it to his parliamentary secretary, if I might.

I want to know if the government is bringing forward a bill on gun control, and when it will be bringing it forward.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding, from comments made publicly by the Minister of Justice, that she intends to bring forward a bill. However, I cannot say, specifically, when.

I will take the hon. member's intervention as a representation and try to find that out for him.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Shefford and then the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, we are now talking about the business of the House. However, during the four days we have debated on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, not a single independent member has been given the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I thought we had an understanding that an independent could be given the floor after every group of 13 speakers. This week, we were entitled to only one question in the House, and since I want to do my work as a member as well as any other member in this House, I wish the House would give me a chance to do so.

Consequently, Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise this matter with you, since I have some comments on the Speech from the Throne, and I would like to have a chance to take part in the debate like any other member. Being in the back near the curtains doesn't mean we don't have the same rights and privileges.

Mr. Speaker: I listened carefully to the hon. member's comments. However, after every speech by any member in this House, he has a chance to ask questions or make comments during a ten-minute period.

If there is a problem about an independent or a member of the Bloc taking part in debate, of course I will consider your remarks, and I hope we will be able to settle this in the appropriate way.

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, I don't want to go on about this, but my contribution is more than just a short question at the end of a speech. What it boils down to is that we are allowed these short questions for charity's sake. What we want is to be able to make a substantial contribution to this debate, and it takes time to make a full-length speech.

Bearing that in mind, Mr. Speaker, we want the same rights and privileges as any other member.

• (1530)

Mr. Speaker: I understand quite clearly the concerns of the hon. member and his colleagues in the Bloc Québécois. There is a problem because in the House we have three major parties but we also have independents, including our colleague from Alberta who is now in his seat.

I can assure the hon. member that after this afternoon's comments, I intend to look at all the options, and I hope the results will be satisfactory to the hon. member.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to give notice that the member for Winnipeg North, who asked a question during Question Period regarding a constituent who was trying to bring the family together for a funeral, was answered by the minister of immigration, who suggested that not all facts that should have been provided were provided by the member.

The member, who had an urgent meeting immediately after Question Period and who has now come back into the House, wanted to give notice at the first opportunity of a question of privilege, and I was trying to reserve on

behalf of my colleague—but I can see he came in while I was speaking.

Perhaps the member would raise a question tomorrow and give notice today.

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. member has a question of privilege and if it arises out of the recent proceedings, I will hear the hon. member.

Mr. Pagtakhan: Mr. Speaker, I have to review the actual *Hansard* myself. I have not seen his reply.

He suggested I could not even give the name of the person. Well—

Mr. Speaker: One moment. If the hon. member needs the assistance of the transcript or more study then the Speaker accepts that. It is not necessary to argue it now. The hon. parliamentary secretary though is on his feet and I will hear the hon. parliamentary secretary, but I want to make it very clear to the hon. member for Winnipeg North that I accept what the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte has said. I have notice of the question of privilege and the question of privilege is reserved.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, if it is reserved that is satisfactory with me. I wanted to make sure that the minister was present.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Pronovost for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his Speech at the opening of the session; and amendment thereto of Mr. Chrétien (p. 24).

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said that by September the government will table its proposals for constitutional reform. The throne speech addresses the questions of unity and prosperity and I would like to quote from the throne speech:

> Our unity is strengthened by a strong economy. And prosperity is enhanced by a united country.

Those are propositions that I am sure we all agree with. Does the government understand that constitutional arrangements must support our economic objectives?

Our leader, Mr. Chrétien, has said that in making changes to the division of powers the essential focus must be an arrangement which best serves the needs of people, not governments or bureaucrats or politicians. Any new arrangements must provide the flexibility to meet the changing demands and challenges of the future. To my knowledge, the government has yet to make a similar statement. Quite frankly, I am concerned about recent proposals to hive off various aspects of economic and social policy, such as training of workers, to the provinces. Divorcing such training from income security policies and tax policies will make it impossible to adequately address the needs of individual Canadians.

We have to be careful about placing limits on the federal spending power. Overlapping jurisdictions are inevitable in a modern and complex world. For Canada to adapt to global realities, a comprehensive and integrated plan of action will be required, one in which training, education and social assistance policies are updated and research and technology strategies are defined on a national level.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to return to the issue of national unity more particularly. I know that we in Quebec feel some disappointment following the events of recent years. The failure of the Meech Lake Accord was interpreted wrongly, I think, as a rejection of Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to go beyond emotions and to analyse more objectively. Personally, I believe that we live in one of the best countries in the world.

When I get up every morning, I thank God for keeping me alive and for the privilege of living in this country.

We do not need an exhaustive analysis to understand and realize Canada's incredible advantages and assets. I am sure that everyone can give a short personal experience. I could talk about it for a long time, but I will confine myself to a small example.

I remember visiting a refugee camp on the border of Cambodia and Thailand in 1980. In that misery, Mr. Speaker, were Canadian doctors and nurses who, in

addition to their work, acted as interpreters between some Swedes, who spoke only English besides their mother tongue, and French people. That is Canada's true vocation, Mr. Speaker. With our two languages and our different cultures that make up Canada, we can indeed play an important international role.

Should we not rather take on the challenges of the world?

Mr. Denis Pronovost (Saint–Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the speech by my colleague, the Liberal member from the Montreal area. In his talk, he said that he was staying with us in Quebec. This statement was challenged by the member for Shefford who seemed not to believe that the member was a Quebecer, even if he is English speaking, and this kind of statement is quite deplorable and should not be parliamentary.

However—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would hope that the hon. member would direct his question to the hon. member's speech. I do not wish to hear anything about anybody else's question in the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pronovost: Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to agree with some parts of the speech by my colleague on national unity. However, he said that his party was prepared to show flexibility. I have trouble grasping that part of his speech, since the leader of the Liberal Party recently said that for him, there was no question of any present federal power being transferred to the provinces.

If that is flexibility, I would like the hon. member to tell me exactly what his party's position is, because if we want changes, both the federal government and the provinces must be prepared to call some things into question. My question for the hon. member is along those lines and I would like him to tell us the position which his leader seems to have great difficulty putting before us here in this House.

Mr. David Berger (Saint–Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. He totally misunderstood the speech of my leader.

• (1540)

For several months now, since his appearance at the Bélanger–Campeau commission, my leader has actually said that he is ready to review the distribution of powers between the federal government and the provinces. He often said that nothing was sacred in the present division of responsibilities.

In my speech, I stressed another aspect of Mr. Chrétien's speech in this regard. He said that we must, in every change, allocate a responsibility to the government which is best able to assume it, while looking for arrangements which would best serve the interests of citizens instead of governments, bureaucrats or politicians.

Therefore, our leader has demonstrated many times his flexibility and his openmindness on this question. I would invite the member to read more carefully the recent speech and proposals my leader made on April 21, in Montréal. I could send him a copy.

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I am of course very pleased to speak today in the debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, Canada is at the crossroads, not only as a political entity, but also as an economic power in North America and in the world. More than ever, we have the duty, as individuals, to decide what kind of country we want to live in and what place it should occupy on this continent as well as in the world.

Of course, national unity plays now a pivotal part in the choices facing us. It would be a mistake, Mr. Speaker, for us collectively to refuse to face up to reality at a time when it is vital to be careful to avoid delusions. All aspects of our daily life are tied to the survival of this country which, in turn, is dependant upon unity as a link between several communities and cultures.

Because of these differences and thanks to these differences, this country is probably the best equiped to ensure the prosperity and quality of life that all the people of Canada are looking for. It is the very existence of Canada as an international power that is at stake. So, I urge you to stop and think of the implications for a moment.

I urge Canadians to consider reality, their reality, setting aside the symbols, the misunderstandings and the conflicts, between the French–speaking and English–

speaking communities, between the east and the west, between native people and non-native people or between new immigrants and not so new immigrants, and answer this question: do we still want this country?

I am talking about a country with a 125-year history as a federation, whose various communities, against all odds, share the common values of peace, justice, tolerance and liberty. These values, embodied in our lifestyle and in our institutions, are what make Canada the envy of most countries in the world.

Since I came to Ottawa in 1984, I have often been confronted, as have my colleagues from Quebec, Mr. Speaker, by the problem of the two solitudes, as we call it. I also had the opportunity to discover a richer yet more complex reality. Confronted to this reality, I realized that ordinary Canadians across the country have more of less the same needs and the same aspirations.

On major issues such as the environment, economic prosperity, the family and health, people all share the ideal of a better life, whether they live in Roberval, Quebec, or in Vegreville, Alberta. We could probably build a lot on these sound aspirations that we all share, provided we are careful, we listen and reach out.

[*English*]

Canada is facing formidable challenges at this time. The identity crisis our country is going through at this time raises certain basic questions which involve each and every one of us. We can blame the government but this crisis needs to be seen as the culmination of a long series of missed opportunities and broken down communications.

Often we fail to ask the real question for fear of getting real answers, the real truth.

Are we perhaps afraid of finding out what we have really become? Any identity crisis, and ours is complicated by also being a unity crisis, is a mirror into which it takes courage to look. The crisis we are experiencing contains the seeds for major change, potential rebirth of our entire country. I want to see this country have the audacity, the daring to question every aspect of this issue, to believe in its own ability to find the right answers.

I have spoken of change and rebirth. What will this consist of? It is not solely up to the government or governments to decide. All Canadians must take part in defining their country, regardless of what that definition may turn out to be. Canadians are the ones who built this country, who made it a country, and they are the ones responsible for its prosperity.

Today's men and women receive this country as an heritage from those who have gone before them. They are therefore the ones who need to be asked what future they want to see for this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake. There is no cut and dried solution to the present crisis in this country. Our government has taken and will continue to take initiatives to advance the cause of national unity, but without the participation of the Canadian people and the co-operation of all major groups in Canadian society, the process is doomed to failure.

Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about another government project. We are talking about the future and the unity of this country. How could we agree on a plan for the future to renew our unity, without calling on the partnership of all Canada's dynamic forces? Without this kind of participation, we will never be receptive to the problems of others. Since there seems to be a consensus in this country on changing the status quo, perhaps it is time to get down to basics and talk about foundations for a new union.

Canada will deserve to be called a country if it has a minimum of consensus. Only broad participation by Canadians can guarantee that a consensus will be reached. We are embarking on an exercise in reflection that will not be complete until Canadians have stated what they want the future of this country to be.

During the months to come, Canadians will have to think about this country's future. We will have to start by thinking about what we are and the kind of society we have built over the years.

As the Minister of National Health and Welfare, I can testify to major achievements by Canadian men and women, and I also want to do so as an individual who is concerned about the quality of life of his fellow citizens and who welcomes this responsibility.

In the field of health and welfare, Canada, during the past 50 years, has adopted policies and programs that are the envy of practically everyone. In the heat of the

debate on free trade and again today, when we are discussing the pressures of international competition, Canada has vigorously renewed its commitments. Despite frequently expressed concerns about the intentions of our government, we have not only maintained our commitments, we have improved on them.

Mr. Speaker, Canada's health care system is recognized as one of the best in the world. Wherever they are in this country, Canadians can be assured of receiving high quality services. They can depend on a national system whose excellence owes a great deal to cooperation among the provinces and to provincial initiatives to improve that system. Because of needs and expectations, the health care sector has expanded enormously over the years. Mr. Speaker, the federal and provincial governments spend $40 billion of their revenue on health care, out of a total of 60 billion.

• (1550)

This year, the federal government transfered $14 billion to the provinces in the form of transfer payments and tax points.

[*English*]

It is more important than ever that the main principles that have served and continue to serve as the foundation of our health system be reaffirmed. I can state without hesitation that features that make our system unique—universality and accessibility—will not be challenged in any way. The risk that those people who are most vulnerable might have to bear the consequences of any change of that kind has convinced me of the need to reaffirm that our national standards will remain intact.

In a time of limited financial resources and increasing pressures on our provincial health services, the federal government is prepared to intensify its co-operation with the provinces. We must find ways of helping our health systems respond more effectively to pressures resulting from such factors as demographic change, technological development and public expectations.

It is also the responsibility of the federal government to ensure that our native people have the greatest possible accessibility to health and social services. This responsibility which the federal government has assumed on behalf of the people of Canada for nearly 125 years has contributed to the establishment of an extensive system of facilities and services for the native and Inuit population extending from the Yukon to the maritime provinces, a system which today consists of some 488 health service facilities including nine hospitals in eight large regions.

Through this system we are able to help the various communities in their efforts to decrease alcohol and drug consumption on reserves, thereby helping to reduce family violence.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, this fact demonstrates the importance of having a national vision of health and welfare that covers the needs of all communities in this country.

The protection of public health is another area whose impact is impressive. Every day, the lives of every one of us are in some way affected by action taken by the Health Protection Branch of Health and Welfare Canada: monitoring the processing and manufacturing of food and drugs, monitoring medical products compliance, taking part in investigations of epidemics, analysing drug samples as part of the Canadian drugs strategy, and so forth. The expectations of Canadians in this area are very high. It is a difficult task that requires many resources and action on a national scale.

[*English*]

Another area in which the activities of the federal government influence the day-to-day reality of Canadians is the area of social programs. It is important to know that Canadians are proud of their image as a caring nation. As our country has matured, social programs have grown and changed to better meet our evolving needs. Although we hold different ideas about the best way to help needy Canadians, the shared value of caring for each other unifies us across the country, and in all regions we expect governments to have a social face.

It is in keeping with these values that we must take stock of the future. Our achievements are considerable but there are challenges which remain. No government program can or should replace the family. However, where governments can assist is by helping the family respond to changing needs and by creating a healthy environment in which Canadian children can live, learn and grow.

More than ever Canadian women are joining the labour force. Sometimes this is a choice, but more often than not it is an economic necessity. At the same time as holding down jobs, many parents must take care of children and elderly parents. Lone parents face a unique challenge in working while trying to provide the best care for their children. The many roles that family members must play create a tremendous strain. As the Minister of National Health and Welfare, I am pleased that the throne speech promises a review of policies in relation to the family. I want to ensure that our policies best meet the present and future needs of families.

Our most precious resource is our children. By their very nature, children belong to society's most vulnerable group. Modern society, for all its technological achievements and advances, has not done well enough with the children. In our country, children have a problem which we cannot ignore; as well as assisting families, we must continually help children out of poverty. While we have seen some improvement in child poverty rates, we must continue to seek the fuller understanding of the root causes of poverty, and work with other governments and voluntary organizations to find effective ways to keep children out of the welfare trap.

The Children's Bureau will help me to develop recommendations to cabinet to fulfil the commitments made at the summit. I envision Canada's National Action Plan as addressing a broad range of issues which affect children, including enforcement of child support orders and action against child pornography.

[*Translation*]

Before I conclude, Mr. Speaker, I have to mention the government effort to fight AIDS. We developed a national strategy, which has the support of community groups, non-government agencies and all levels of government, a remarkable achievement in terms of consultation and partnership.

Let me assure you that I will carry the work initiated by my predecessor in that field. Therefore I undertake to step up all joint efforts which will help us beat this horrible virus.

Mr. Speaker, we are facing other great challenges. Canadian men and women expect their government to use extreme caution, and it is vital that we live up to their expectations. Canada has a good name, thanks to its vision based on such values as fairness, compassion, tolerance and generosity. As a nation, we now need to re-affirm our unanimity cohesion in the values and the assets we share. Health and social programs are some of our vital assets.

That is what I want achieve both as a minister and a member of this government. I came to Ottawa hoping I could contribute to Canada's growth, bearing in mind the values, principles and differences which make our country. I hope we can soon find the path to unity, so that we carry on with this humna-scale undertaking.

I invite everyone to take an active part in the preservation of our heritage, since, in light of the challenge that lies ahead, we can hope for even better tomorrows.

[*English*]

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to make a few remarks and also to direct a question to the minister of health.

Just this very day there was a very grim report put out by a journalist from the *Edmonton Journal*. Basically what that article says is that northerners lead the nation in most classes of illness. It says:

> With the exception of heart disease, Canada's northern territories experience higher death and disease rates than the rest of the country. Birth and infant mortality rates are also higher.

It also quotes the minister of health from the Northwest Territories:

> It is only recently that we have been able to supply a fairly decent level of water and sewage, says Nellie Cournoyea, the Territorial Health Minister.

It goes on to say that it is not unusual to have as many as 16 people living in a poorly ventilated, substandard home. The chronic housing shortage is a major obstacle to combating infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis and respiratory infections. Cournoyea adds that an additional 2,000 housing units are needed to meet current demands, never mind the nightmare of an anticipated population explosion that could see the vast region's population double within 30 years.

• (1600)

Housing is the number one health priority in the Northwest Territories and the second priority is environmental health in the homes, says Dr. Paul Cappon of McGill University.

They go on to say, and this is very important, that a 1986 survey showed that 77 per cent of Inuit women and 65 per cent of Dene and Metis women smoke, giving women in the territories a cancer rate four times higher than the rest of Canada. More than half the residents of the Northwest Territories and 40 per cent of Yukoners smoke, compared to one third of the population nationally.

This is a very grim indictment and I would like to get some kind of an indication from the minister of health. I know he is new to his portfolio, but in what way can we as parliamentarians and elected officials, in a responsible and non-partisan manner, try to grapple with these very, very difficult health issues that affect the remote areas of Canada?

In 1991, should we expect to have diseases that were unheard of and that were rampant in the 1940s and 1950s, such as tuberculosis?

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member. We know very well how dedicated she is to the problems dealing with aboriginal peoples.

In the analysis I have made of the Department of Health and Welfare, I drew the conclusions that I drew in the five other departments where I worked before, that the reality of native people in this country is very particular.

I have two bands in my riding and the highest rate of suicide in Lac-Saint-Jean is in Point Bleue, in the Montagnais band in my riding.

I hope that my colleague will agree with me that there are many factors dealing with the problems, particularly with these people. The problems are unemployment, family violence, drug abuse and alcohol abuse. I am not sure that as a country we have always given those people the chance to get out of those problems in the same efficient way we gave to it other people. That is why I have particularly asked the department to look at means that could be used to increase help given, particularly to northern bands.

I was in Winnipeg last Saturday. The first visit I made as the minister of health was to the office in Winnipeg, committing myself to return and to particularly meet with native people to see what we can do better. Already the drug strategy and family violence have been approached, as well as child intervention, and we will have more on that in the fall. I will keep that in mind. It is very sensitive.

It is not just a matter of saying we will, it is a matter of seeing the ways and means we have. Resources are more scarce than they were, but I committed myself to do my best to help those people the best we can.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Brome—Missisquoi and then I will recognize the hon. member for New Westminister—Burnaby. Questions or comments.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Gabrielle Bertrand (Brome—Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, the Minister often mentioned the important benefits we have in this country. I would like to say that the other day, I was watching a television program. We know that in the United States, some universities have a chair or school of Canadian studies, where American students find out what is happening in our country, Canada. The dean of such an institution faculty was asked what American students ask him most often about Canada. First was our health system. Second was history and third, the Constitution.

I do not know whether the minister could tell us how it would be easier to make our fellow Canadians understand that this country has social programs like health insurance that are envied by other countries and even by our neighbours, the United States, which may be one of the world's richest countries, but which does not have the same quality of social services that we have here. People often complain in our country that taxes might be a little higher than elsewhere, than our southern neighbours have to pay, but in return, we have incomparable social programs that are envied by many other countries.

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): I appreciate the question from my colleague, Mr. Speaker, because indeed, not a week goes by without the department of health and welfare receiving delegations from the United States that want to find out exactly what makes our health plan and all our social programs so good, bearing in mind that Canada shares these costs among 26 million while our southern neighbours have a population of 250 million. In many fields

such as education, health, social programs, action on AIDS, they are considered among the best.

I must tell my colleague from Brome—Missisquoi that of course, if you have something for a long time, you forget how valuable it is and how to keep it. I think that the way the federal government handles such things as the resources at our disposal, transfers and so on is often discussed. We should never forget that with our precarious financial situation, the least economic mismanagement or moving away from our interest rate policies or the way we are managing, difficult though it may be, the economy and finances of Canada— What many provinces have done recently will probably make it possible for the system to continue. But again, we must always keep in mind that the slightest relaxation, the least temptation to correct the situation in a different way could endanger this system and then Canadians would realize that they do have one of the best systems in the world.

[*English*]

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, through you I will extend my congratulations to the new minister of health on assuming his new portfolio. I think today is the first time he has spoken in the House as minister of health.

The minister is well aware of the controversy that has been surrounding breast implants in this country and in the United States. His department has issued just today a new bulletin called *Implantable Medical Devices*. It comes from the Health Protection Branch.

It says: "The scientific and medical communities have identified a number of confirmed and hypothetical health risks associated with breast implants."

This is after months and months of reassurances from the department and from the previous minister of health that there was in fact no problem with these devices.

The United States Food and Drug Administration has now revised its published estimate of cancer risk from breast implants. It now uses the one in 10,000 risk figure. Critics in Washington say the FDA is muzzling its own scientists.

We have asked the minister for a judicial inquiry on this whole matter and process of medical devices being approved by the Department of National Health and Welfare. The confidence of Canadian women in the Health Protection Branch has been seriously eroded.

The minister must do something to reassure Canadian women. We have had the IUD scandal. We have had the thalidomide scandal. We have had the Depro Provera scandal. He must do something.

Will he assure Canadian women that there will be an inquiry into breast implants in this country, an inquiry in which Canadian women can ask the questions they feel they must ask?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I realize that the question is very important, but the time has expired.

• (1610)

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, this will not take long. I would like to have a chance to go further with that question, but first of all I want to reaffirm something of interest to me in terms of the health of Canadians, particularly women in this case. In all the reviews I have made about breast implants, and in particular the Meme implant, everything has been done by the department and the minister, my predecessor, in light of the information which was available at the time. Any contrary information has been duplicated and has been controlled at any time by the department.

Once again, what has been issued today refers to information that Canadians, particularly women, need at the present time. I believe that my colleague has to keep in mind what we have done and will continue to do. As an example, she is surely aware of the 1-800 line that we offered to women last week. Five hundred women have called so far. The department reported to me that answers given, by and large, satisfied the people who called.

We deal with 25,000 new medical devices every year and there are 500,000 on the market. The department is open at any time if my colleagues would like to come, get informed and look at the way we work. We have just formed a committee chaired by Dr. Hearne which will determine a way to review the medical devices operation. If there are any problems they will report to me. Obviously I will change the process, but I believe what my colleague has in mind is important and that is not to worry women about the way it works.

I can confirm, with all the information that I have at the present time, that what is done is well done, controlled, recontrolled, reprocessed and redetermined. But once again decisions are made based on information available at the time. But science is science and if I have to change a decision in light of new information I will do so.

I can guarantee the women of Canada that in terms of breast implants at the present time everything has been done well and will continue to be done well.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The Honourable Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell—Trucking Industry; the Honourable Member for York South—Weston—Disasters; the Honourable Member for Don Valley East—Housing; the Honourable Member for Scarborough West—Immigration.

The hon. member for Shefford.

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for recognizing me at this time, in the midst of a debate which surely will count in the history of Canada and will probably become more acrimonious in the months to come. I have in mind in particular the speech from the minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs this morning in which he told us that they would be introducing a bill on the holding of referenda when we know that a similar measure has been introduced in the National Assembly in Quebec City and should become law before the end of June.

Consequently, Mr. Speaker, we are in a pre-referendum period. Therefore, coming here to tell our English-speaking colleagues what we want and what the situation is, is fulfilling the role the Bloc Quebecois sets for itself, the role of being a link with English Canada at a time when the concept of sovereignty is more and more accepted and is becoming a political necessity.

In the next few minutes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to convince you that sovereignty is also an economic necessity. Naturally, over the last twelve months we have seen a lot of water flow under the bridge. After the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, Quebec had extensive studies done on its future.

I think that all members of this House will agree that the Bélanger-Campeau commission was a model of democracy, a model of broadening political horizons, not only for the elected members of the National Assembly but also for the leaders of various communities and groups in Quebec. Besides, it was an unprecedented experience in Canada, where for the first time non-elected people were part of such a broad, wide-ranging, important process.

There was also the Allaire Report in the Quebec Liberal Party, which was adopted by a large majority. So to those who claim that sovereignty is advocated only by a minority or who think that only independence crusaders believe in it, I want to tell them that the consensus in Quebec is growing day by day and since the failure of Meech Lake, we have learned not to trust others but to decide on our collective future ourselves.

That is why when I see federal initiatives that may be intended to counter the initiatives of the Government of Quebec, I tell them that they are really pale imitations.

For example, we have seen the Spicer commission in recent months. I feel sorry for English Canada to have to go through this charade instead of discussing and really looking into the kind of country you want. Of course, the Beaudoin-Edwards committee has been concerned with the mechanics, but completely ignored the substance, the content. And God knows that in Canada now, the two confronting visions have nothing to do with process: they are realities in people's hearts and minds. And whatever process is adopted, do not think that you can reconcile the difference between a group that wants a strong central government—and I respect those in English Canada who want a strong central government; it is their right. For others, the only real government that counts is the one that controls the majority, the one in the National Assembly.

No travelling committee, not one, two, three or twelve committees will change the reality out there. The debate now going on in this country is not one of process, but of vision. Everything hinges on there being two visions but only one country. What is missing is a country. That is why we see more and more Quebecers who traditionally

rejected sovereignty come to realize that the differences are irreconcilable. We tried everything.

The Minister of Health asked us earlier what kind of country we wanted. Quebecers have unequivocally answered this question twice already and, each time, their cry from the heart was not heard. No wonder that a formation like the Bloc Quebecois was established. No wonder that a formation like the Reform Party is emerging today. This is happening because of the fundamental difference between the legal vision of Canada that you are proposing and what this country is really about. All the difference is there.

It is about the real country that we want to talk about in this House, Mr. Speaker. We know it offends the pure and innocent ears of some of our hon. colleagues. We know this is not the traditional argument heard in this House where efforts are made to disguise reality by pretending that the country depicted in the legislation corresponds to the real Canada. However, the reality that people see in their heads and in their hearts is totally different.

The reason why traditional parties are facing massive rejection throughout the country is very simple: they do not suit the real country and the aspirations of the people who live in this real country, outside of this ivory tower we live in, here, in Ottawa.

So, when I hear the Speech from the Throne challenge, call upon the Canadian people to participate, the first question that comes to mind, Mr. Speaker, is who is going to believe this government? It is the first one that comes to mind in response to this challenge. For their part, Canadians would like to challenge this government to run again in an election. In that way, this Speech from the Throne is fraudulent. It was made by an illegitimate government, a fact corroborated by all public opinion polls. This government would do the country a big favour if the Prime Minister were to decide to put Canada's interest before that of his own party and to ask Canadians and Quebecers to pick true representative in these times of turmoil. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the make-up of this Parliament would reflect the actual make-up of this country and not that of some dream that this Speech from the Throne is trying to sell us.

• (1620)

We know what the reality is in fact. So, when our friends opposite claim they will take up these great challenges, we know that they lack the moral authority as well as the capacbility and the will to do so. We know they are the lowest ever in the polls: they have lost the trust of just about everybody in Canada.

So, Mr. Speaker, rhetoric aside, in real life, there are realities to face. As we speak and as this government is trying to sell us his lines, 1.6 million of our fellow citizens are unemployed. Under this government, which is allegedly so generous and so perfect, as we speak and while the Prime Minister is praising the great virtues of federalism, 11,180 banckruptcies have been recorded in Canada over the past year. At a time when the economic policies of the government should be one fostering a strong economy, as promised in its last Speech from the Throne, interest rates are oscillating between 10 and 12 percent, while our dollar is at 87 cents.

So, we talk about sovereignty, Mr. Speaker, it is not strictly a matter of political necessity. Sovereignty is increasingly becoming an economic necessity, and that statement is not from me. Even the Quebec Chamber of Commerce tells us, in its brief, that it is time to act. They say the decision-making process should be put in place immediately. The same recommendation was made to the Quebec government by the Bélanger-Campeau commission. That is what the legislation the Quebec government introduced yesterday is about, one more step toward a referendum in Quebec.

But, this afternoon, the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs told us that the federal government will want to hold its own referendum. They will introduce their own referendum legislation in an attempt to weaken the resolve of Quebecers and create a diversion.

Mr. Speaker, we realize this is an attempt to create a diversion! So we invite all those who want to relive the torments of conscription to hold their federal referendum; we invite them to ask Quebecers the real question and they will get an answer they never hoped for.

Mr. Speaker, to those who thought they could, out of Ottawa, scare the Quebec people with their jackboots, I say: Go pay a visit to Quebecers in the next little while, you will see how low your credibility level is, how you will

not be able to convince anyone, because the onus of proof rests with you, and so far you have not delivered.

Mr. Speaker, for years, I advocated a renewed federalism. But one day, I came to realize that we could not deliver, that we had to find some other way, another political formula, one that would solve our real problems. When we talk about real problems, we talk about major national programs, and the generosity of the federal government, but we know, Mr. Speaker, that this government owes $388 billion, uses a third of our taxes to pay the interest, and increases the national debt by $30 billion each year, so how can they talk about sharing the wealth? In fact, all they have done this last few years is sharing the deficit. The fact is the government cannot afford its dreams any longer. That was obvious in the Throne Speech. Actually, Mr. Speaker, they now want to establish national standards in areas they have no business into, and then have the provinces foot the bill.

They even have the guts to refer to national standards in education, an exclusive provincial jurisdiction ever since 1867, especially in Quebec. I am convinced even Maurice Duplessis must be turning in his grave right now, at the throught of Ottawa interfering in education. That was part of the original agreement. The government does not want to abide by the rules in general matters or respect the necessary choices of the grey areas of the Constitution, and now they are even prepared to ride rough short over the most clearly-stated parts of the Canadian Constitution. All this from a government that said it had a favourable bias for Quebec. That is shameful, Mr. Speaker. I tell the members from Quebec on the other side that Quebec will never accept your meddling in education policy. We will never accept your meddling in our affairs in that field.

Even worse, this government wants to go even further in occupational training. In Quebec, there is not just consensus but unanimity on occupational training being the exclusive responsibility of the Province of Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, even the *Conseil du patronat,* federalist to the core, issued a press release recommending that all manpower training programs be carried out by the government of Quebec. We know that about 40 per cent of the funds for such training are wasted. So when we say that sovereignty is necessary, we need only look at the attempts of this government to meddle in fields of provincial jurisdiction, to duplicate services, to waste our taxes, and God knows that we cannot afford it now.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about federal policies. We can talk about those where they have responsibility, in particular research and development. We read recently that the Space Agency, which was supposed to be the leader in research and development for Quebec, this famous space agency that we had to fight over and wrench away, and I will give you the figures, Mr. Speaker, for this space agency's research contracts: 50 per cent in the West, 35 per cent in Ontario and a meagre, shameful 9.5 per cent in Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, that is from this government which says it has a favourable bias. I think that if we want to pursue our economic objectives, if we want to recognize the political, economic and commercial imperatives, 30 years of discussion, bickering, frustration and above all misunderstanding, as shown of this Speech from the Throne, of insensitivity, lead us to conclude that we would prefer to assume our responsibilities ourselves. That is why from the context in this Speech from the Throne and the debate on this amendment, I would like to move a subamendment, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the hon. member from Hull—Aylmer, which reads as follows:

> That the amendment be amended by adding, after the words "economic affairs of the nation", the following: "and in light of its interference in the exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec in the fields of education and training".

Mr. Speaker, I think that this subamendment is acceptable and I hope that we will have an opportunity to vote on it because I want to know where our colleagues stand. It is important to know how strong their convictions are and especially how much they respect the letter and the spirit of the present Constitution.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table this subamendment.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with interest to the speech made by the hon. member for Shefford, whom I think I know well.

• (1630)

I even remember visiting his place of birth, I believe in the Magdalen Islands.

An hon. member: A Magdalenian.

Mr. Boudria: A Magdalenian, yes. That was the term that the hon. member for Shefford taught me when I paid him a visit. I must say that it was a most enjoyable visit.

I do not want to reveal before this House secrets that have to do with personal friendship, but suffice it to say that at that time, the hon. member believed—as I still believe—in a strong and united Canada. I am disappointed to hear his comments today. I am disappointed, Mr. Speaker, because I believe that the hon. member has confused two issues and I wonder if he sincerely believes what he says because, surely, he must understand that there is a difference between being a member of the Opposition to the government, where it is the role to make the government accountable, and being opposed to the very existence of one's country. In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, there is a difference between these two issues.

It is my duty, as a member of the Opposition, to make the government accountable. I do not apologize for it: That is the reason why I was sent here by my constituents. The people of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell have asked me to represent them; they have given me a mandate to represent them in this House. Because of circumstances, because of what has happened in the other 294 ridings in Canada, I sit on the Opposition side. It is not because of what happened in my own riding, indeed, if I had not been elected, I simply would not be here. I am on the Opposition side because of what has happened in the other ridings. You are either a member of the Opposition or a member of the government. As a member of the government, one tries, as best as possible, to conduct the affairs of the country, like any other government in the past. But as a member of the Opposition, one has to make the government accountable.

Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member says that the government lacks credibility, I can certainly share his opinion; however, Mr. Speaker, that does not mean that Canada lacks credibility. It may be true that unemployment is high in Canada and that our monetary policy is not good, and it is an opinion that I share, but that does not mean that Canada is a bad country. Those are the fundamental differences on the basis of which we must separate our role as spokespersons in the House of Commons from our reactions toward those who govern and those who form the opposition. But this role does not allow us to say to Canadians that their country does not work because people have lost confidence in those who are in power.

Mr. Speaker, there is another point I want to make. The hon. member for Shefford talked about job training. As a matter of fact, I think he mentioned it in his resolution. He says that training—I think he used the terms job training and employment training in his speech—is strictly under provincial jurisdiction.

I would like to ask the hon. member if he has ever signed a form under the Job Development Program. Under that program, grants can be obtained from the federal government, but the Member of Parliament has to give his approval. Has he ever signed a form under section 25 of the Unemployment Insurance Act, which is about job training? I have signed quite a few, Mr. Speaker, and I must say that those forms are public documents available under the Access to Information Act. I hope that members in this House who have heard the amendment put forward by the Bloc Quebecois today will look for those forms signed by each member of that party, Mr. Speaker. I hope that some hon. members opposite will do it.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member that we must keep the system accountable. I do not share his feelings towards my country. I for one, Mr. Speaker, would like to offer my best wishes to the minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

It might not be fashionable for a member of the Opposition to formulate such wishes, but I think that in doing so, Mr. Speaker, I am not wishing that the government opposite run the economy the way they did in the past, but that the minister succeed in keeping our country together, because that principle is larger than I, larger than the members opposite and even larger, with all due respect, than the occupant of the Chair. And there lies the difference, Mr. Speaker. I take this opportunity to formulate this wish to the minister,

because I want our country to remain strong, united and prosperous in the future.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am taking the hon. member's subamendment under advisement. As soon as I can make a ruling on it, I will.

I do not know whether there was a question there or not, but I will let the hon. member reply.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. I understand why he wants to defend Canada as it is today. I understand because he was not rejected by Meech Lake. He supported the Meech Lake Accord throughout that debate, unlike his leader. Personally, I think that if anyone is to blame in this House, and I don't blame the government for the demise of Meech Lake, I am more inclined to put the blame on the Leader of the Liberal Party who forced us all, as individual members,to start wondering about the ability of this Parliament and this country to function as such. Mr. Speaker, I think, in fact I sincerely believe, that for the past 30 years our institutions have been unable to respond to the fundamental requirements and needs of Quebec. Consequently, I no longer believe that even with another round with committee after committee in fact, I am positive that 18 months from now, we will be holding a referendum on sovereignty, because English Canada will not have given the matter sufficient consideration and have been unable to make concrete proposals.

My comments are not meant to be anti-English Canada. They have every right to define the country as they want it to be, in their image and likeness, as we say. They have the right to make education a national issue. They have the right to let Ottawa run everything, if they want to. That kind of country does not have my loyalty. One thing is certain: This has been very difficult for me. It isn't easy to file in here, one after the other. It isn't my idea of fun. However, we believe that without a reaction from Quebecers the day after the demise of Meech Lake, it would have been business as usual, as the Leader of the Opposition hoped it would be, when he said: After June 23, it will be the 24th and the 25th, and just forget Quebec's demands. We want to remind people daily of the problems we had to face and the way we were humiliated. Consequently, I believe the institution has failed, but not necessarily its individual members. However, we must face the fact that if the division of powers is not changed, nothing will change in this country. That is why I think English Canada has the right to define the country it wants. We have done our duty. All we have to do now is make our decision.

As for the jobs strategy, I am sure the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell does not believe his stop-gap projects are occupational training; mowing the grass— What I want is real jobs—

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

Order, please. The amendment to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Shefford and seconded by the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer has been ruled in order.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing.

• (1640)

[*English*]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, could I ask the consent of the House to the New Democratic Party's intention to split our speeches into two speeches of 10 minutes with five minutes of questions from now on. I do not think that should be any problem.

I would like to begin my comments on the Speech from the Throne with some general comments. The speech begins by talking about Canada's history as a history of builders and achievers and how Canadian men and women created a society that is as free and fair as any on earth. I want to make sure that the government was not intending to include itself in this category of builders and achievers and creators of a free and fair society. I assure the government that the people of Canada do not share the view that this government is in that category and sees the government as a destroyer and creator of something which is unfair, not something which is fair.

The speech goes on to talk about the need to rebuild Canadian unity and overcome the acrimony, apathy and incomprehension that exists. Of course we all agree with that, but the government must also take its responsibility as one of the main culprits in generating disunity,

acrimony, apathy and incomprehension about the importance of Canada and holding the country together.

The Speech from the Throne goes on to talk about putting Canada first and wanting all parliamentarians to put Canada first, to set partisan motives aside and work for a stronger country.

How can the government expect us to put all our partisan views aside? How can it expect us to buy into its view of Canada which has generated such unemployment, such misery and such poverty across this country? The government is not learning from its mistakes. The New Democratic Party cannot participate in working towards the sort of Canada that this government wants. We will, of course, work towards a Canada which is one and united, but a Canada which is fair, compassionate and cares about people rather than corporations.

Even in the Speech from the Throne, there is more of the same. There are more of the government's economic policies, which have torn the country apart, being proposed for the next session of Parliament. There is more privatization, more deregulation, and more economic policies which will tear the country apart. There are more references to cuts to transfer payments which will tear the country apart in terms of our social policies. This is a trend which has been going on for quite some time.

The Speech from the Throne talks about a Constitution that will unite a nation. Well, so it should, but so should a government unite a nation. It should seek compromise and consensus, not just at the time when a Constitution is being framed, not just when a Constitution is being negotiated. It should also unite a nation at times when we are dealing with social policies and economic policies.

We have seen the tragedy of this government's economic policies. Social programs have been cut at a time when they are needed most. We have seen this tragedy caused by the free trade agreement, by unfair taxation, by the high dollar, by high interest rates, by cuts in transfer payments to the provinces, by deregulation, by privatization and by cuts to national institutions like CBC and VIA Rail.

In spite of all the evidence this direction is continued in the throne speech. We have free trade for provinces too. This means the end of manufacturing industries in Saskatchewan. It means the concentration of more manufacturing in central Canada and Ontario, away from the hinterland economies. It means more job losses, more pain, more poverty, more unemployment and more sickness in the regions. This is thoroughly unacceptable to the people of Saskatchewan, thoroughly unacceptable to the people of Atlantic Canada and all the regions of Canada who have not received a fair deal under this or, indeed, former governments.

There is much that could be said about the general thrust of the Speech from the Throne but I would like to concentrate on one issue which is not in the throne speech but which should have been. It deals with matters of poverty and, in particular, child poverty. We all remember that this House, this government committed itself to removing child poverty by the year 2000.

We need a plan and a timetable to ensure that child poverty is eliminated by the year 2000.

The government in the throne speech has committed itself to implement the commitments made. This would take a major change in attitude. Somebody must have been on the road to Damascus to see some revelation which would suggest that we have to do something different. Yet this government has been a government which has slashed education programs and slashed transfer payments to the provinces for social programs in B.C., Alberta, and Ontario. This has had major negative implications on children, yet now it wants to say that it is going to change for the better and that it will ensure that Canadian girls and boys will be better educated, better protected and better nurtured. If they are going to be better protected, it seems to me they had better be protected from the present Government of Canada which has caused them great harm over the last short while.

I would like to make two brief comments with regard to the children's summit which is mentioned in the throne speech. The government talks about following through on those commitments.

There are two commitments in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. One is to ensure that children enjoy the highest attainable standard of

health and facilities for treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health—the highest attainable standards.

Anybody in this country knows that we are far, far away from ensuring that children across this country, particularly those in rural and northern areas and poor children, receive the highest attainable standard of health. They do not, and it is time the government made some commitments in that regard.

In addition, with regard to education, there is a commitment to ensure that higher education be accessible to all on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means. Yet this government has slashed funding to higher education which has meant less and less successful education for low and middle income Canadians, higher tuition fees, and so on. We can see that all across the country in our own universities and our own communities where tuition fees are going through the roof.

What we need is not more rhetoric. We need to be caring about children. We need policy initiatives which actually resolve the problem.

We need aggressive action on pay equity. We need an end to tax loopholes that benefit the wealthy individuals and corporations in our society. We need to cut subsidies to the rich corporations instead of slashing social programs for those who need it most. We need a national child care strategy. This is the first Speech from the Throne for a long time with not even a mention of child care.

We need viable housing initiatives. We need increased social assistance levels to protect those who are weakest in our society. We need to reverse cutbacks to health and post-secondary education. We need to be paying attention to aboriginal and minority concerns so that the poverty gap between those groups and other Canadians can be bridged.

These things were not in the speech. There was no commitment to addressing the real concerns of Canadians or addressing the real concerns of those least affluent Canadians. That is what we needed. Instead, we received more of the same disastrous policies which we have seen over the last few years.

In closing, Canadians need and Canadians demand better policies.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I thank the hon. member for being so succinct.

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, I was very happy to hear my hon. colleague make the remarks that he did. I think it is incomprehensible to many of us that a government that is languishing at 15 per cent of the polls, with 85 per cent of Canadians opposed to the direction in which it is headed, can talk about unity and competitiveness and still forge ahead with no change in direction.

Surely in a situation where we are becoming less and less competitive and less and less united, and 85 per cent of the public is opposed to the government's policy, it would read the writing on the wall and make some changes. There have been no changes, and I think that is a real shame. I think Canadians are calling for change and they are not getting it.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague to reflect on some of his previous life experience as director of the co-operative centre at the University of Saskatchewan. Perhaps he could share with us some of the ideas he has developed about how the co-operative system could well play a major role in bringing this country together and making it a more competitive and compassionate place, for example by encouraging much more involvement in the co-op housing sector.

There have been reports indicating that the health care system would be much more efficient, cheaper, as well as more effective if we made greater use of co-op health as a mode of health delivery. He mentioned day care. A lot of the most positive development in this country in the field of day care has come through co-operatives, in spite of the lack of funding. It is a very important factor in protecting and diversifying primary production in many parts of the country. With the increasing number of lay-offs and plant closures due to free trade, very often the formation of worker co-ops to save jobs is the last line of defence in protecting jobs in communities.

• (1650)

I would ask the hon. member if he might comment from his extensive experience in this field.

Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, it was a long time ago that I was so involved with co-operatives. It is clear this is an area which the government has essentially abandoned. It abandoned it probably because co-ops represent Canadian-owned, locally run institutions, some of which have been incredi-

bly successful in the province of Quebec and in my own province of Saskatchewan as well as across the country with some 11 million members, almost one-third of the Canadian population.

In particular, one matter which could have been addressed by the government is the application of the goods and services tax on membership fees of co-operatives. The government seems to be penalizing co-operatives by charging the GST on the membership fees, which Canadians have to spend in order to become members of co-operatives to participate in the organization. The government has received numerous applications to respond to the problem of Canadian-owned and Canadian-managed corporations and yet has refused to do so, leaving them at some disadvantage with regard to other corporations.

I commend co-operatives to this government as a Canadian-owned, Canadian-run democratic corporate entity which has served the needs of 11 million Canadians well.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, we listened to the throne speech earlier this week and looked to the government to provide the Canadian people with a plan for economic recovery, a plan for a statement on national unity and the Constitution and, sadly, we were all very disappointed. It seems to be again the same, tired old Tory agenda, an agenda that has brought us the free trade deal, an agenda that has cost Canadians thousands and thousands of jobs in every region of this country, an agenda that has increased taxes, increased the burden on to the backs of middle and lower income people and an agenda that has failed to this point on national unity.

National unity is much more than which spending powers are administered by which level of government. It is about a nation in which individuals are secure, employed and contribute to the good of all in our society. It is about a nation in which every Canadian is valued regardless of the region they come from, the colour of their skin, or their abilities.

Canadians do want a strong Canada, a diverse and a vibrant nation, one they can be proud of. I have spoken to my constituents, as many of the people in this House have spoken to their constituents, and have listened to their concerns on the future of this country and on the pain and the worry they are feeling right now about the very future of our nation.

It is hard to be optimistic about Canada when you are under attack by your own government, a government that has brought us the GST, brought us the free trade deal, brought cutbacks, one that put capping on the Canada Assistance Plan to Ontario, to British Columbia, to Alberta, and one that implemented cutbacks to social programs and left Canadians feeling very disintegrated and worried about the future.

Many Canadians are feeling the impact of the trade deal, particularly in the province of Ontario. It is not just Ontario, however, that is losing manufacturing jobs. In my own riding of New Westminster, there is a plant which has been making steel tubing for 33 years under Canadian ownership, providing jobs in my community. It had been purchased by an American firm recently, and within three months that company, Wolverine, is moving south of the border, closing that plant in Canada. It seems that what the Americans got out of the trade deal is a market in Canada but no commitment to jobs in Canada. Our government gave away that commitment to jobs; 180 jobs were lost in a very small community. That is just one example of what is happening right across this country.

We have seen it with the truckers who are out here today and have been here all week demonstrating. They were demonstrating a year ago about deregulation and about the changes in their industry. They were warning the government in saying that the government's initiatives in deregulation were bad for them and bad for their industry.

The government does not listen. It continues along the same blind policies, policies that are really ruining our country and ruining the sense of people in the nation as Canadians. I wonder which jobs are next on the government's hit list.

I listened to the throne speech for any mention of the green plan that was unveiled by this government with a great deal of attention, hoopla and promises, but it was not mentioned. The commitments of the green plan are not being fulfilled at all. The Fraser River runs right through both parts of my riding—Burnaby and New Westminster. There was a commitment in the green plan for action on the Fraser River. That river is one of the

lifeblood rivers of the province of British Columbia, and where is the action to clean up that river?

What have the members of the government done with the green plan so far? They have spent $37,000 to test the reaction on a logo. They spent $12,000 on picture frames. They spent $150,000 on communications advice from private firms. They have spent almost $2 million on advertising. What has been done on the Fraser so far? They say it is coming; when is it coming? People are waiting in every region of British Columbia. People in their ridings are asking questions and people in my riding are asking questions. They say soon. People have been asking the questions for seven years of your government and have got no response on the issue of the Fraser River.

That river is important in British Columbia for tourism, fishing and for the lumber industry, and the member opposite knows that. It is of major importance in our province. We keep hearing that there is going to be an announcement but it never comes. I have constituents calling me weekly about when that announcement is coming. They get no answer from the Department of the Environment of this government.

I was pleased about the throne speech mentioning a blue ribbon panel on violence against women. I am also concerned that this new committee has precluded immediate action on gender sensitivity training for judges. I am concerned that the government is ignoring one simple and effective action on violence against women, and that is to remove the cap on the Canada Assistance Plan, which funds shelters for battered women, child care and social assistance. Abused women must have the support they need. They need a sympathetic justice system and they need economic options.

Nobody knows what a blue ribbon panel is. It sounds like some kind of prize at an agricultural fair. We have had experience with this government's blue ribbon panel in the past: the De Grandpré blue ribbon panel. Most of us will remember what Canadians got from that blue ribbon panel.

I am concerned that the present panel may preclude a royal commission on violence against women, which, if it were implemented, like the 1970 royal commission on the status of women, would have focused public attention on the issue, raised awareness, provided education and led to government and public action on this issue.

I hope that the panel will be made up of victims of violence, those who work in the front lines with victims of violence, and women-positive researchers. I hope that this panel hears from women and issues a definitive report which is taken seriously by this government and acted upon.

• (1700)

There is a promise of programs for disabled people in the throne speech. I support any program that makes our society more accessible to the disabled, but I also want to alert the government to the fact that disabled women are at a far greater risk of violence and attack.

I would like the government to keep the particular problems of disabled women in mind when it sets up these programs for the disabled and when it sets up the panel on violence against women.

Except for the panel and the programs for the disabled, which account for three sentences in the throne speech, the speech was a disappointment to Canadian women. There was no mention of child care. It was promised in 1984 and 1988. It was mentioned in every other throne speech, but not even mentioned this time.

As of March 1990, there were 433,000 children under the age of three with no parents at home to care for them. As of March 1990, there were 47,000 day care spaces, including family day care, for children of that age. That leaves almost 387,000 children under the age of three with informal, insecure arrangements which range widely in quality, or with no child care services at all.

There is no commitment to strengthen the employment equity legislation which comes up for renewal this year. There is no commitment to affordable housing. There is no commitment to remove the discrimination against immigrant women in federally employment-related language training programs.

There is no commitment to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

There is no promise of fairness for women federal Public Service employees. In the 1986 throne speech they promised to correct inequitable wage rates in the public service. Now this government is blocking the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal hearing into unfair wage rates for women in the Public Service.

The throne speech talks about literacy, education and yet, the government froze spending on education which amounts to a loss of millions of dollars in funding to education year after year.

The throne speech talks about Canada's economic strength and the most advanced social programs in the world. I do not know what world this government is talking about. Is it Mars? Here on planet earth, most western European countries have a much more advanced parental leave program and child care system than we do here in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I think you are signalling me that my time is up. I would like to make a comment about the government's request to set aside partisan comments in the House of Commons. I am happy to support the government when and if it brings in good policies for the Canadian people.

For example, I and my party did support a government Private Members' Bill to help women have access to their share of the Canada Pension Plan. This was a positive step and we all supported it.

However, do not expect me to support the GST. Do not ask me to support cuts to leave for adoptive parents. Do not ask me to support a bill that will harm the Canadian people. We want effective action from this government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Since there will not be any questions or comments, I gave the hon. member an extra three or four minutes.

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have an opportunity to comment on the throne speech delivered on Monday by the Right Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn, Governor General of Canada.

As the Prime Minister eloquently expressed yesterday, Canada is at a crossroads. Regardless of the final direction and outcome, Canada will never be the same. To those who take great pride in wallowing in defeatism and pessimism about Canada's future, let me say that no generation in Canada's history has ever passed without its share of doom and gloom forecast. Despite the naysayers, Canada has endured, more vibrant and alive with each passing year. I have never been more optimistic about our future.

Yes, it was tragic that Meech Lake died. However, that accord was carrying excess baggage not related to the Constitution.

The failure of the Meech Lake Accord has caused worry about national unity, but it also made two things clear: we must find a better way to amend the Constitution, and Canadians want to have a say in the process.

Accordingly, in November 1990, the Prime Minister announced the establishment of the Spicer commission and, in December, the formation of the special joint committee on the constitutional amending formula. Frankly, it would be naive to expect a magic formula to come from the deliberations of these bodies to cure all the aches and pains of our nationhood. However, in both cases a genuine attempt is being made to develop a national consensus rather than a provincial, territorial or special interest group perspective of Canada.

The wounds of past grievances are deep, but if we are true to our hearts and intellects, we can heal them. The risks created by our current disagreements are wide, but together we can bridge them.

That is the philosophy of the Prime Minister, the government and myself, and that is the direction expressed in the throne speech. Many Canadians blame the current problems of the economy on the Prime Minister and the policies of our government when, in very real terms, we have championed reforms and changes necessary to produce and ensure prosperity for all Canadians for years to come.

There is no denying that there has been a 2.5 per cent drop in the economy's performance, and high interest rates have contributed. However, interest rates are coming down and we must not lose sight of the fact that the U.S. economy has been in recession as well, with the resulting dampening effect on our economy.

In the current recession there has been a loss of 6.5 per cent of manufacturing jobs. However, in the recession of 1981 and 1982, the loss of manufacturing jobs was 12 per cent. Present circumstances, although undesirable, testify to the resiliency of the economy under our government's leadership. In fact, although the unemployment rate stands at 10.2 per cent, 1.285 million jobs have been created in Canada since September 1984 when

we were first elected, and 470,000 of those jobs were in Ontario alone.

Of the jobs created by the Progressive Conservative government, 76.8 per cent have been full-time employment opportunities. As a government we are fully committed to further reductions in federal spending and deficit. As outlined in the latest budget and reaffirmed in the throne speech, the deficit will be brought down to under $25 billion in 1992-93 and $6.5 billion by 1994.

From 1992 through to 1995, program spending will be limited to an average of 3 per cent a year. We practise what we preach. The provincial governments have certainly been spending on a much more lavish scale, and the same applies to municipal governments.

The bottom line is simply that if competitiveness is the key economic issue of the 1990s, Canada is off to a very rocky start this decade. Our efforts to improve Canada's economic efficiency through the free trade deal, the GST, unemployment insurance reform, spending controls and deficit reduction, have all been bitterly opposed. Much of the opposition is based on the erroneous belief in Canada that the world has changed so little in recent decades that Canada need not change in order to keep up.

• (1710)

Many Canadians honestly believe that our current standard of living can be maintained without adjusting to the new global economy and by using the same economic and business strategies that have proved successful in the past.

Nothing could be further from the truth. If those delusions continue to distort discussion and action on national competitiveness, it will doom Canadians to unnecessary failure.

The course outlined in the throne speech attempts to steer Canadians clear of a head-in-the-sand approach to our economic well-being.

However, the throne speech did not only dwell on questions of the Constitution and the economy, it reaffirmed our commitment to the proposition that building a prosperous economy is fully compatible with maintaining a healthy environment.

In fact, since coming to power in 1984, our government has shown decisive leadership in placing an emphasis on the state of Canada's environment.

Briefly, I would like to review a few key highlights. In the current 1991-92 fiscal year, we have committed over $1 billion to environmental programs. The Acid Rain Abatement Program initiated in February 1985 committed the seven provinces east of Saskatchewan to reducing their annual emissions of sulphur dioxide, the principle cause of acid rain, by 50 per cent of 1980 levels by 1994.

To date, sulphur dioxide emissions in Canada have been reduced by 40 per cent.

We have shown leadership with several important initiatives intended to reduce the presence of industrial toxins in our fresh water.

In October 1989 we announced a $125 million five-year Great Lakes action plan to deal with health aspects of pollution, prevent toxic contamination and start a clean-up of areas in the Great Lakes basin.

In addition, in June 1988 we announced a five-year $110 million program to protect and restore the quality of the St. Lawrence River. We have introduced some of the toughest environmental legislation in the world, including the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and the federal environmental assessment process.

However, nothing is more significant than the Canada-United States air quality accord signed by the President of the United States, George Bush, and our Prime Minister on March 13.

I have served for over 10 years on a special parliamentary committee on acid rain, and in this Parliament as a member of the Standing Committee on the Environment.

I can honestly say that this historic agreement will have a significant impact on acid rain depositions in my riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka and elsewhere for years to come.

We have only touched the tip of the iceberg in terms of the environmental initiatives and programs our government has been responsible for since 1984. In the throne speech, we reaffirmed our commitment to using the comprehensive, six-year, $3 billion green plan as the principle vehicle by which Canadians will be helped to

clean up, protect and enhance the environment over the coming months and years.

I am confident that the green plan initiatives, combined with actions by the provinces and the private sector, will ensure that Canadians have the clean air, water and land essential for a quality standard of living.

Finally, I was very happy to see that the throne speech established the family as a major priority. The family is, after all, the basic unit of Canadian society. Its strengthening should be a major objective of government policy.

I am encouraged by the fact that our government recognizes that Canadian society is changing and considerable pressure has been placed on the family unit. In light of those changes and pressures, it is reassuring that the government has made a commitment to renewing its policies to ensure that they are well tailored to meet the current and future needs of Canadian families.

The government already provides substantial funding for child care, allocating close to $1 billion annually through a number of tax and expenditure programs. Recent changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act now makes available a total of $1 billion per year to assist mothers and fathers in caring for new born children. However, I believe we are taking a significant step in the right direction with our commitment to a national action plan for children which will address a broad range of issues including child care, enforcement of child support orders, and action against child pornography.

In the course of reviewing existing policies, it is my hope that we examine closely the family tax and support system currently in place. As it stands now, the family tax and support system is cumbersome, inefficient, and unfair in its treatment of the family. Many aspects of the present system weaken rather than strengthen the national fibre.

In concluding, let me say that in many ways Canadians are a family. True, we have our differences and have gone through our fair share of growing pains. But like a family, I believe that when push comes to shove, the time comes to pull together. We have reached that point today in Canada.

The directions laid out in the throne speech do not provide all the answers or solutions to our present ailments. We do not even suggest that we have a cure-all. What we are doing as a government and in the commitments outlined in the throne speech is reaching out as family members across the floor of the House of Commons and across this great land, saying let us work together to ensure that a great country becomes even greater.

As individuals, as a government, as a people, we are far from being perfect, but then who is. Yet, as a nation we are the envy of the world. Indeed, Canada is a living and international ideal worth preserving and nurturing for generations to come.

The distinguished Canadian historian, A.R.M. Lower, in his book *Colony to Nation* made a reference to Canada which to me is quite appropriate given our present circumstances, and I quote:

> In every generation Canadians have had to rework the miracle of their political experience. Canada has been created because there has existed within the hearts of its people a determination to build for themselves an enduring home. Canada is a supreme act of faith.

Canadians have not lost that faith, and I have not lost that faith. For the sake of future generations, I hope the majority of the members of this House have not lost that faith either.

Mr. Speaker, again it has been a privilege to comment on the Speech from the Throne.

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to comment on the future plans of this government for national unity and economic prosperity, as laid out in Monday's throne speech.

In doing so, I must express my disappointment that at this time with so much concern over the state of the nation and the economy, and concern by all Canadians over the state of the nation and the economy, the speech shows no sense of direction or any evidence of the leadership that this country needs to survive and prosper as a country.

We needed action on the problem of keeping Canada together, but we have another joint committee. On the economy and competitiveness, we needed a sign from this government that it realized the disastrous effects its policies have had over the past eight years. They have not worked. Instead, we saw that it plans to stay on course.

• (1720)

My talk here tonight will be on these two items; the Constitution and national unity, and the lack of what I consider economic direction by this government in such a critical time of our country.

With respect to the Constitution and national unity, 11 months have passed since the Meech Lake Accord failed. In that time, our Prime Minister has appointed two commissions, the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future, otherwise known as the Spicer committee or commission, and the Special Joint Committee of the House and the Senate on the Amending Process for the Canadian Constitution, otherwise known as the Beaudoin–Edwards committee of which I was a member. Both were set up to seek out the views of Canadians on what they want their country to look like in the future and how they want their Constitution changed to reflect their values, if it needs to be done.

As well, we have seen Quebec, who has had two studies, the Belanger–Campeau, a committee set up with politicians from all parties, as well as members from outside of government, interested Quebecers. We have also seen the Liberal report on Allaire. That is Quebec's combined position towards Canada and what it needs or where it wants to go within this framework of Canada.

I have to say that I regret that the provinces have not come across in the same way, but I am not sure they have been encouraged by our Prime Minister or by the Government of Canada to start looking at this very serious question.

I was a member of the Beaudoin–Edwards committee. Since February 19, 1991 this committee has held about 27 public sessions both here and outside of Ottawa. We dealt with a very distinct area in the Canadian picture or in the Canadian Constitution. We dealt with the question; was there something wrong with our Constitution, with the amending formula and was there a need for a referendum or a constituent assembly. I do not really want to pre-empt the report of that committee. We have been pre-empted already by the Prime Minister who set up another committee without waiting to hear what we had to say, but we did hear from experts on this item.

I think we heard from experts across the country on our present day Constitution. Unfortunately, I can say, in contradiction to the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka, who thinks we should be looking for a better way to amend our Constitution, that none of the experts said it was the Constitution itself, the present day Constitution, that was so bad in the Meech Lake process, they said it was the process itself in Meech Lake that did not allow public participation.

Actually, the current Constitution has worked twice out of three times; once in 1983 and again, I think, in 1987. It did not work in 1988. But if one looks at the Meech Lake Accord, what was it? It was a new amending formula agreed to by 10 provincial premiers and the Prime Minister. It was not even in our Constitution. Everything in the Meech Lake package, except for one item, needed unanimity.

I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, I made the mistake that probably most Canadians make, nothing in that package except one item needed unanimity. The rest could have been done by the seven and fifty rule in the Constitution. I am sure most of it would have passed had there been flexibility on the part of our leaders, which I think was lacking, and public participation, so people would know exactly what our politicians were doing in the Meech Lake Accord. That was lacking. That was brought out at the Beaudoin–Edwards committee by the experts. It was not the Constitution. It was the lack of flexibility and the lack of public participation. As well, over and over again we were reminded that the Meech Lake package was presented as a *fait accompli*, take it or leave it, and that no changes would be permitted regardless of the level of public outcry.

I remind the House, it was a new amending formula that was used; unanimity or nothing, when they could have probably passed all of it, except for the Supreme Court, with the seven and fifty. Despite this clear message, and despite the weight of the evidence, the committee did not even have a chance to report before the Prime Minister decided to put his own approach to the public process.

We could have sat last week or this week and finished it. I do not think we can even sit next week unless we agree to sit as a committee to finish our work because the House has not agreed to let the committees resume. We saw that earlier today in the external affairs debate concerning what had happened in Question Period.

He wants the opinion of yet another committee. He wants a special joint committee that will travel, just like we have seen the Spicer committee do, just like the Beaudoin–Edwards committee has done. Yet there is no leadership in presenting concrete proposals as to what could be done to start the process.

He wants another nine months to pass before we get any specific proposal is brought forward. That is dangerously close to the deadlines Quebec has established in the referendum. More to the point, contrary to what we had heard on the Beaudoin–Edwards committee, there is no specific commitment to involve Canadians directly in the process. Once again, they may end up as spectators.

I am sure I am not the only person in the House who senses some of the same back to the wall, roll of the dice tactics that we saw between 1987 and 1990. I do not think we need another joint committee in the fall.

I was pleased this morning to hear the new minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs outline the four stages he saw the government taking. He said we would await the reports of Spicer and Beaudoin. Then proposals would be formed by the government, and a joint committee would travel across Canada on those proposals and then it would go to the legislators.

The main thing that was brought before us is that the public wants to know that there is flexibility at all stages and in particular, at that last stage once the proposals have come back from that joint committee and before they go to the premiers, they want to know if they have any public input on that proposal.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, this is where the government has failed. It is waiting until next February to say to the public: "You may have a couple of months and that is going to be it, because Quebec is going to make its mind up one way or another". Again our back is to the wall.

Why are we not starting it now? Why are we not discussing a specific proposal over the summer? What would I put in that proposal? It does not take imagination. Most Canadians know what is in there. My leader gave an outline the other day of what his proposal should be.

First and foremost we should define what Canada is supposed to be for all Canadians. Second, I think we could go to the fact that we probably have to have a human rights code in our Constitution because there are some who do not feel that all people are equal before the law, so we have to define it. I am one of those who feels that we should be big enough to have all people equal before the law. But that is another thing.

• (1730)

Spending power is a grave concern to the provinces. Why are we not talking about it? We have not talked about it since Meech failed. Why are we not talking?

Some witnesses said: "start talking". Do two stages. Start talking about what we can present to Quebec and then bring Quebec back to the table. We heard that from Mr. Pennicott in the Yukon. We heard it from other witnesses.

We also need to look at the distribution of powers. The Prime Minister mentions in the Speech from the Throne educational standards across Canada. Is he opening the way to talk about division of powers? Well, if he is, why are we not talking about it now, publicly, to see if there is not a need for a uniform standard in nine provinces of Canada of an education system respecting at all times the rights of Quebecers to their education system.

What about the aboriginal people? I have been in and out of this Chamber, by election, a number of times. It is more than time to start recognizing that they have certain rights that are inherent by virtue of having been in Canada before we came here. It is time for us, as Canadians, as politicians to put it out. We have all summer to talk about it. We have all of June. I do not see why we have to go by deadlines, particularly when it is so important to Canada that we stay together.

I could talk about the Senate. They have a majority. They appointed a majority over there. Change the Senate with your majority. Let us get down to work.

This week I was pleased to hear the member for South Shore talk about the concerns of Nova Scotians. It was a first. I was pleased and I agreed with everything he said. I would hope that if it came to a vote that he would vote with me or I would vote with him. For once in my life in Parliament we would have the same concerns for an area. This Parliament is outdated and it is a waste of effort sometimes. No wonder we are not respected by an awful lot of Canadians for not being able to sit down and tackle it.

The last thing I want to say, because my time is going, is on the economy and the competitiveness that was talked about. It was with a mixture of anger and disbelief that I read the pat on the back the government gave itself on the economy and the competitiveness in the Speech from the Throne. I am sure that the 1.4 million Canadians who are currently out of work because of the government's made–in–Canada recession had a similar response.

This government has systematically wrecked our economy and undermined our competitiveness with every decision it has taken in the past three years.

The truckers in Ontario today are a prime example. We have no VIA Rail. We have no railroad and it is doing away with the trucks. We cannot be competitive because of what? The government has jacked up interest rates to a point where there is an unprecedented spread between Canadian rates and those of our chief trading partner, the United States. There is 4 percentage points. It is forcing our businesses to pay more for capital than their chief competitors south of the border and undermining our competitive position.

It has pegged the Canadian dollar at an artificially high level in American dollars. For the year to date, it has averaged 85.7 cents U.S. This is a break with our tradition of letting it float to whatever value is justified by the realities of the Canadian economy.

This has discouraged our exports into the American markets and undermined our competitiveness. I can speak for an area that has fish and because of our interest rates and our high Canadian dollar, it is expensive to send into the U.S.

In passing, I would like to say that if it ever should come out that there was an agreement between this government and the United States under the free trade agreement to prop up the Canadian dollar to make it that high, I would hope that there would not be a Canada, if there are any Canadians left by the time this government is through with Canada, who would ever vote for them again.

It has implemented an offensive new tax, the GST. That is devastating our border communities. Even before the tax was brought into effect this year, the government knew that the GST would raise the price of Canadian goods and services an average of 3.8 per cent over those being sold in the United States.

The government also knew that the cross–border shopping trips would increase by 2 million per year, solely as a result of the GST.

Remember that 80 per cent of the Canadian population lives within only 200 miles of the American border, easy driving distance. I simply cannot understand why the government went ahead with a tax that so severely undermines our competitiveness. On that only, we hear from them that we need to have production costs that are equal to the United States.

When this government puts our interest rates at the same level as the United States, when our dollar is not pegged as it should be today for our exports, and when our taxes, GST or our personal taxes are at the same level as the United States, then maybe the costs of production in Canada might be able to come down to the same level as in the United States, and we might stop blaming the Canadian labour people for what this government has achieved in one final swoop with its economic policies.

I tell you, it may be hurting somebody over there, but he will have a chance to ask a question if he wants.

I cannot put the blame on people for this government's free trade agreement, a free trade agreement that it now wants to expand to include Mexico, where there are even cheaper production costs when we cannot compete with the United States under it because of the economic policies of this minister.

I can only say that Canada is a great country. If the people over there are hurting a little bit, maybe they should start to influence their government. Maybe if they influenced their government and spoke up in their caucus, we would not have the high interests rates that we have had that created this recession. We would have our exports going fairly into the United States. We cannot even finish our fish because the policy of this government on fish has been three ministers in less than two–and–a–half years. How can you have any policy for fish when you have a new minister every nine months. Heavens, if they created anything in the nine months I would be happy, but they have not created anything. They had to be replaced.

I am looking forward to seeing this new minister, because he has, I am sure, long experience and has been a minister of fisheries in the past. They have resurrected

the minister and I hope that by his resurrection he will have a new policy.

I do think that unless there are backbenchers who in caucus will start to talk about their economic needs in their regions, we will not have anything left. Certainly the Canadian public, the polls, everybody is telling them to change their economic outlook in Canada and let us begin to prosper.

We do not need to see truckers having their jobs done away with across the country. We do not have any rail. We are not going to have any trucks in the east. I do not know what we are going to have at the end of it. I can certainly say that at the rate this government is going, we are not going to have much.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, I do take exception to a number of things the member has stated, but there is one thing on which we do agree, and that is that we do have a great country.

Obviously, to maintain a great country, you have to respond to changes that the modern world is demanding. I know the hon. member takes exception to that because change is always difficult. The difficulty in our position is simply that we are a government that takes its responsibilities seriously and if to meet the demands of the world marketplace we have to change, we are going to change. It is never easy. The result of that is simply that we are low in the polls, because change is never easy.

Again, the hon. member is going through that old bag of Liberal philosophy, the one they have tagged and carried along with them since 1987–88.

• (1740)

Every sparrow that falls they blame on this government and our trade agreement. What she chooses to ignore is simply this. The last figures coming out of Canada–U.S. trade indicates that we are winning, that we have a $16 billion to $17 billion trade surplus. It means despite what the member states, we are doing a number of things right.

The hon. member wants to concentrate on the negative, and that is fine, but let us take a look at the big picture. In Canada, the trade agreement is working to our benefit. If you want to look at isolated statistics in relation to unemployment, unemployment in the United States is 10 times higher than ours. Do they blame that on the trade agreement with Canada? Of course not.

There are other factors involved there, mainly a downturn in the western economy. We are part of that western economy. We cannot ignore that. We cannot bury our heads in the sand.

The hon. member also moved into an area of particular concern to me. It is the relation to cross–border shopping. No one ignores the fact that we have a problem in that regard. Again, in a province as small as the one that I represent, the province of New Brunswick, in the big picture we do very well.

The member again chooses to ignore that statistic. The province of New Brunswick has a $600 million trade surplus with the state of Maine despite all the cross–border shopping that takes place.

She chooses to ignore that very figure and takes a look at the Canadian dollar. The Canadian dollar is simply a reflection of the strength of the Canadian economy. Any economist will tell you that.

It simply means that the other countries of the world have confidence in us as a nation. If they did not believe in us, we would have a 50 cent dollar. That is the difference between our philosophy and their philosophy. For years, they wanted to prop themselves up with a weak Canadian dollar.

In the long term, that is not the answer. The long–term answer is we have to be competitive. If we are competitive and we are doing the things that are necessary to maintain a strong and healthy Canadian economy, the result is you are going to have a strong Canadian dollar.

I, for one, if I was in the exporting business, would love to have a weak Canadian dollar, but there is a price that is paid for that, a price that you pay for a weak dollar. The hon. member knows very well what it is, because she has an understanding of economics which is sometimes clouded by the political party that she represents.

We are doing very well in the international marketplace, and I do not want the member to distort the big picture. She is very effective at distorting the big picture when she chooses to do so, although on an individual basis she starts out very well.

I think she is reflecting her own sense of where she is and what is going on. When she gets into the big black cloud that sort of looms over her party, she falls into that same trap that they have entrapped themselves in, not going beyond that.

We, as a party, will go beyond that. We will make the tough decisions that are going to be good for all Canadians in the long haul.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I do not know if there was a question, but if the hon. member would like to rebut.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say to the hon. member that I do not think I distort any facts.

We can all have our party policies, and whatever. What I was bringing out was that there are production costs that this government has control over and has had control over. One is the interest rate. One is the Canadian dollar and one is certainly the level of taxes.

The GST could not have come at a worse time. I think it was in *The Financial Times* or somebody in the paper the other day who said: "If the free trade agreement was good policy, it was the wrong time, and if the GST is supposed to be so good, why was it brought in at the wrong time as well?"

I can say that I am glad that the GST is going to pay off the deficit. I ask only: What has the government done with all the money that it has collected since January? It still has not introduced a bill since the budget came out in February showing that it is going to put on the deficit. Is it that strapped that it has to keep going with the GST to run the government? It could make some other decisions like believe the commissions that it has set up for millions of dollars, believe what people are saying to those commissions and start looking at the problem right now of keeping Canada together so we can get down to the basics of the economy.

The only other thing I would say is, yes, Canada is an exporter. I have known that all my life. Therefore, we need a low dollar right now in order to get our exports up and to get the economy going. If the member does not understand that, I do not know what else I can say.

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, it was an excellent speech, I think, in response to the Speech from the Throne from this 15 per cent government. I found it very interesting that the member dwelt on the question of the contradiction between the government's announced policies and its actions when it comes to making Canada and Canadians more competitive.

In my constituency, which encompasses the northern half of Saskatchewan, we are certainly in a situation where there are policy changes needed in order to make that constituency and those constituents more competitive.

What I am talking about is some of the investments that this government is prepared to make in people. Certainly the government member who spoke is correct in saying we have to be ready for changing times, new times, the technology of today and so forth.

However, what is the record of this government? It talks in the throne speech about creating a learning society, about support for education and so on, but what has it done? It has withdrawn completely from adult basic education. With regard to its literacy program, in many cases, the vast majority of funds are spent on receptions, television shows and so on. CJS funding has been cut. Funding for post-secondary education has been cut.

At the same time, there are literally thousands of parents in my constituency who are not able to take advantage of work opportunities or education opportunities because of the lack of child care. It is a very, very real need. People cannot participate in this economy. They cannot get ahead. They cannot make themselves more competitive or more productive because there is no proper child care system brought forward by this government in spite of numerous promises to do so.

I would like to ask the member to comment on how Canada and Canadians can become more productive when government policies keep them from becoming so.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased with the hon. member's question on that point because I had to leave that out in my text. One always has more to say, and most politicians do, than they can get on the record.

I would say that this government has cut secondary funding to the provinces consistently since I have been back. As you cut secondary funding, you are hurting the education system and the training necessary. I will go to the day care in a minute. I would just say that my figures show that illiteracy in Canada is around 20 per cent and going up. I would even go higher than that, but I do not have that particular statistic here.

An hon. member: It is higher than that.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): It is higher than that? Well, it is 20 per cent, at least in my area where I have a very active and very good illiteracy council. It has statistics. What scares me about that statistic and should scare the minister and should scare others in this House is that as our population becomes less educated and unable to read, it will be a real cost of production. I think it is scary that that number has grown and it has grown in this government's time. At the same time, it has cut educational programs and training.

I look at the developing countries and their percentages are far lower for illiteracy than ours because they put their priorities on education. If you have an educated work force, you will be able to produce.

• (1750)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret to interrupt the hon. member but her time has expired.

Mrs. Edna Anderson (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to participate today in the throne speech debate. This new session of Parliament signals a new beginning, a new determination by this government to take the steps necessary to help Canada and all Canadians to face the challenges of the future.

There are some disturbing realities that face us as a nation, and as citizens of the world, in this first year of the last decade of the last century of this millennium. The list is daunting; the future of Canada as a confederation, the state of the environment, the ability of the economy to continue to generate growth and jobs, the plight of children in poverty. And what makes many of these realities so disturbing is that they in themselves compromise our ability to deal with the challenges and the changes that are confronting us.

We are constantly assailed with mountains of news and information, and yet 40 per cent of Canadians cannot read a daily newspaper. We worry about our farmers having too much product and not enough markets, while untold millions of people are facing starvation in places like Iraq, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Sudan. We worry about the quality of the education that our children are receiving, while the job market is changing so fast that some of the professions they are training for will have disappeared by the time they are out of school.

There is an old adage that the only constant in the world is change. It sounds trite, but its truth is all around for us to see. And it is also true that those who know how to deal with and adapt to change will ride the crest of the wave of history, and those who do not will be swept along by the tide against their wills. We have no choice but to adapt to change, but we do have a choice about whether we make it work for us.

What this means is that change should not be feared, it should be welcomed. If we can make it work for us instead of against us, we can make Canada a more prosperous, more progressive, and more unified country. It is not so much the changes that we make, but the way that we make them, that give us the opportunities to move ahead.

You will remember that one of the themes of the last federal election campaign was about managing change. Candidates of both the Progressive Conservative and the Liberal parties used the phrase. It was a favourite of the pollsters for quite a while. Personally, it always made me think of a child putting his or her quarters and dimes into a piggy bank. However ridiculous the phrase, there is an important concept behind it. People are quite rightly afraid of change, or at least the implications of change, but they are also realistic about the fact that it is inevitable and part of life.

They know that promises of some to stop change, or to turn the clock back to a simpler time, are just insulting to their intelligence. To quote Derek Burney, our Ambassador to the United States, "Stop the world, I want to get off", may be a comforting slogan for some, but it does not offer a very promising trip.

At the same time, we must recognize that our society has a finite capacity to accept radical change. Conservatism is a trait deeply ingrained in Canadians. We are suspicious about bold new policies that promise to solve all of our problems overnight. We are especially suspicious of bold new policies offered up by governments, and rightly so. We remember the National Energy Program and Allan MacEachen's 1982 budget. We know

that they are still paying for those mistakes, in lost economic opportunities and higher debt servicing costs.

The signs of too much change, too fast, can be disturbing. We see it in the rise in unemployment and plant closings, and in lost international markets for our products. We also see it in growing racial intolerance in our cities, and in the rising violence against women and children. It is reflected in questions about our immigration policies, about the size and effect of the national debt, about the ability of the Canadian confederation to cope with the aspirations of Quebec and the west.

Therefore, we must recognize the finite capacity of the Canadian economy and society to adapt to change. It is the duty of the government and of this House to propose and consider the means to increase our capacity to adapt to change. In this way we can ensure that change becomes an accepted part of life, not something to be feared.

This means that all Canadians should become more aware of the challenges that we are all facing together, and more aware of our collective strengths and skills. This means that we must be more tolerant of each other, less afraid of each other, less violent toward each other. A change in peoples' attitudes toward other languages, other cultures and other races will not happen overnight, but there are important steps that can be taken soon, that will contribute to changed attitudes.

We can take steps toward making the workforce more skilled and flexible and therefore more secure and prosperous. We can take steps toward developing a literate and numerate population more receptive to new ideas. We can take steps toward making sure that our children are healthy, well nourished and well cared for and therefore ready to embrace the challenges that the next century holds in store for them.

Canadians want to make sure that they can individually and collectively adjust to the changes that they are facing. They want to be able to adjust, they want to be able to take advantage of new opportunities. In other words, they may be conservative, but they are also progressive.

What is even more important than the decisions we make as a government and as a Parliament is how we make them. People will no longer accept decisions made behind closed doors. They want to be part of the decision-making process. The process must be open, consultative and co-operative; it must rise above petty partisanship or narrow self-interest.

It must also be realistic and workable. It cannot be possible for the entire process to be derailed by a single individual or group with their own agenda. It is far easier to say no and to ignore the consequences than it is to participate in the process that finds the way to say yes.

The challenge we face is to find a way to get more people involved in the process, to make more people involved in the quest to find a solution acceptable to as broad a spectrum as possible, to make our democratic system work better.

Therefore, I see the challenge that we face in this session of Parliament as threefold. First, we must recognize the real limits of the capacity of Canada and Canadians to deal with change. Second, we must pursue policies that will work to expand these limits. Third, we must pursue these policies in a more open and more democratic way.

What does this mean in practical terms? Let me talk about one of the most pressing and tragic issues facing Canada today, one that concerns me greatly.

At least one in every ten women in Canada is battered by her male partner. A million women in Canada are battered weekly. Half of all women murdered each year die at the hands of their partners. The prevalence of such violence in Canada is nothing less than shocking. Some say that this violence is increasing as the advances made by women in society triggers a backlash, while others claim that the abuse women suffer at the hands of men is simply part of the uneven distribution of power in society.

The challenge for everyone involved in the issue is to find a way of preventing the violence from occurring in the first place, by changing deep-seated attitudes. We in this House can change laws in a matter of months but attitudes, values and behaviour can take far longer to change.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret, I have to interrupt the hon. member. She will have 10 minutes remaining in her speech, plus 10 minutes questions and comments.

Before I get into the late show, the Chair would like to remind hon. members that pursuant to Standing Order 38 as amended, which came into effect at the beginning of the session, the time available for each matter raised during in the adjournment proceeding is now six minutes. The member raising the matter may speak for up to four minutes and the time available for reply is two minutes.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, in Canada, the trucking industry employs approximately 500,000 Canadians. It generates about 12 billion dollars annually, and is an important industry in our country.

Last Friday, I was very disappointed to learn that Glengarry Transport, better known as GTL in our region, went bankrupt. About 1,794 employees were left without a job. No more jobs in an industry and in a community that certainly needed good jobs like the ones GTL provided.

Mr. Speaker, the jobs at GTL were certainly good jobs for my constituents, but they were more than that. In my town, when we saw the name "Glengarry" or "GTL" painted in yellow on the trucks, all the residents of Glengarry were rightfully proud. GTL was founded in 1948 by Mr. Lefebvre and today, or at least until last Friday, the company was still operated by his sons. Until 1988, the company had never lost any money. Forty consecutive years of profit. All of a sudden, in 1988, there was deregulation and since then, losses.

[*English*]

It is more than a coincidence, 40 years of regulations, 40 years of profits; three years of deregulation, three years of huge losses at GTL.

[*Translation*]

If members opposite or others think this situation might be exclusive to GTL, that there might have been some mismanagement, they should look further. They should look, for example, at Kingsway Transport, a leading transport company in Canada, which is now for sale. The owners of Federal Industries want to get rid of the business because it is losing money.

If people think this situation is exclusive to these two large companies, they should go outside today and see the, independent truckers who, are also facing the same problems.

On April 29, I wrote to the new Minister of Transport asking for his help not only for GTL, but also for all the workers in the Canadian transport industry.

Last week, on Thursday I had the honor of meeting with the Minister of State (Transport) and, accompanied by Mr. Gilles Lefebvre from GTL (Transport), I made representations to him. I told him why GTL was at its very end. At that time, I had no idea the company would go bankrupt 24 hours later.

So, Mr. Speaker, today we are in the House and the government must do whatever it can to help the transport industry in general, but particularly the GTL workers who have lost their jobs. At this very minute, I have just been told that all attempts to reorganize the company have failed. So, it is sure and final now, and early today, GTL had to shut down.

[*English*]

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his notice of the question and the concern that he has so eloquently expressed on behalf of his constituents.

I think the member would like me to set the record straight. This government has been listening to the truckers. Last year the former Minister of Transport initiated dialogue with the truckers. There is not now nor has there ever been any disagreement about the fact that truckers are facing difficult times. The minister has been

most sympathetic about the difficulties the truckers are facing.

What we have had to say though is that there is no quick fix here. As the minister has said in the House and in the meetings he has held is that he is willing to work with the truckers.

The minister has shown his good faith. This morning he met for an hour and a half with the truckers who are parked on Wellington Street and who have been on Parliament Hill this week. The minister has arranged a further meeting today between the truckers and his officials. He met yesterday afternoon with the wives of the truckers. He met the day before with the coalition, and he is scheduled next week to meet with the Canadian Trucking Association.

There is another point that must be made here, which is to point out the very large provincial involvement in this issue. I am not pointing fingers, I am really stating facts. The provincial fuel tax question, particularly in Ontario, must be recognized.

Last, I want to make it clear that we have been working very hard for many weeks and months. We will continue to work hard with all the parties; the truckers, our provincial colleagues, the unions and shippers. I hope we made it clear that we are involved and will stay involved.

DISASTERS

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, this is a follow-up to my question to the Prime Minister on Tuesday concerning the Air-India disaster.

Last Friday, Inderjit Singh Reyat was convicted of manslaughter in the 1985 bombing which took place at Narita airport in Japan. That particular incident and the Air-India disaster took place 54 minutes apart.

In the Air-India disaster on June 23, 1985, 329 people were killed, 280 of whom were Canadians. There were 80 children on board. It was the biggest mass murder in Canadian history.

Over the course of the last six years I have pressed this government for a royal commission of inquiry into this particular disaster. The government has continued to come up with excuses one after another.

One of the excuses it continued to use was that there were criminal proceedings ongoing into the related Narita bombing. Those criminal proceedings are now over. A conviction has been secured.

Another excuse this government has been giving is that there were civil proceedings ongoing. The families of the victims have sued Air-India, the Government of Canada and others. Those civil proceedings are all settled and the Government of Canada contributed to the settlement which would indicate some type of responsibility on its part.

The criminal investigation into the Air-India disaster has reached a dead end. The Government of Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police know who did it, yet they do not have the evidence in order to convict the person or persons who committed this horrendous and hideous crime.

A royal commission of inquiry is absolutely essential in order to assist in the criminal investigation. It is also essential in order to determine the role that the Government of Canada played in this particular matter, the role of the security intelligence service and the role of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

There have been allegations that the Government of Canada received advance warning before the bomb went off on June 23, 1985. We know about erased tapes. We know about false affidavits. We know about CSIS bungling. We know about RCMP bungling. Yet the government refuses a royal commission of inquiry.

I suspect it is because of the embarrassment that a royal commission of inquiry will cause. I would like to remind the House in closing that when it came to the conduct of Sinclair Stevens—we all remember Sinclair Stevens, who was a former Conservative cabinet minister—the government was quick to call a royal commission of inquiry.

It cost the taxpayers of Canada $5 million in order to conduct that inquiry. The taxpayers of Canada paid Mr. Stevens' legal fees in the amount of $500,000. Now we are dealing with the biggest mass murder ever in history of Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member's time has expired.

Adjournment Debate

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his question because it is one that has been of interest to me and to my constituents as well.

• (1810)

Mr. Speaker, together with all Canadians, I share the hon. member's desire to find satisfactory answers to the terrible tragedy which occurred off the coast of Ireland in the summer of 1985.

The continuation of the police investigation into this matter is the appropriate response and one which requires our full support. I can assure the member that the downing of the Air-India flight 182 on June 23, 1985 is still under active investigation by the RCMP and all investigative leads are being vigorously pursued.

I point, for example, to plans now being made to send four RCMP investigators, an RCMP laboratory expert and a Transportation Safety Board of Canada expert to the Air-India crash site in the North Atlantic, 110 miles off Cork, Ireland.

This significant undertaking will commence in early July and will take up to one month to complete. The purpose of this endeavour is to recover certain wreckage which will further the ongoing RCMP investigation.

In the summer of 1989, an RCMP expedition successfully raised pieces from the plane's debris from the ocean floor. This summer, the RCMP team will work at the crash site from a vessel fitted with a remote operated vehicle capable of working in 5,000 metres of water. The wreckage of the downed Air-India aircraft is located at a depth of about 2,000 metres.

Any items of wreckage recovered will be shipped back to Canada for detailed forensic examination and analysis. The recovery operation planned for this summer is but one step in a continuing RCMP investigation.

In my view, it is essential that the RCMP continue in an unimpeded fashion its exploration of all possible avenues of this most important investigation.

HOUSING

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, when my great grandparents came to Canada in 1884, they built their own home in Toronto on Broadview Avenue, across from Riverdale Park. They were homeowners. My grandparents after them were homeowners. My parents were homeowners and when I was growing up, like you, Mr. Speaker, I just assumed that one day I too would be a homeowner.

Today, fortunately, my wife and I are homeowners. Home ownership is the cornerstone of this country. It is the dream of most Canadians. Fortunately, in Canada, we have one of the highest rates of home ownership in the world; some 62 per cent of Canadian households are home owners.

But today, young Canadians are asking themselves if they will ever having the opportunity to be homeowners. The Prime Minister alluded to that yesterday when he said that our children may be the first generation of Canadians to be worse off than their parents.

That is why we have to break down some of the barriers to home ownership. What are those barriers? We have barriers like high housing prices; we have zoning that discourages the construction of affordable housing; we have high interest rates for mortgages; we have a lack of confidence in our future employment, and we have high down payments.

A lot of those things we cannot do anything about, but we can do something about the high down payments, because presently, if you have a down payment of 25 per cent or more there is no problem. You can get a mortgage, no problem at all. If you have a down payment somewhere between 10 per cent and 25 per cent, then the mortgage lender requires mortgage insurance and that is the only way that you could get a mortgage. If you have a down payment of less than 10 per cent, no way, you cannot get mortgage insurance, you cannot get a mortgage at all.

The government housing agency, CMHC, has estimated however that if we dropped homeowner downpayments to 5 per cent, with a 95 per cent mortgage insurance, we could ensure that up to 200,000 additional households across this country could become home owners.

Why do we not do that? When interest rates were going up, I was told that would to stimulate demand and send the wrong message. But now, as you know, interest rates are going down. In fact, in addition to that we have double digit unemployment, 15.5 per cent more unemployment in the construction trades than we had a year ago, prices are down, and surely now it is an ideal time to

lower down payments and allow more people to be home owners.

The Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister have often asked the opposition for its ideas as to how to create jobs, but at the same time not increase the deficit and the national debt. Well, this will do it.

At the same time as increasing home ownership and increasing employment, however, it is also going to help young Canadians to realize their dream of home ownership.

My Progressive Conservative Party wants to encourage home ownership. What does your Progressive Conservative Party want to do, Mr. Minister?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank, on behalf of the Minister for Housing, my colleague Alan Redway for his suggestion about creating jobs in construction by lowering the down payment on a home to 5 per cent.

[*English*]

Canada is a nation of homeowners. In fact, Canadians enjoy one of the highest rates of home ownership in the world, about 62 per cent over all.

[*Translation*]

The best way to create jobs and help people become homeowners is to build a strong economy. To that end, we need low interest rates and moderate inflation. If we achieve that, business and consumers will regain confidence in the economy.

That is the approach this government has chosen. Interest rates have gone down five points in the last eleven months, and inflation is stable.

[*English*]

Business confidence is rising. There is good news for the residential construction industry and future home buyers. Yesterday, the Canadian Real Estate Association reported sales of existing housing across the country soared over 66 per cent since this time last year.

In my riding of Manicouagan, several millions of dollars in loans were insured by CMHC in 1990.

The opportunity to own a home is an important value in Canada. Home ownership encourages stable communities and helps individuals and families build equity for the future.

[*Translation*]

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation is presently considering various ways to help Canadians buy their own homes. One way would be a mortgage insurance for people who can only afford a down payment of 5 per cent. This insurance would be guaranteed by the government.

[*English*]

CMHC studies estimate that by reducing down payments to 5 per cent, it would allow up to 200,000 Canadian renters a reasonable opportunity for home ownership. Of these, there could some 10,000 potential first-time homeowners in the first year.

[*Translation*]

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we want to help home buyers, and this is my answer to the hon. member.

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, I asked a question of the Minister of Immigration and it bears repeating. It concerns the Al-Mashat case. I asked very simply:

> Why did this former mouthpiece for Saddam Hussein get preferential treatment at the expense of ordinary people waiting patiently? Why was he allowed to jump the queue?

The minister did not answer.

Canadians know that there are rules and that for every rule, there is an exception. Canadians also know that ministers are the custodians of the public trust and they are expected to implement and respect the rules and to explain and justify the exceptions.

Let us look at this case. On Wednesday, February 27, External Affairs is advised that Mr. Al-Mashat wishes to defect. The next day, Thursday, the defector committee meets and rejects his application as a defector. The next day, Friday, the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service conducts its first inquiries. Canadians are asked to believe that the defector committee did not think it important enough to advise the minister that Al-Mashat had been rejected.

Canadians are asked to believe that CSIS found the former ambassador not to be a valuable source of intelligence. Canadians are asked to believe that no one at CSIS thought it important enough to advise the minister.

On Tuesday, March 5, the Al-Mashats are interviewed. Who interviewed them? Who suggested to them that they apply as retirees, a class that the minister of immigration had announced was being phased out and which, in fact, will disappear June 30.

Canadians are asked to believe that officials in Vienna did not think this man important enough to advise our ambassador in Vienna.

On Thursday, March 7, the Al-Mashats had their second interview and are given provisional acceptance, two days after their first interview.

On March 8, a memorandum is sent to the Secretary of State for External Affairs explaining the situation. Canadians are asked to believe that the memo was not brought to the external affairs minister's attention. On March 11, senior immigration officials are so concerned that they call external affairs and Mr. Paul Tellier, Clerk of the Privy Council, to insist that the application not be fast-tracked. Canadians are asked to believe that these senior officials did not, despite their concern, alert their own minister.

March 28, landed immigrant status is granted to the Al-Mashats, 28 days from start to finish, including interviews, medical clearances and CSIS security checks for a man that CSIS found not to be a valued source of intelligence. That process for ordinary people takes, at best, 12 to 18 months and, more usually, two to three years. But for him, 28 days and no minister knows about it.

I ask again: Why was this man given preferential treatment? Canadians have the right to know.

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, in response to this question, the reason why Dr. Al-Mashat's immigration application was processed quickly has already been addressed in a report by the Deputy Ministers of Employment and Immigration and External Affairs. This report, which was made public on May 14, 1991, is based on the findings of an extensive inquiry into the circumstances under which Dr. Al-Mashat was granted admission to Canada.

This afternoon, the Secretary of State for External Affairs confirmed on several occasions the willingness of ministers to appear before a parliamentary committee together with officials concerned to respond to questions on this matter. The Minister of Employment and Immigration has stated in the House that there is no need to table any document related to Dr. Al-Mashat's admission to Canada. The report by the Deputy Ministers of Employment and Immigration and External Affairs released on May 14, 1991, clearly outline the circumstances of Dr. Al-Mashat's case.

This government has acted openly and responsibly on this issue, and will continue to do so.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.22 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 17, 1991

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

MAIN ESTIMATES

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEES

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, there have been discussions and I believe you will find consent for the following motion.

I move:

That the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1992, laid upon the table on May 14, 1991, be referred to the several standing committees of the House as follows:

The list is lengthy. If it is agreeable to the House, Madam Speaker, I would ask that the list be printed in *Hansard* as if it had been read.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Editor's Note: List referred to above is as follows:*]

To the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs.

Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, L20 and L25.

To the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

Agriculture, Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45.

To the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture.

Communications, Votes, 1, 5, 10, 15, L20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90 and 95.

Secretary of State Votes 1, 5, 30 and 35.

To the Standing Committee on Multiculturalism and Citizenship.

Secretary of State Votes 15 and 20.

To the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations.

Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40.

Finance, Vote 35.

Governor General, Vote 1.

Industry, Science and Technology, Votes 100 and 105.

Parliament, Vote 1.

Privy Council, Votes 1, 5 and 35.

Public Works, Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35.

Secretary of State, Votes 10 and 25.

Supply and Services, Votes 1, 5 and 10.

Treasury Board, Votes 1, 3, 5, 10, 15 and 20.

To the Standing Committee on House Management.

Privy Council, Vote 15.

To the Standing Committee on Energy, Mines and Resources.

Energy, Mines and Resources, Votes 1, 5, 10, L15, L20, 25, 30, 35 and 40.

To the Standing Committee on Environment.

Environment, Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30.

To the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade.

External Affairs, Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, L40, L45, 50, 55, 60 and 65.

To the Standing Committee on Finance.

Finance Votes 1, L5, L10, 15, 25 and 30.

National Revenue, Votes 1, 5, 10 and 15.

Privy Council, Vote 25.

To the Standing Committee on Forestry and Fisheries.

Fisheries and Oceans, Votes 1, 5 and 10.

Forestry, Votes 1, 5 and 10.

To the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons.

Justice, Vote 10.

To the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General.

Justice, Votes 1, 5, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45.

Privy Council, Vote 40.

Solicitor General, Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40.

To the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration.

Employment and Immigration, Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 35.

Labour, Votes 1, 5, 10 and 15.

To the Standing Committee on House Management.

Parliament, Votes 10 and 15.

To the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs.

National Defence, Votes 1, 5, 10, 15 and 20.

Veterans Affairs, Votes 1, 5, 10, 15 and 20.

To the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors and the Status of Women.

Employment and Immigration, Votes 30 and 40.

National Health and Welfare, Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35.

To the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Finance, Vote 20.

To the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, Regional and Northern Development.

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Votes 1, 5, L10 and 15.

Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Votes 30, 35, 40 and 45.

Industry, Science and Technology, Votes 1, 5, L10, L15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, L60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90 and 95.

Western Economic Diversification, Votes 1 and 5.

To the Standing Committee on Transport.

Privy Council, Votes 10 and 30.

Transport, Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55 and 60.

To the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

Privy Council, Vote 20.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The motion is adopted.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

HEALTH AND WELFARE, SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SENIORS AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN

REINSTATEMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, the second motion deals with the health and welfare committee and is as follows:

That the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors and the Status of Women as it existed on the last day of the Second Session of the present Parliament be reinstated for the sole purpose of completing its report on the health care system in Canada and its funding, such reconstituted committee being a separate and distinct entity from the standing committee of the same name as listed in Standing Order 104.

For the purpose of this order, the Standing Orders relating to the committee in effect at the end of the Second Session of the present Parliament continue to apply.

That the evidence adduced by the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors and the Status of Women in the Second Session of the present Parliament, be deemed to have been referred to the committee.

That all motions and orders adopted by the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors and the Status of Women in the Second Session of the present Parliament, necessary for the completion of its report be deemed to have been adopted by the committee in the present session.

That this committee hereby appointed table its report to the House no later than June 1, 1991, and that upon tabling of the report, the committee shall cease to exist.

Ms. Langan: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I have written to the chair of the health and welfare committee that, in doing its study on health care in Canada and its funding, it give serious consideration to how medical devices in Canada and research on medicine is done by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. I would hope the committee would take that into consideration in its deliberations.

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, I hear the representation of the hon. member. However, I would suspect it would probably be better dealt with in the new health committee that will be formed as soon as the Whips have completed their work and are able to report their striking committee report to the House.

Ms. Langan: I thank the hon. member for his comments and I do believe that would be a good topic for the new committee when it is struck. But if the new committee is looking at health care in Canada and its funding, I think it is very important that this question be looked at by the committee as part of the whole question. I would ask them to at least consider it.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I do not understand if the hon. member is withholding consent for the motion to be approved at this time.

The motion has been heard and has been adopted.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVILEGE AND ELECTIONS

REINSTATEMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I am sorry, I have a couple more to go.

I move:

That the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections as it existed on the last day of the Second Session of the present Parliament be reinstated for the sole purpose of completing its report on the question raised by the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River regarding the release of certain documents by the Solicitor General of Canada.

That the evidence adduced by the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections in the Second Session of the present Parliament be deemed to have been referred to the committee.

That all motions and orders adopted by the said Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections in the said Second Session necessary for completion of its report be deemed to have been adopted by the committee in the present session, and that upon presentation of its report to the House, the committee cease to exist.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the motion. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

• (1010)

SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE PROCESS FOR AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA

RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I believe this is the last one:

That a message be sent to the Senate to acquaint Their Honours with the fact that the House of Commons does unite with the Senate in the reconstitution of the Special Joint Committee on the Process for amending the Constitution of Canada that existed in the Second Session of the present Parliament with all the same powers and conditions contained in the Order of Reference dated December 17, 1990.

That the membership of the House of Commons on the committee be the same membership as on the last day of the Second Session of the present Parliament.

That the evidence adduced by the Special Joint Committee on the Process for amending the Constitution of Canada in the Second Session of the present Parliament be deemed to have been referred to a Special Committee hereby appointed;

That the portion of the budget of the Special Committee on the Process for amending the Constitution of Canada not expended during the Second Session of the present Parliament be deemed to constitute the entire budget of the Special Committee hereby appointed, unless a supplementary budget is approved by the Board of Internal Economy;

That all contracts entered into by the Special Joint Committee on the Process for amending the Constitution of Canada during the Second Session of the present Parliament be deemed contracts for the Special Committee hereby appointed and be deemed to be in force, unless the Special Committee hereby appointed orders otherwise;

That all motions and orders adopted by the Special Joint Committee on the Process for amending the Constitution of Canada during the Second Session of the present Parliament be deemed to have been adopted by the Special Committee hereby appointed, unless it otherwise orders.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West) moved:

That this House condemns the government for undermining the Canadian trucking industry through an irresponsible approach to deregulation, taxation, and Canada—U.S. trade, and;

That this House calls upon the government to introduce immediate measures to permit Canadian truckers to compete on a level playing field with their American counterparts.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am pleased on behalf of my Liberal colleagues in the House of Commons today to make the subject of our opposition day motion the crisis facing the Canadian trucking industry, an industry that in terms of federal responsibility was placed on a very slippery slope in 1988 when the government, the national Conservative government, deregulated the trucking industry. Since then Canadian trucking firms have had to protest without any success, have had to urge blockades to try to get the attention of the government and, this week, those truckers have brought their concerns to Ottawa and have parked themselves in front of the Eternal Flame on Parliament Hill.

On Monday our Liberal caucus met those truckers and met the spouses and the children of those truckers to try to give them at least a forum for venting their frustrations that have come to the fore. We, through the parliamentary opportunities granted to us in Question Period, have tried to raise those concerns. We have also petitioned the Speaker for an emergency debate which was regrettably turned down.

Therefore we have gone the extra distance of dedicating this day for the concerns facing the national trucking industry in Canada.

Our concern did not start this week. Our concern has certainly been voiced in terms of the deregulated mode that the government is introducing in the transport sector, not only in trucking but elsewhere. Not only have members of Parliament met Canadian truckers in Ottawa, but members of the Liberal caucus have met with those trucking companies and representatives in major cities in Ontario and elsewhere. Members of Parliament from Windsor West, Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Essex—Kent, Haldimand—Norfolk, the riding of Kent, Lambton—Middlesex, Willowdale, and Prince Edward—Hastings, just to name a few, and others have confronted the concerns of those Canadians.

Deregulation, 1988. To try to make the Canadian industry more competitive, to try to inject competition and efficiency, the government opened the doors of deregulation, and thereby allowed market forces to clearly dominate. Before deregulation, an American trucking firm had to prove that there was indeed a market requirement for that firm to do the hauling, given the fact that Canadian firms were not doing it. It could be appealed by Canadian interests so that if the market between Buffalo and Toronto was saturated, then for all intents and purposes that American firm would not be permitted in that saturated market.

Under deregulation, that market and those doors have been fully opened, and that has meant that American firms have had the license to freely come into our market and compete head to head. It has meant that in 1986, before deregulation, in the province of Ontario there were 500 trucking carriers trying to deal with a $2 billion freight business.

After deregulation there are 3,000 truckers after the same pie, and therefore the survival of the fittest has become the rules of the game. Since deregulation there have been almost a thousand companies—600 last year alone—that have gone belly up and have gone under and are not returning.

This is not a small industry. It is an industry which employs directly over 600,000 Canadians, with indirect spin-offs. I would suggest to the minister, with regard to the seven famous studies, that the time for study ought to have been before the flood gates were opened, before the deregulated barn door was thrown open, to ascertain what the down sides and the up sides would be under deregulation. The deregulatory doors were opened and then the consequences were studied.

The government deregulated, allowing American companies to come in freely, and it did so knowing full well the realities of the trucking market: Canadian truckers would be forced to operate at a 15 to 20 per cent cost disadvantage; American truckers could write off their trucks in four years, while in Canada that same write-off takes 13 years. American truckers can write off their licences, Canadian truckers cannot. Fuel prices are comparatively 20 cents per litre more in Canada than in the United States. Buying a new truck in the United States costs, on average, $70,000; in Canada $90,000. In addition, we have a high dollar and a high interest rate policy which further aggravate an already bad situation.

With the geographic nature of our country, it is very clear that the American trucking fraternity can penetrate most of our market very quickly and very easily through the cross borders. We simply cannot reciprocate because we would not be able to compete in the heartland of America and hit its far-flung markets. Our populations are sparse whereas those in the United States are certainly concentrated in greater numbers.

When we talk about buying tires, equipment and insurance, the Americans pay less. For example, to refit a set of tires on an average rig in the United States costs $2,500; in Canada, the same set of tires is $5,000. In Canada a tune-up for an average rig is double that of an American tune-up.

We have deregulation, then we have deregulation on a basis that the Canadian government knew exactly that the Canadian trucking company, unless it has an equalizer, unless it has an adjustment mechanism, would not be able to compete fairly and successfully head to head. Is it any wonder that those truckers, angered and frustrated with the economic realities of the marketplace, have parked their vans and trucks in front of Parliament Hill?

• (1020)

All that reflects the human face of the economic misery which is facing Canadian truckers. It is organized frustration of not only truckers but of other workers who have had enough of this government's policies. These policies are irresponsible and they are insensitive to the needs of Canadians. Canadian interests ought to be priority number one, not priority number two.

None of the Canadian trucking firms last year made sizeable profits. GTL, the fourth largest firm, whose head office is virtually next door in my colleague's riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, went under just last week.

In our meetings, we heard not only testimony from the drivers, but from their wives and children. They are hurting as well because spouses are being forced to take on two jobs to make ends meet at the end of the month because there is no money coming in. There are no jobs. There is no profit. There is no pride any more if the Canadian trucking industry is allowed to continue its slide down the slippery slope of deregulation.

Many wives told us in very emotional ways about the food rationing in their own families. They told us that many truckers do not have sick pay or holiday pay. When they take a day, it comes out of their wages. We met Dave Wallis, who before deregulation had seven rigs operating at profits.

Today, Dave Wallis has one truck left and he is on the verge of losing that last truck. Dave Wallis must pay $60 an hour to a mechanic to fix his rig but he can only get $30 an hour to haul the materials. How does a Dave Wallis survive? How long can Dave Wallis tread water?

The Dave Wallis is symptomatic. We need to talk about the Dave Wallis' of this country. Rather than hiding behind studies or generic terms, we need to discuss the impact on the average Canadian trucker. What is the impact on the average Canadian family in that business and in others?

It is not only a problem in the trucking industry. Talk about Open Skies. The government wants to deregulate the skies. Is it going to do to our air carriers what it has done to our truck carriers?

Why does the government not ask the Americans to take down the protectionist walls in shipping? The Americans refuse to compete in shipping. They know that our Canadian shipping industry can compete very well, thank you very much. Oh no. The Americans do not want to ruin their industry.

They put up a wall there, but they tell this Canadian government to bring down the walls on trucking and in your skies so we can compete and do a job on you.

I also want to mention that the infrastructure of VIA Rail has been gutted. It is not only an isolated case of the trucking fraternity. It is a mindset that has been applied to the trucking industry and to the rail industry. It is being applied, perhaps, in the few short months now that the government is negotiating Open Skies, to our air carriers.

I think that the transport industry in this country is not only important economically, but it has been a sense of pride and a sense of unity in terms of the development of this country.

While no one should be an ideologue or dogmatic, we should also protect, preserve and try to promote our own transport industries rather than giving them away.

I would suggest to the hon. minister—I appreciate and thank him—who listened to our appeals to at least meet with the visiting delegation. He has done so and he has met for the last day or day and a half with these owner-operator truckers, which he had not done before. I appreciate the fact that he has given his hours to try to mediate.

The time for throwing out the word "study" is over. There are seven studies under way that may not report until the end of the summer. Canadian truckers need a greater sense of hope because his predecessor, in Windsor last year when the truckers did the same blockade, basically raised the expectations of the trucking community. The predecessor to this minister said: "Do not worry. I will talk to the Minister of Finance. I will put in place reforms that will try to equalize the level playing field between the United States and Canada".

What has happened is precious little. Therefore, the expectations are high. The stakes are high. Those stakes have been raised by the government. Therefore, I urge the minister to be very cognizant of what his predecessors have put in motion.

His predecessor even said in a letter that he would not be prepared to wait until the final seven studies are in before taking action. I think that this minister ought not to simply study the issue to death while jobs are dying, families are struggling and hope is dwindling.

I am going to suggest to the minister nine options that our caucus and our party are prepared to put on the floor of the House of Commons today for debate. Nine options that, either in whole or in part, I believe and my caucus and my leader believes can, in fact, be the immediate remedy to some of the challenges facing truckers.

Option number one is a quicker write-off provision under Revenue Canada. I have mentioned that the United States truckers can write a percentage of their truck off in four years, whereas, the Canadian trucker by comparison takes 13 years. I would suggest that Revenue Canada permit the Canadian truckers to write off their rigs between four to seven years, therefore, cutting the depreciation time in half and bringing it up to speed with the American truckers. A truck costs a lot of money and, therefore, a quicker write-off period would put more dollars in the pockets of Canadian truckers. It would add to the cash flow and would allow the trucker some latitude and some flexibility to meet the hard times. The hard times are here now and, therefore, there is a greater sense of urgency for cash flow during a recessionary time. That assistance is needed now.

Option two is to take a look at the federal excise tax and offer some relief in terms of diesel fuel. The taxes are both provincial and federal. I will come to the provincial one. The federal tax is roughly four cents per litre. However, the federal government ought to recognize that where the inequities really begin is in the base price. Diesel fuel in the United States, before tax, is 18.6 cents a litre. In Canada it is 37.9 cents. After tax in the United States it is 27 cents per litre and in Canada, after tax, 59 cents.

What I am suggesting is that, in terms of the federal tax, the government can have three options. It can provide a temporary relief on payment of the federal excise tax until the industry is back on its fee. It can perhaps drop the excise tax by a cent or by a margin it feels would provide some leadership to the provincial transport ministers in the provinces to do likewise. This would show good faith and at the same time, of course, relieve the truckers from that.

• (1030)

Third, the government can also provide the truckers, as we do the farming community, with a subsidy on diesel fuel. Those are three possible options the government could implement to deal adequately and efficiently with the federal tax on diesel fuel.

Option number four relates to the GST. We believe the government should scrap the GST, period. However, it seems the government is going to persist with the GST. Therefore, we are suggesting, that the government drastically shorten the rebate period for Canadian truckers. Currently, truckers pay GST on fuel and then receive a rebate. It takes about six months. That period is far too long. Canadian truckers give money to the government, almost as a loan, and have to wait six months for their rebate. In that six month period, compared to their American competition, the American driver is ahead.

The period for the rebate should be considerably shorter than six months. On average, to fill up the tank of a diesel truck costs $250 more in Canada than it does in the United States. Every fill-up costs the Canadian trucker $250 more. If truckers received their rebate in a shorter period of time that money would assist greatly in their cash-flow.

The other option related to the GST is that the government should provide the truckers with a longer period of time to pay the GST on the goods they ship and collect from the shipper. The problem is that this government requires the Canadian trucker to submit the GST collected from the shipper within 45 days but the shipper does not pay the trucking company for 50, 60 or 90 days. This means that truckers have to pay the GST on the goods shipped and their invoices do not get paid for 90 days. We have again money going out of the pockets of Canadian truckers.

We are suggesting as option number four that the government try to equalize the lag so that the Canadian trucker is not out of pocket. As soon as those invoices are paid then the GST would be remitted. This gives a

financial break, in terms of cash-flow, to Canadian truckers.

Option number five. We are suggesting that the government seriously consider allowing Canadian truckers to deduct their licence fees, their licence expenses. American truckers can deduct the licence fees from their taxes. Revenue Canada does not extend the same luxury to Canadian truckers. A licence fee, on average in Canada, costs $2,000. We are suggesting, therefore, to allow Canadian truckers, like the American trucking fraternity, to deduct those licence fees from their taxes.

Madam Speaker, you mentioned that I have a minute left. I seek the co-operation of the House to allow me to finish presenting my nine points so the government can respond.

Option number six. I would suggest that the federal Minister of Transport urgently convene a ministers' meeting of his provincial counterparts because, while there are two levels of government involved with trucking, there is one trucking constituency. That trucking constituency needs a coherent, co-ordinated and harmonized approach to deal with their problems. The federal government blames the NDP government of Ontario, and the NDP government, Premier Rae, blames the federal Conservative government. They are blaming each other and it is a great Ping-Pong game, but those truckers are still outside and still hurting.

We need an urgent meeting to co-ordinate our efforts and begin to deal with the problems head on.

Option number seven is to pursue a federal-provincial trade-off. What do I mean by that?

I am suggesting financial co-operation to ease the provincial tax portion, which is roughly 15 cents, a heavy burden, almost four times the federal tax. I believe that the federal government can encourage the provincial governments, of Ontario for example, to reduce the burden of their excise tax if it, for example, is flexible enough in terms of funding for infrastructure of roads.

In the United States, the national government pays roughly 20 to 25 per cent of road construction. In Canada the federal government pays 5 per cent and the majority is obviously paid by the provinces. The federal government should say: " If we consider increasing the moneys we will give to the provinces for construction of roads, will you, the provinces, give the truckers a bit of a break on the excise tax?" What the provinces lose from their fuel excise tax, they will gain in transfer payments from the federal government for construction of roads.

Perhaps Mr. Rae in Ontario would not levy 2 cents, as he did in his budget, and another 2 cents on January 1, 1992. That is exorbitant. I believe there can be a constructive give and take between the two levels of government to the advantage of the Canadian trucker.

Option number eight. Many American truckers and American trucks are now engaging in illegal cabotage. That is a fancy way of saying that instead of going from Buffalo to Toronto and back from Toronto to Buffalo, those truckers are going from Buffalo to Toronto, sneaking into Hamilton, perhaps London, and then back into Buffalo. Canadian truckers cannot compete as it is. We are going to be thrown off the road if American truckers continue to engage in illegal cabotage because we cannot compete with them.

Option number eight contains two subsections. First, a greater enforcement mechanism at our border crossings to ensure that our enforcements may in fact be enforced and American truckers know clearly that we will come down hard and very quickly. I would suggest that the penalty, when an American trucker is found doing illegal cabotage, be increased immediately from a $2,000 fine to a $5,000 fine. This represents a doubling and gives it a bit more teeth. If an American trucker wants to take a chance, he will pay stiffer penalties if he is caught. Hopefully, he will be caught at the border crossings because of stricter enforcement. We have jurisdiction at the border crossings.

Option number nine is a temporary moratorium on new interprovincial licences to try to stand back until this industry has caught its breath. Ontario has done that for its new licences. It does not solve the problem of the existing licences, but it certainly does not aggravate it to the nth degree. In interprovincial trucking the federal government has jurisdiction, so it can impose that moratorium if it wants.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate your flexibility and the flexibility of my colleagues on the other side. I have tried to be constructive. I have tried to give some facts on what deregulation has done, how uncompetitive we are head to head and third, to offer nine options which I believe, if enacted in whole or in part or in combination, will allow those truckers outside to enjoy this holiday weekend just

a little more than they will if this government turns a deaf ear to their concern.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State and to Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, I would also like to respond to what was said by the hon. member opposite. To hear him talk, he and his party have all the answers.

What often bothers me about the hon. member is that every time something happens on this side of the House in Ottawa, it is always because he recommended it. I have been watching the minister for the last few days, and I saw he managed to meet them and their families as well. I also met the truckers.

Madam Speaker, I used to work in the industry, and truckers really have problems. Those people outside really need help. I know them. I worked for them and with them, and I had the privilege of having them as customers. They are really in trouble.

My colleagues do not seem to realize what the situation is, and they seem to be proving it this morning. Fifteen years ago, we repaired trucks for these people. Believe it or not, some garages wouldn't do jobs for truckers because they couldn't pay the repair bills. That is a sad commentary, and these people certainly did not have an easy life.

I hardly think these people are here today because the situation has improved. In fact, they are getting the short end of the stick. There have been taxes, taxes and more taxes. They were taxed on diesel fuel, they were taxed on gas—they were taxed on just about everything.

• (1040)

There is another problem the hon. member forgot to mention. About five years ago, a company in my riding, owned by a good friend of mine, couldn't get insurance. He was paying $30,000 for a fleet of 20 trucks, and he was going to be charged $135,000 for going to the United States. He went to the United States because his company had business there.

And now with free trade, I thought he would keep going to the United States. But nothing has changed. So it isn't because of the GST. Fifteen years ago there was no GST. It isn't because of the GST, because five years ago the GST didn't exist. There was a tax on gas, but not as high as it is now. Unfortunately, provincial taxes don't only hurt truckers—and I said so when Quebec brought down its latest provincial budget—they also tend to aggravate other problems, because truckers transport goods— consumer goods. It isn't the GST. Here in Quebec, it's the GST plus the QST, plus this and that. But people tend to forget that.

Earlier, the hon. member said there are solutions. There is no miracle solution! Even if we remove the GST tomorrow morning, the truckers might get from Wellington to the next street over, but the problem would still be there. There is no miracle solution. The minister made this quite clear. What we need is a package of solutions.

The Liberal Party's solution is quite simple: forward, reverse, forward and reverse. You don't do that when you drive a truck. You have eighteen forward gears and one reverse. Madam Speaker, I used to work for a company that had 3,500 trucks to repair. But the problem was always the same. I used to say—do I have a few minutes left, Madam Speaker?

Madam Deputy Speaker: We had a ten-minute question and comment period following the speech from the hon. member for York West. But I notice that others yet would like to make comments and ask questions. Therefore, I would ask the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to conclude, if he may, to allow the hon. member to answer and give someone else a chance to ask questions.

The hon. member can of course be recongnized later if he wants to speak again.

Mr. Della Noce: All right, Madam Speaker. I wish I had had as much time as he did, because I would have a lot to say, but I will try again later.

In closing, if my hon. colleague intends to blame the government for everything, there is nothing easier to do for the opposition, but I would like to quote just a few lines from the May 17, 1991, *Globe and Mail* where it said:

[*English*]

The trucking association had urged the treasurer not to increase fuel taxes. Indeed, the truckers said if they did not receive a fuel tax cut, the industry would be

increasingly vulnerable to competition from U.S. truckers.

[*Translation*]

That is in Ontario. Perhaps my hon. colleague has a closer insight in this, since he is from Ontario. I am not saying things are better in Quebec. We have the same problem. In fact, the price is even higher. I am against provincial taxes as well, not just the 4 cent federal tax. We tried to set an example was set but, unfortunately, the provincial Finance ministers—

I want to tell my hon. colleague in closing that, if there ever was a reasonable Finance minister dealing with these truckers, it was the federal minister. There has been no tax increase on fuel and gasoline in two years. I want to mention it because he neglected to say that. That is what is important, but those people failed to mention it. The provinces however imposed heavy taxes unfortunately.

[*English*]

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says that he used to have truckers as his clients and, therefore, he knows their problems. His leader, the Prime Minister, was a trucker himself and he should be as sensitive as the hon. member suggests that he is. If he boasted very proudly of having dirtied his hands hauling in Baie Comeau at one time, then why have we a government that is so insensitive?

I am very grateful to the Chair and to the members on the other side for giving me the opportunity to complete my remarks. Although I accuse this government of neglecting the facts and the realities facing our industry before deregulation, and of inaction following that, what I have tried to be is not so much negative or accusatory, but constructive and I have placed nine possible options. They are not exhaustive, they are not exclusionary of other ideas, they are nine possible actions which can be implemented to give our Canadian truckers a chance and an opportunity to compete.

As I have suggested quite clearly, the government must change the rules by which we are playing the game with Americans, otherwise we are going to lose the game and it is going to be a rout. It is not going to be even close. I have suggested nine rule changes. I look forward to the member offering more rule changes. If it is not going to change the rules, then I ask the government to let us not beat around the bush, let us change the game. Let us change the game and re-regulate it so that the Canadian truckers have a chance to finish the game, complete the game and be successful at playing the game.

There are basically two options: change the rules so that the truckers can play and compete fairly; or, please, Mr. Minister, do not send our truckers on a collision course with American truckers. I have confidence in Canadians. I have confidence in our industry. I am also a Canadian who is realistic and I have pride in not sending Canadians without an equalizer to compete with the best. Every country does it.

We ought to give the tools by which our Canadian truckers can earn their livelihood, make a profit and raise a family; something that they are being precluded from doing in great numbers.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague from York West on his interventions on a very important subject matter, namely the crisis that we have in the trucking industry at the present time.

The member has made nine succinct points in terms of what governments can do. I was interested in his remarks with regard to the mindset of the government opposite. It seems that it was aware of difficulties that would be forthcoming in the trucking and transportation industries, but notwithstanding that, it proceeded with the consummation of the free trade agreement.

My question to my colleague is: is it his view that this particular trade deal and the mindset which surrounds that deal and which has followed that particular deal is, in itself, having some negative impact on the trucking industry in Canada?

Mr. Marchi: Madam Speaker, I thank my House leader for a very pertinent question. I met with one trucker on the Sparks Street Mall yesterday. With regard to the seven studies, he said: "Mr. Marchi, why didn't they do seven studies before deregulation? Why didn't they study the impact before they threw the door open to American competition? Not open the flood-gates, not open the barn door and then say 'By the way, we are going to study the impact and see how badly Canadians are being hurt.' "

• (1050)

What my House leader is suggesting is the government clearly put the cart before the horse and it really seems insensitive to the fact the cart is being trampled.

It is the mindset of a government that is driven by market forces and laws of the jungle to allow the Americans to come in on the guise of: "We are competitive. Don't you worry, boys. Go out there and be the best."

The government told us with free trade we can do the job. We can compete. We asked for a better deal. We are not opposed to freer trade. We are opposed to a bad free trade agreement.

There has not been an equal playing field. There have been no adjustment programs. What we see in the dangerous mindset of removing FIRA, Petro-Canada, CBC and VIA Rail, is the dismantling of mechanisms and institutions which have taken a lifetime to build and win.

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, since May 1990, groups of unaffiliated truck owner-operators have been sporadically demonstrating and blockading highway checkpoints.

Truckers' concerns have been focused on taxation differentials between Canada and the U.S., notably on fuel and on the enforcement in Canada of the prohibition of cabotage—the carrying of goods between Canadian points by U.S. trucks—and on the impact of economic regulatory reforms and free trade generally in the industry.

In the summer of 1990, my predecessor established a task force to look at the concerns expressed by the truckers and created a forum for dialogue. I venture to say that this is a much more productive direction than hearing the previous speaker, my hon. colleague from York West, say that a committee of the Liberal Party has been functioning throughout this year.

Today in the House of Commons he deposits on the floor nine quick-fix solutions in an area where there is no quick-fix solution. The solutions that we must look into are medium-term and long-term solutions.

In the summer of 1990, this task force was created. It includes representatives of major trucking associations, union leaders, independent owner-operators and provincial government officials. This task force has initiated studies on taxation, trucking costs, cabotage and on other factors considered to affect the competitive position of the Canadian trucking industry.

The studies are expected to be ready for release at the end of this month.

Although some laws apply to interprovincial highway transport, provincial governments enforce the legislation and generally take the lead in this field. The situation today is that there is a task force process under way with representatives of all segments of the industry, with the governments involved, federal and provincial, to look at the concerns of the industry.

Earlier this week I met with the coalition. On Wednesday I met with spouses of the truckers and yesterday I met with a delegation from the owner-operators now gathered in Ottawa.

My officials continue at this time to meet with these representatives to address the concerns which fall within federal jurisdiction. I have listened to and heard their concerns, and I understand them. I invited these truckers to join the task force process because this process is an appropriate forum for looking at this issue.

There have been a number of statements about the impact of federal policies on the industry. I would like to clarify some salient points.

First, free trade. The free trade agreement did not include any changes to the ground rules for the trucking industry. Second, under the old federal sales tax, while truckers did not pay sales tax on their purchases of tractors or trailers, they did pay federal sales tax on most other goods purchased, including fuel. The new GST effectively eliminates any federal sales tax from trucking inputs because the truckers will be refunded all the GST they pay on their rigs, fuel, parts, servicing and on other overhead.

Mr. Boudria: When?

Mr. Corbeil: I hear shouts from the opposite side. That member should know that there is a clause in the GST regulation to the effect that if the recipients of the credits are not refunded within 21 days, if I am not mistaken, the federal government is going to pay interest on those payments.

After the implementation of the GST, total federal taxes included in fuel prices in Canada are 4 cents per litre; 2.2 cents less per litre than in the U.S.

In relation to the depreciation issue, I would like to explain that in Canada tractors and trailers are given a 30 per cent declining balance treatment. This would be roughly equivalent to allowing truckers to write off their trucks over a seven year period. In the U.S. the corresponding periods are three years for tractors and five years for trailers.

Offsetting this preferential depreciation is the fact that the U.S. also levies a 12 per cent heavy truck and trailer excise tax which Canada does not.

Provincial fuel taxes tend to be higher than U.S. state taxes and this differential has been increased as a result of some provincial budgets, such as Ontario's and Quebec's, where fuel taxes were increased by 3.4 cents a litre over the period of the year 1991.

I want to back up a little here and talk about some of the things that have happened in motor carrier transportation during the past year. I want to first elaborate on some of the initiatives that were begun, not today on the floor of the House of Commons, but last year.

At a meeting of federal and provincial transport ministers last year in St. John's, Newfoundland, it was agreed that the work necessary to find solutions to trucker problems should be divided into two parts. The first part was the examination of owner-operator issues. A working group was created under the chairmanship of Manitoba.

There were three questions posed specifically by the owner-operators: one, should owner-operators be licensed; two, should load brokers—intermediaries who are paid a commission to bring truckers and shippers together—be regulated; the third question asked that the working group be mandated to act as facilitator to bring the trucking companies and the owner-operators together to negotiate a code of ethics.

I must say that the provincial and federal officials on the working group have reported a considerable lack of co-operation on the part of the trucking companies. I find it very disappointing that the members of the Canadian Trucking Association have refused to meet with the working group and the owner-operators to discuss the code of ethics.

The code of ethics was to set guidelines for business relations between owner-operators and trucking companies. The trucking companies have expressed an unwillingness to reduce a long list of grievances that the owner-operators have with some trucking companies. Needless to say, such an attitude has not been helpful.

The second part of the work mandated by the council of transport ministers was to address Canada-U.S. tax issues and transborder trucking competitiveness. Transport Canada officials were instructed to launch a study on global transborder competitive factors. The study was divided into eight parts. The objectives of the study were to determine the nature and extent of the Canadian share of transborder markets, assess the over-all—

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister can resume after Question Period.

It being 11 o'clock, pursuant to—

[*English*]

The hon. minister was rising on a point of order.

Mr. Corbeil: Madam Speaker, may I have the same courtesy that we extended to the first speaker and be allowed to terminate my speech after Question Period.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think that the hon. minister can present this motion when he resumes his speech. I think that he should be extended that courtesy. Of course, the House will ultimately decide.

It being 11 o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Members' Statements, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

NEW BRUNSWICK RESEARCH AND PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL

Mr. J.W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Madam Speaker, yesterday in Fredericton the New Brunswick Research and Productivity Council officially opened its new laboratory complex which will be devoted primarily on behalf of small and medium sized business to applied research and technological service in the

fields of chemistry, biotechnology, microbiology, and food science.

The facility will also include a pilot plant for the development of new food products and a quarantine unit for aquaculture health studies.

All of these capabilities will be dedicated to the provision of knowledge, skill and innovation for use by manufacturing companies in New Brunswick and elsewhere in Atlantic Canada. In fact, the scientific and engineering services and competence of RPC is gaining a truly national reputation.

This expansion is part of a $20 million strategic development plan for RPC, being funded substantially through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. It is a major investment that conveys dramatic evidence of Canada's commitment to regional economic expansion in the Atlantic region and to the creation of higher productivity and increased competitiveness as key elements in our mission toward national prosperity in Canada.

* * *

ASSOCIATION OF POLISH ENGINEERS IN CANADA

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Association of Polish Engineers in Canada, which is being celebrated this weekend in Ottawa. They are a shining example of all an NGO can be and can achieve.

In 1941, with only 100 engineers and a charter drafted by our own Senator George McIlraith, then parliamentary secretary to C. D. Howe, they began the work of assisting professional newcomers to gain Canadian accreditation and technical language skills required for speaking and writing English.

By arranging for Canadian engineers to teach them, not only were the desired language skills learned, most students were hired by one of the Canadian companies that donated the teaching time.

With Sir Casimir Gzowski, an engineer and builder of our railroads and bridges, as their patron, they expanded to include chemists, physicists, and members of other related professions and now number in the thousands.

Today I ask all members of the House to join me in saluting the ingenuity, dedication and hard work which have resulted in this outstanding achievement by the Association of Polish Engineers in Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

KANESATAKE BAND COUNCIL

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Argenteuil—Papineau): Madam Speaker, people were amazed to hear on the CBC yesterday that the Kanesatake Band Council was receiving up to $150,000 a year too much for its activities, on the basis of inaccurate population figures. Such a situation is unacceptable and the Band Council's failure to declare the exact population of Kanesatake to the government authorities is a serious offence that victimizes taxpayers.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I ask that an inquiry be launched after May 31 so that those guilty can be punished by law. I call upon the clan mothers to dismiss this Council which has been guilty of committing such a fraud and ask that the government immediately appoint an interim council until the community comes up with a new form of government, that a band census policy be implemented immediately to avoid further incidents of this kind and that the royal commission of inquiry be authorized to do so under its mandate. It is important to act quickly, Madam Speaker, to restore the trust and honour of citizens of that community.

* * *

[*English*]

COAL MINING

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Madam Speaker, once again the Conservative government is trying to sap the lifeblood out of the people of Cape Breton.

While the Conservative government nurtures the development of the Westray Coal Mine in Pictou East, home to the new Tory Premier Don Cameron, the Cape Breton Development Corporation is being dismantled.

The Westray Coal Mine will be seizing 300,000 tonnes of Devco's traditional sales to the Nova Scotia Power Corporation. If the Lingan Mine in Cape Breton is closed as a result, 700 to 800 coal miners will be out of

work in a area where the unemployment rate is over twice the national average.

The Island cannot absorb any more job losses. We have hundreds and hundreds of families out of work and out of hope, and the Conservative government wants to kick us one more time. We are paying a painful price for the freedom to vote on the Island.

After winning the leadership of the Nova Scotia Conservative Party, the premier said:

> I can tell the people of Cape Breton they have nothing to fear from Don Cameron—will no longer play political games with their lives.

The games have not stopped. We have a provincial and federal Tory government that would rather line the pockets of a foreign investor than make sure that families—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member's time has expired.

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Madam Speaker, traditionally this House has been better at creating conflicts than resolving them, but Canada was created only when George Brown, a Grit, and George-Étienne Cartier and John A. Macdonald, Conservatives, put aside their partisan differences and worked together to bring about a united country.

There is a lesson in that for all sides of this House, but it is not just a lesson for politicians. It is a lesson for all Canadians. Those of us who believe in a strong, united Canada must stop saying: "They do not respect us. Let them go. It has got to be our way or else", and start saying publicly and loudly: "We do respect you. We all have a lot to lose. We are all Canadians".

Who speaks for Canada? Every Canadian must do that.

* * *

REFUGEES

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Madam Speaker, four years ago Jesus Seferino Aguilar came to Canada seeking protection as a refugee. He had left home in the war zone of El Salvador after witnessing the killing of his brother. After a long delay, he was placed in the refugee backlog with the minister's promise that all cases would be decided by December 31, 1990.

Jesus waited alone. He could not visit relatives in the United States or El Salvador nor sponsor them to Canada because he was not landed.

In 1990, a psychiatric study sponsored by the Canadian Council of Churches, showed that the mental health of the majority of refugee claimants in the backlog was growing worse with danger of suicide. The United Nations Committee on Human Rights was sympathetic, but the then minister scoffed at the warning.

Jesus had no friends in high places to plead for him. He was repeatedly treated by a psychiatrist for depression and schizophrenia. This month, more than two years after the minister's promise, four years after he came, when only a third of the backlog had received a decision, Jesus Seferino Aguilar killed himself.

Again I urge this government to stop the suffering and death it is causing—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sorry the hon. member's time has now expired.

* * *

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose): Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister for Science who, because of his vast wealth of knowledge and experience, knows the importance of encouraging students to pursue studies in the fields of science, technology, and engineering.

These fields will ensure that Canada remains globally competitive in the 21st century by retaining our position among the top 10 high-tech countries. All members of this House must continue to make a concentrated effort in every area concerning the youth of Canada and their education. Education must and will play a key role in Canada's future.

* * *

EDUCATION

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Yes, Madam Speaker, education must play a role but not with the approach that is being pursued by this government.

S. O. 31

I would draw Your Honour's attention to the throne speech in which the government states that with provincial co-operation it would like to see Canada-wide goals in education "established for the year 2000".

Reading this literally, the government appears to be suggesting that it will take nine years just to establish goals relating to education.

Say it ain't so, Mr. Prime Minister. You cannot really be suggesting that it will take nine years just to establish goals. Agreement on goals in education should be part and parcel of the constitutional agreement we hope to conclude. In other words, our constitutional arrangements should support our economic objectives.

First of all we need to agree on goals and quickly; then we need to take action to reach them.

Canadians can no longer afford ambiguity, inaction and the absence of national leadership.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member's time is up. The hon. member for La Prairie.

* * *

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. Fernand Jourdenais (La Prairie): Madam Speaker, we all know that this is Police Week.

I take the opportunity to extend my hearty congratulations to all police officers in Canada for their ongoing efforts to maintain peace and order throughout the country.

I also want to congratulate all police officers in my riding, especially eight policemen from Brossard who received the Distinguished Service Medal for Police at a special ceremony.

I personally wish to point out the tremendous and untiring dedication, as well as the courage and bravery, of Raymond Gagné, Alain Gingras, Michel Grenon, Marcel Gagliardi, Jean-Guy Leclerc, Pierre Morasse and Louis Alleva.

Madam Speaker, a special posthumous presentation was made to the son of Sergeant Gilles Veilleux, who died two years ago.

Congratulations and thanks to our police officers!

* * *

• (1110)

[*English*]

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East): Madam Speaker, last week I wrote to the Government of B.C. about the potential for flooding due to an above average snow pack. I have yet to hear a response from the Government of B.C. on what could represent a major disaster.

Earlier this week a road was washed out, outside Fernie, B.C., and the danger for wider flooding continues to exist.

A recent study has shown that schools in Coquitlam, B.C. would not have a chance of withstanding a major earthquake, and we know the potential that exists on the lower mainland of B.C.

Earlier this spring Canadians watched entire communities being washed away in Quebec.

Given the fact that the Government of B.C. has been slow to act and given the fact the federal government has allocated only $6 million for emergency preparedness for the entire country, I would like to call on the government to take action to better co-ordinate emergency preparedness with the provinces and make a real investment in emergency preparedness instead of waiting for a disaster to happen.

* * *

FAMILY VIOLENCE

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Madam Speaker, of great concern to all Canadians is a terrible toll of family violence in our nation. Because there are many causes there must be many remedies.

To help Canadians deal with the problems, the Canadian government has introduced many programs and initiatives to meet the problems. These include education programs for Canadians regarding the extent and causes of the problem. Other initiatives strengthen the legal framework to assist victims and to stop offenders. The government will increase services to aboriginal communities, provide more housing for abused women

and children, including emergency and longer term aid. They will assist in providing treatment services for offenders as well as their victims.

Much more needs to be done but the government is to be commended for the programs it has already initiated.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADA POST

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Madam Speaker, I hope the minister responsible for Canada Post will realize that postal workers in the Outaouais are going to put the pressure on. For some time there have been rumours that the offices in Gatineau, Hull and Aylmer would be vacated and mechanical sortation done at the Alta Vista branch. Madam Speaker, after talking to some of the unions. I find it hard to understand why no consultations were initiated by Canada Post to find out why these rumours were circulating.

I think the minister responsible for Canada Post ought to put an end to the uncertainly and realize that the issue of mechanical sortation at Alta Vista does nothing to resolve the specific problems of a region like the Outaouais. Ever since Confederation we have had our own postal administration. Now, all of a sudden remours are circulating and a number of steps have already been taken.

We want to ask Canada Post and the corporation's management to do what is necessary to put an end to—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member's time has now expired. The hon. member for Cambridge.

* * *

[*English*]

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): Madam Speaker, yesterday almost 3,000 people representing a wide cross-section of Ontarians protested outside Queen's Park expressing their disapproval of the recent NDP budget. They believe this NDP budget will provide for massive disincentives for both existing and new companies to invest in Ontario. They know it is a tax time-bomb that will go off in the next couple of years.

I am sure this group of fiscally responsible and concerned taxpayers was not surprised to hear that both the province of Ontario and Ontario Hydro had their credit rating revised downward. Their simple message to Bob Rae is: "Stop putting the taxpayers' money where your mouth is".

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport.

The truckers who are still out there in front of the Parliament Buildings are a symbol of the frustration of millions of Canadians who are unemployed or on the verge of bankruptcy as a result of your economic policies.

I personally met mothers with families, and so did the minister, who are going through a family crisis because of your policies. Stop hiding behind studies or other governments. Will the federal government do something today so that these families can live in dignity?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada and the Ministry of Transport did not wait until the trucks lined the streets to do something about this problem.

About a year ago, we had a meeting with all the main parties involved. They agreed there would be studies on every aspect that, in some cases, required clarification and in others presented a real problem. These studies will be used to get the facts, as opposed to perceptions or allegations.

That is being done now. Meanwhile, we have had another meeting with owners and leaseholders, who are now meeting at the office of the Ministry of Transport.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, three years ago, your government initiated its policy to deregulate transportation in the trucking industry. They have now been here for a week, and all they are getting is tickets.

[*English*]

They have been out front and they are in the rain today. They have been here for a week and all they have got from your government are tickets, 40 tickets, to show for their actions.

I want to ask the minister when he is going to stop hiding behind studies, when he is going to stop playing political football, and when he is going to start providing some real answers.

This minister from Toronto may think it is very funny. I have met with women in the gallery who were in—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member may want to speak through the Chair and please put her question at this point.

Ms. Copps: My question is to the minister. As the speaker will know, it is not a laughing matter. There are thousands of families whose lives hang in the balance, and I want to know if he is going to announce specific measures today so that those families can come in out of the rain and start having a hope for their economic survival. Will he provide answers today?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I can assure you my colleague from Ontario did not consider this a laughing matter. I think his remarks concerned my colleague, today's Acting Leader of the Liberal Party and the Opposition, and her habit of dealing with the subject by daily repeating a number of half truths or unfounded allegations.

I repeat that the studies were not ordered as a result of a unilateral decision by the federal government. The decision involved all the main parties involved, including the truckers themselves, trucking companies, the provincial government and the federal government. In fact, provincial governments can have an even greater impact than the federal government in this area, when we consider that the provincial sales tax on diesel fuel is much higher, four or five times as high, as the federal tax. This makes a tremendous difference when you add up the total cost of company operations.

I would like to ask the Liberal Party, which announced this morning that a committee had been examining the matter for several months, to tell us about the committee's conclusions. I would like to say to the hon. member for Hamilton East that it would have been far more—

[*English*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, these truckers are the tip of the iceberg in a brewing tax revolt that is sweeping this country.

Does the government not realize that the GST was the last straw for Canadians? The minister knows that every time a Canadian trucker fills his tank it costs him $250 more than an American trucker for the same tankful.

• (1120)

I want to ask the minister a specific question. He has asked us about our proposals. We have put some specific proposals on the table, and one of them includes ending the excise tax on diesel fuels. Will he do that today?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, it is really unbelievable that the member on the other side is asking the federal government to reduce its federal sales tax which is already 2.2 cents per litre lower than the corresponding tax in the U.S.

She also says we should remove GST. The implementation of GST, which was delayed for almost two years by the members of her party and her friends in the Senate, has had the definite result of reducing the cost of operations for all the truckers. As far as the gas is concerned, the GST is responsible for a reduction of 2.5 cents per gallon.

At the same time, the hon. member comes from a province where the diesel fuel tax has been increased many times and is in the process of being increased again. I think she should invite the truckers, rather than fuelling some political aspects in this debate, to address the provincial legislation as strongly as they can because the real problem is there and not in this House.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Madam Speaker, today Statistics Canada, in reporting on the inflation figures, in effect, said that the Minister of Transport does not know what he is talking about.

Statistics Canada today reported that the year over year inflation rate is up by more than 6 per cent for the fourth month in a row. The government's own statistical agency said about these figures: "They continue to reflect the higher price levels resulting from the introduction of the GST".

Will the Acting Minister of Finance admit the Department of Finance was wrong and the GST is having much more than a one-time impact on inflation? Will he take steps to reverse this GST policy which is destroying retail businesses, driving more and more Canadians to shop in the United States, and obviously doing great damage to our trucking industry?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, first of all I should make it very clear to the hon. member and to those who are watching Question Period today that on the GST and truckers, truckers used to pay 13.5 per cent sales tax when they bought a truck. Now they pay a GST of 7 per cent and claim it back. They claim back the GST on their gasoline. Their operating costs are much less, so that helps the truckers. That is what the GST does positively for the trucking industry. The hon. member should understand that.

We are encouraged that the inflation rate has levelled off and has remained steady. We still believe that we will reach our target. As we have said in the budget, and I would like to quote from *The Budget Papers* just so that the hon. member understands the targets that we have set for inflation in this country: "The first target is to lower the annual increase in the Consumer Price Index to 3 per cent by the end of 1992. An interim milepost of 5 per cent has been set for the end of 1991".

We believe we are on target.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Madam Speaker, not only does the Minister of Transport not know what he is talking about, this is obviously the case with the minister of state.

By the time the truckers get back the GST they will have gone broke because of the delays in this government's approach to this matter.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, year after year, the inflation rates for Quebec City and Montreal are the highest in Canada. Statistics Canada has said that these fugures continue to reflect the implementation of the GST.

[*English*]

The minister has confirmed that this government wants to have a tough anti-inflation policy more than it wants to create jobs or growth. Will he make a commitment for the government today that in dealing with the inflation its own policies have created it will not revert to the high interest rate policy that has already destroyed so many jobs and businesses in this country? Will he make that commitment today?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, old habits die slowly.

I must say that interest rates have dropped over the past year by almost 5 per cent. Mortgage rates are down. Housing starts are up. Resales are reaching record levels at the present time.

We have made a commitment to get inflation down, to get interest rates down, and to keep them down. As long as the inflationary pressures stay down then interest rates will stay down.

I am encouraged and the government is encouraged by most of the provincial governments in this country that have, together with the federal government, brought in budgets to restrain spending, to control wages, and to try to get the expenditures of governments under control.

There has been only one government that has not gone along with this. It reminds me of my father when he used to say: "Everybody is out of step except my son, John".

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the Constitution. It is in relation to a new approach that is needed to national unity.

I want to begin by suggesting to the minister that if he is truly committed to non-partisanship and co-operation, it is action and not words that are going to show that to the Canadian people.

It seems to me that there is nothing in the throne speech that suggests co-operation when we are told: "Here is the process that is going to take place. Here are the rules. Now everyone had better co-operate".

Will the minister, because I understand he is fully responsible for this area and can make these decisions, withdraw the committee process that is outlined in the throne speech and in a truly co-operative spirit meet with the other parties in this House to discuss a process that we can begin right from the beginning, that is truly co-operative, and that in fact will show Canadians that all parliamentarians in this House are prepared to do that?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to answer what was in effect that question yesterday when it was posed by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands after my remarks in the House.

We have taken a decision that faced with the cynicism in Canada about elected officials we could either contribute to that cynicism by having parliamentarians walk away from our most basic responsibility for the future of the country, or we could try to change that cynicism by demonstrating that parliamentarians are effective and prepared in dealing with the nation's problems. But we are not going to do that in old ways. We are prepared to establish a joint committee of this House and the other place and then adopt the most original means we can to involve the Canadian public.

I said to her colleague in the House yesterday that I would very much welcome specific suggestions from the NDP, the Liberal Party, or indeed from individual members of the House, as to means by which we can preserve the well-established tradition of parliamentary democracy in this country and add to it the most effective possible involvement of other Canadians interested in this process.

As to actions speaking louder than words, I agree with her. That is why I began my responsibilities in this portfolio by acting, by going to talk directly to people who had felt excluded from the process in the past. I intend to continue to act in that way, as this government does.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Madam Speaker, it is clear that any constitutional decision will be made by the Parliament of Canada.

We will not be undermining the authority of the parliamentary tradition in Canada, it seems to me, if as politicians we show to Canadians that we are listening to what they have to say.

In fact, I am suggesting to the minister that that is our responsibility and our duty so that the process that we institute at the beginning indicates that we are listening to Canadians.

No one is suggesting that elected members would not be a part of that process. I am simply suggesting it should be enlarged to include those who are under-represented in this House.

I will say to the minister that women make up 51 per cent of the population of this country. They make up 14 per cent of the population of this House. Aboriginal people and visible minorities are under-represented in this House.

Will the minister consider seriously that we try a new way, perhaps a less traditional way, which will include elected officials but expand that process right from the beginning to show Canadians that we are listening and we are prepared to do something in a really new way?

• (1130)

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Madam Speaker, the answer to that general question is yes.

Certainly I agree with the observation of the hon. member. It is one of the problems of any elected institution that it is not as representative of the country, demographically, as it should be.

Will we take a variety of means, as innovative as we can find, to listen to people, to involve them in the decisions? The answer to that is clearly yes. Will we abandon Parliament? The answer to that is no.

Our view is that Parliament needs to be reformed, but not abandoned. We recognize the cynicism that exists in the country. We think it is corrosive. We think that succumbing to that cynicism could in fact make it more difficult for us to build the kind of strong Canada we want. We intend to reform the way this Parliament works. We intend to reach out as widely as we can to

involve Canadians in the process of deciding our future together, but we do not intend to abandon one of the institutions that has served this country very well in 124 years of our history.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Madam Speaker, no one is talking about abandoning Parliament. We are simply saying that this an extraordinary, absolutely serious and crucial issue for the future of Canada. Surely the authority of parliamentarians will be reinforced when we say that we are prepared to do things in an extraordinary, innovative way right from the beginning for this particular situation.

I think to characterize it as abandoning Parliament is clearly not presenting what I am suggesting.

[*Translation*]

I would remind the government that the Beaudoin–Edwards Committee will soon make its report public. Can the government promise today in this House that it will not ignore any recommendation to increase the participation of as many people as possible at the beginning of the process advocated by this report?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Madam Speaker, I clearly said yesterday in my speech in the House that I have no intention of judging the Beaudoin–Edwards committee report before it is received and I have no intention of rejecting the suggestions it may contain. If the Beaudoin–Edwards committee suggests ways for Parliament to consult Canadians better, I would be quite interested in hearing them and I intend to take them seriously.

As far as innovation is concerned, we already said in the Speech from the Throne the other day that, for the time in the history of our Parliament, we would give a parliamentary committee, as a formal part of its mandate, the right to work with elected provincial legislators and not only to consult them. That is something new. There are other ways to ensure more citizen participation, but on a parliamentary basis that serves Canada well.

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Employment and Immigration I will direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister.

On Wednesday the Secretary of State for External Affairs said that the only problem with the Al-Mashat case was not that Mr. Al-Mashat was admitted on the fast track, but that ministers did not know.

Once again the new Secretary of State for External Affairs has it all wrong. We will find out what ministers knew. We are equally concerned about why Al-Mashat was given a fast track when so many people are not given any preference, any kind of access, because they do not know people in high places.

I would like to ask the minister this question. In 1988, close to 27,000 Kurdish refugees escaped from the chemical attacks of the Iraqi government. Three thousand applied to come to Canada, and according to a report of the Turkish government, not one has been accepted or interviewed up to this time. They are still tragically waiting to be accepted.

Rather than being solely preoccupied with defending the reputation of ministers, when is this government going to afford the victims of the Iraqi government the same kind of treatment it gave to Al-Mashat.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I would like to quote from page 21 of the McGrath commission report which was unanimously endorsed in this House and signed by the hon. member's seatmate. It states:

> The idea of a minister being responsible for everything that goes on in a department may once have been realistic, but it has long since ceased to be so. A minister cannot possibly know everything that is going on in a department. The doctrine of ministerial accountability undermines the potential for genuine accountability on the part of the person that ought to be accountable—the senior officer of the department.

The recommendation, endorsed unanimously, was:

> We recommend that all ministers co-operate with committees exercising their expanded mandates by making available public servants that may be called to testify before a committee.

We have made that commitment. That committee will implement these recommendations which were approved—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Madam Speaker, the problem with these ministers is not that they don't know everything that is happening in its departments, they don't know anything at all about what is going on in their departments. Especially when it goes into their own offices, they have no control or judgment on it.

If that minister is now speaking for government, my specific question is about why the Kurdish refugees who escaped from a brutal chemical attack are not given any consideration at all? I have a specific case of one of my own constituents who, over a year ago, married a Kurdish woman who has been sitting in Iran for close to a year without any kind of treatment or review whatsoever by the Department of Immigration.

Does this not show that there is an unfair and discriminatory system? I ask that minister, is that not one of the primary topics and subjects of investigation that the parliamentary committee must address: why the immigration system gives preference to people in high places but ignores the plight of ordinary citizens?

Mr. Benno Friesen (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, there are no doubt cases where there is unfair and discriminatory queue jumping. I remember very well when one potential immigrant drove to Manitoba, was put into a ministerial car, given a ministerial driver and driven to Emerson, Manitoba for the Emerson shuffle so that he could be landed. Does the member remember that? We would be glad to bring that forward in the committee.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Madam Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration and, in his absence, to the Acting Prime Minister.

Recently, Zbigniew Redka, a man of Polish origin, was told, after waiting for two years, he would have to wait another two years to have his immigration case heard. Shortly after, he hanged himself.

Last week, Jesus Saferino Aquilan, a Salvadoran refugee claimant committed suicide in Toronto.

How can the government of the day allow Mr. Al-Mashat, no friend of Canada, to jump the queue and yet have refugees and self-exiles wait three, four and five years for a landed immigrant status?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the point I was trying to make by reading the McGrath committee report, which is the recommendation we have approved, is that these kinds of detailed questions are unsuitable, as this committee recommended, for this kind of exchange. They are good for scoring political points.

The committee will meet just as soon as his party co-operates with establishing the membership. In fact, those questions about Al-Mashat can be dealt with and we can put this strawman aside and deal with the real issues that affect Canadians.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Madam Speaker, I drew a potential suicide case from Montreal to the former minister of immigration's attention. Today the minister says: "People who are committing suicide because of the government's bungling should not be raised in this forum?"

I have just drawn attention to two cases. How many more such cases are there in the refugee backlog?

I would like to ask the minister if he will hold an inquest into the two cases that I have mentioned and report to Parliament? Will he agree today to grant work permits and permission to go to school to self-exiled refugees who have to wait 18 to 24 months for their landed immigrant status? Also, will he promise today in this House that the government will clear up all refugee backlog cases within six months?

• (1140)

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the minister is unavoidably absent from the House today. I know this was a serious question raised by my hon. friend and I will treat it that way, and I trust his colleagues will.

He relates to the House circumstances which all of us would regard as tragic. Certainly the problem of refugee backlog is one that has been of concern to the House and to the government for some time. We have taken some actions to deal with it. He has made some specific requests that I will draw immediately to the attention of the minister who will, I hope, be in a position to reply either directly to the hon. member or to the House as soon as he is back next week.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister. Yesterday the Federal Court ruled that the cabinet broke the law to cut a special deal for Alcan. Today I would like to pursue the special deals found in the green plan communication contracts which have been flowing to friends of the Prime Minister and the cabinet at $250,000 a month since the last election.

Does the Acting Prime Minister feel it is appropriate to pay $20,000 a month to Paul Boomer Throop for advice to the Minister of the Environment, knowing that P. Boomer Throop was the 1988 election tour co-ordinator for the Prime Minister and is presently employed by the Conservative Party?

Hon. Pauline Browes (Minister of State (Environment)): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity today to respond to the first question to come to me as the Minister of State for the Environment.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. Browes: Some three weeks ago the Prime Minister put additional emphasis on the preservation and the protection of the Canadian environment by appointing an additional voice to the cabinet. I am very privileged and pleased to be able to fulfil those duties.

In relation to the question that the hon. member has brought forward, the green plan that was established by the Government of Canada had extensive consultations. Over 10,000 Canadians were consulted about the green plan, in co-operation with the provincial governments and industry.

It was an opportunity for us to reach out to hear what people have to say and at the same time bring together the green plan of over some hundred initiatives.

Now we have an opportunity to bring forward the information about the green plan to the Canadian people. I am very pleased we are doing that and we are going to continue to be consulting and implementing the issues and the green plan.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Madam Speaker, I welcome the minister to her new position but my question is for the Acting Prime Minister about corruption and the need to do something about it.

I am sure it is just a coincidence, but would the Acting Prime Minister explain why Ian Anderson, the Prime Minister's former deputy communications director received $75,000 for communications advice on the green plan, or why Pat Delbridge who is now head of the government's environmental logo board received $200,000 for two months work last year?

Will the Acting Prime Minister support sending all of these contracts let so far under the green plan to a public auditing function by a special committee of this House to determine where these untendered $8 million are going and whether or not they are just going from the public purse to friends of the Conservative Party?

Hon. Pauline Browes (Minister of State (Environment)): Madam Speaker, the green plan is a tremendous, major undertaking by the Canadian government and by the people of Canada. We want to discuss and implement these various initiatives which are set out in the green plan and we will continue to have these consultations and the implementation.

In relation to the particular issues that the hon. member has mentioned, there will a thorough analysis of all of this. The Minister of the Environment and myself are new to these positions. We are looking at all the analyses as to how we can communicate best with the people of Canada.

[*Translation*]

CLOTHING INDUSTRY

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Madam Speaker, my question is for the new Minister of Labour. I want to congratulate him on his promotion.

I would like to ask the Minister if he is aware that 39 women's clothing factories have closed down since 1986, resulting in some 2,000 lost jobs in the Montreal region and elsewhere in Quebec.

The Minister's predecessor had already met these people and given them promises which he did not keep. Will the new Minister of Labour try to help these people and be more effective than his predecessor?

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

I can tell you that my predecessor was very, very effective and probably even more effective than my colleague opposite when he was Minister of Labour in Montreal.

The hon. member for Papineau-Saint-Michel knows very well that the Department of Employment and Immigration has some training programs to help these people who lost their jobs. If some of those companies are eligible for the Older Worker Adjustment Program which the Minister knows very well, we in the Department of Labour will be pleased to see that those people are compensated adequately.

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): I have a supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

I would remind the Minister that it is incredible that his predecessor did not know that the regulations for the Older Worker Adjustment Program required a certain number of employees per factory and plant. Now, 90 per cent of this women's clothing industry in Quebec has about 30 or 40 employees and the Minister's regulations required a minimum of 100 employees.

Will the new Minister be more competent and effective than his predecessor and change the regulations?

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel knows very well that the regulations of the Older Worker Adjustment Program are negotiated with the provinces. It is a federal-provincial program.

We are now looking into the various regulations with the Quebec Minister, Mr. Bourbeau, and I can assure the Minister that we will do everything possible so that the workers in the Montreal region whom he has just mentioned can benefit from as many programs as possible offered by the Department of Labour and also the Department of Employment and Immigration.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of State for the Environment.

The minister, coming from metropolitan Toronto, is well aware of the fact that, like so many other Canadian cities, metropolitan Toronto is facing an imminent garbage crisis. One of the worst offenders in this crisis is excessive packaging.

Since the voluntary packaging program does not seem to be working, will the government introduce immediately a program of stiff regulations to reduce packaging and do it before the 1993 deadline or target date set in the green plan? If we do not do that, we are going to have garbage piled up in our back yards and our parks.

Hon. Pauline Browes (Minister of State (Environment)): Madam Speaker, I want to first compliment the member for Don Valley East on his continued interest in environmental issues. I have worked with him on those in metro Toronto and I appreciate his good work.

The national protocol on packaging, as established by the environment ministers of Canada, is to reduce packaging by 50 per cent by the year 2000. Nobody in this House wants to wait till the year 2000 to have all of this done, so by 1993 we are going to have regulations. If by 1992 we see that the voluntary action, the consultation with the provinces, the consultation with industries, is not accomplishing what we want it to do, the federal government will put forward those regulations. The provinces monitor the volume of waste into the landfill sites so that will be our indication whether or not the program is working.

• (1150)

I want to say that the consumers themselves can do a great deal in terms of reducing waste. Just yesterday I received 30 letters from the—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sure the hon. minister will find another moment to get into what seems to be a speech.

* * *

BANKRUPTCIES

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce): Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister for employment or the Minister of Labour. Yesterday Pascal's hardware, a successful Montreal business for 87 years, fell victim to the recession and went bankrupt. As a result 21 stores have closed and 1,600 employees have lost their jobs, many of them with more than 20 years service.

Would the minister say whether this massive lay–off will qualify for help under the program for older worker adjustment and what other initiatives does the government have to retrain and re–employ these workers?

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, a committee will be formed immediately between the Quebec representatives and the federal representatives to decide on the eligibility of the workers of Pascal's.

With regard to the retraining, the hon. member is aware that the federal government through the Department of Employment and Immigration has a significant number of retraining programs. We could even have had more had the Official Opposition not blocked Bill C–21 for two years. We do have the programs in place and we will use them.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce): Madam Speaker, that is not enough. When is this government going to recognize it bears a heavy responsibility in closures such as this. The goods and services tax, high interest rates, the free trade agreement and mass cross–border shopping have all contributed to this closure.

Why is the government ignoring the economic and social conditions in Montreal and right across this country?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, no one is happy when a company goes bankrupt, but I think it is very important that Canadians understand the reasons why and not the fallacious reasons—

Mr. Allmand: GST and the free trade agreement.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The hon. member, Madam Speaker, just mentioned the GST as he did in his speech. Practically the price of everything in a hardware store is going down as a result of the GST because of the tax credit.

Mr. Tobin: That's nuts.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): My hon. friend from Newfoundland says: "That's nuts". If he would go and look at the nuts and bolts in a hardware store, he will see that the changes in prices are significant. Prices have gone down on a broad range of items in a hardware store.

The point I am making, Madam Speaker, is there are reasons for companies going bankrupt, but let us not confuse the facts. Let us make sure that the GST is credited for being a benefit to hardware store owners.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, I would like to return to the Acting Prime Minister and the Al–Mashat case. Canadians, particularly those who have been involved with the immigration process and know its delays are asking why he received this very special treatment. There is a suspicion that Canada was being used as a safe house for an American informer.

Given that today Mr. Al–Mashat claims that he was offered asylum in both France and the United States, which the French doubt and the Americans now officially deny, will the minister confirm that the Prime Minister of Canada himself is willing to appear before the parliamentary committee; that the government has no objection to Mr. Al–Mashat being subpoenaed to that committee and will the government make representations to the United States government so that representatives of the National Security Council and the CIA can be brought before the parliamentary committee to testify. Maybe we can get to the bottom of this.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, just to confirm what was said yesterday on several occasions, we are very anxious to get this matter before the committee as soon as possible. Then all relevant officials can be called before the committee because we are absolutely convinced that the facts we have elucidated will become obvious to those who keep an open mind. We are anxious to put behind us the innuendo and so on that comes forward as a result of lack of information and pure unsubstantiated suspicion. Let us let this committee do its work. I am sure at the end of the day we will all be better off when we know what we are talking about.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker, my question is for the same minister.

This morning I learned from a Crown attorney, in the case against the member for Lévis, that the defence had indicated last Monday, May 6, that they would be using C–79 in the defence at last Wednesday's court hearing. As a result, the Crown told witnesses not to appear, in that a non–proclaimed piece of legislation would not have any status before the court.

Is this minister in a position to assure this House that neither the member for Lévis, his lawyer, nor anybody else acting on his behalf, approached cabinet ministers or their offices, urging the proclamation of C–79, prior to that specific court hearing?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member knows, after two years of all–party activity on committee, there was unanimity among the parties to introduce Bill C–79 to regularize the relationship between the House and the RCMP in terms of responsibilities. There was unanimity in that regard.

When bills are given Royal Assent there is sometimes a time separation between Royal Assent and Proclamation, because administrative matters need to be taken care of and put in place. No such requirements were necessary with this bill.

When I became aware, as a result of a conversation with a member of Parliament whose offices were being searched by the RCMP at the time, that C–79 had not been proclaimed, I was on my way out of town. Three days later when I got back, I asked my staff to have it proclaimed.

The reality is that it was given Royal Assent on April 11. It should have been proclaimed on April 12. It should have been passed last year.

The hon. member, in looking for conspiracy and in suggesting that there is something wrong in proclaiming a bill which was endorsed by both Houses, which was unanimously approved by all political parties in this House, is really, really searching for scandal. I wish he would be more sympathetic to peoples' reputations as members were sympathetic to his reputation when he had problems.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PROVINCIAL JURISDICTION OVER EDUCATION

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs. Last night, a few minutes after his appointment as federal minister responsible for meddling, his colleague the Minister of Employment and Immigration said on the CBC, and I quote: "Education is nobody's exclusive domain." I would like to ask the minister responsible—

An hon. member: It's true.

Mr. Lapierre: I hear another conservative minister say "it's true". I would like to ask the responsible minister whether or not he is willing to correct what his colleague for Employment and Immigration said, and remind him of Section 93 of the BNA Act of 1867?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Madam Speaker, I don't have to read the Constitution to my Cabinet colleague. The Speech from the Throne is very clear. We do not intend to interfere in provincial jurisdictions and we clearly accepted— we said in the Speech from the Throne that education would remain a provincial matter.

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is to the same minister. Mr. Rémillard, a distinguished lawyer who has read the Speech from the Throne, says: "It is unacceptable that Ottawa should intrude in a field of provincial jurisdiction like education and training". Is the minister telling me that Mr. Rémillard did not read the Speech from the Throne correctly or will he explain to me how he can

reconcile the statement from the minister of Canadian affairs and the attitude of his government?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Madam Speaker, when I will need to talk to Mr. Rémillard, I will do so directly and not through someone who changed views and party while in this chamber.

[*English*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Halifax, one question please.

* * *

JUSTICE

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Madam Speaker, my question is for the hon. Government House Leader.

• (1200)

As we understand the hon. House leader to have responded to a question previously, a member whose office was the potential subject of a police search had approached him on proclamation of Bill C-79.

Does the hon. government House leader not think that this is obstruction of justice?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, those are not the facts. The facts are that the office was being searched under a search warrant. The hon. member phoned me up to inform me of that fact so that I should know in the event it became—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sure the member for York South—Weston would allow the hon. minister to complete his answer.

Mr. Andre: As I was saying, Madam Speaker, the hon. member, in view of my responsibilities, phoned me up to inform me that the search was under way, not to ask for any action.

Incidentally, in the conversation he informed me that Bill C-79 had not been implemented. That would have had no effect, because that bill which was unanimously adopted by her party had been given Royal Assent. It had been approved by both Houses back in April. I then asked my staff, three days later as a matter of fact, why it had not been proclaimed and asked that it be proclaimed.

I am sorry the hon. member cannot seem to listen to my answer without her jaws moving and noises coming out of her throat.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I want to refer to my answer to the hon. member for Windsor West. I gave some inaccurate information in my response to him when I said that the truckers paid federal sales tax on trucks and trailers. They did not under the old system. Under the new system they do not pay federal sales taxes on all their business expenses as they used to do. I apologize to the House for that misinformation.

While I am on my feet, I have two Ways and Means motions which I wish to table today.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

WAYS AND MEANS

TABLING OF NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 83(1), I have the honour to lay upon the table a copy of notice of a Ways and Means motion to amend the Excise Tax Act and other legislation respecting the implementation of the goods and services tax, and a Ways and Means motion to amend the excise tax and the Excise Tax Act.

I ask, pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 83(2), that an Order of the Day be designated for the consideration of each of the said two Ways and Means motions.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The House thanks the hon. minister for setting the record straight.

* * *

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

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

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

* * *

RAILWAY ACT

REINSTATEMENT OF BILL C-26

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I have several motions that relate to the reinstatement of bills from the previous session. The first one deals with Bill C-26. I move:

That, notwithstanding any standing or special order of this House, the following bill introduced in the Second Session of the Thirty-Fourth Parliament be reinstated forthwith in this session as follows:

An act to amend the Railway Act (Grain and Flour Subsidies), be deemed to have been introduced, read the first time and ordered to be printed, read a second time and referred to and reported by a legislative committee with an amendment, concurred in at report stage with an amendment and ordered for third reading.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The motion is denied.

* * *

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

REINSTATEMENT OF BILL C-58

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, the next motion deals with Bill C-58, the Young Offenders Act:

That, notwithstanding any standing or special order of this House, the following bill introduced in the Second Session of the Thirty-Fourth Parliament be reinstated forthwith in this session as follows:

An act to amend the Young Offenders Act and the Criminal Code, be deemed to have been introduced, read the first time and ordered to be printed, read a second time and referred to and reported by a legislative committee (with amendments).

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Consent has been denied.

* * *

CROWN CORPORATIONS DISSOLUTION OR TRANSFER AUTHORIZATION ACT

REINSTATEMENT OF BILL C-73

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, this relates to Bill C-73, something that is up and running right now. It is an attempt to save money for the taxpayers:

That, notwithstanding any standing or special order of this House, the following bill introduced in the Second Session of the Thirty-Fourth Parliament be reinstated forthwith in this session as follows:

An act to provide for the dissolution or transfer of certain Crown corporations and to amend certain acts in consequence thereof, be deemed to have been introduced, read the first time and ordered to be printed, read a second time and referred to and reported by a legislative committee with an amendment.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: There is no unanimous consent. The hon. member may allow me to look around the House. I have now heard him and consent has been denied.

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT

REINSTATEMENT OF BILL C-87

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): I am on a roll, Madam Speaker.

This relates to Bill C-78, the environment bill:

That, notwithstanding any standing or special order of this House, the following bill introduced in the Second Session of the Thirty-Fourth Parliament be reinstated forthwith in this session as follows:

An act to establish a federal environmental assessment process, be deemed to have been introduced, read the first time and ordered to be printed, read a second time and referred to legislative committee C (Bill C-78); and that the evidence educed and documents received by any special committee of this House in the Second Session of the Thirty-Fourth Parliament in relation to this bill be deemed to have been referred to legislative committee C (Bill C-78) in this present session.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary is not receiving unanimous consent to move this motion.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The motion is denied.

* * *

APPOINTMENT OF A PORT WARDEN FOR THE HARBOUR OF QUEBEC

REINSTATEMENT OF BILL C-82

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, this relates to Bill C-82:

That, notwithstanding any standing or special order of this House, the following bill introduced in the Second Session of the Thirty-Fourth Parliament be reinstated forthwith in this session as follows:

An act to amend an act to provide for the appointment of a Port Warden for the Harbour of Quebec and an act to amend and consolidate the acts relating to the office of Port Warden for the Harbour of Montreal, and to validate certain fees and charges established pursuant thereto, be deemed to have been introduced, read the first time and ordered to be printed, read a second to a second time and referred to and reported by a legislative committee (without amendment), concurred in at report stage, read a third time and passed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The motion has been denied.

* * *

FEDERAL TRUST AND LOAN COMPANIES

REINSTATEMENT OF BILL

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I move:

That, notwithstanding any standing or special order of this House, the following bill introduced in the Second Session of the Thirty-Fourth Parliament be reinstated forthwith in this session as follows:

An act to revise and amend the law governing federal trust and loan companies and to provide for related and consequential matters, be deemed to have been introduced, read a first time and ordered to be printed, read a second time and referred to and reported by the Standing Committee on Finance with several amendments.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

AIRPORTS

REINSTATEMENT OF BILL

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I will advise the House that this is my last attempt:

That, notwithstanding any standing or special order of this House, the following bill introduced in the Second Session of the Thirty-Fourth Parliament be reinstated forthwith in this session as follows:

An act to provide for certain matters respecting official languages, employees' pensions and labour relations in connection with the

transfer of certain airports, be deemed to have been introduced, read a first time and ordered to be printed, read a second time and referred to and reported by a legislative committee without amendment.

• (1210)

Madam Deputy Speaker: Do I understand that unanimous is being denied?

Some hon. members: Denied.

* * *

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

MEMBERSHIP OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): I am sorry, Madam Speaker, there is one more that has been brought to my attention.

This one is a request of the New Democratic Party effecting changes on the management committee for the first striking meeting on which I think notice has gone out for Tuesday:

That effective May 21, 1991, the following changes be made to the membership of the Standing Committee on House Management:

Ms. Langan for Mr. Angus, Mr. Axworthy for Mr. Riis.

And that effective May 27, 1991, the following changes be made to the membership of the Standing Committee on House Management:

Mr. Angus for Ms. Langan, Mr. Riis for Mr. Axworthy.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have unanimous consent to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to

Mr. Dingwall: Madam Speaker, it is rather interesting to note some of the comments of the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader who either intentionally or whatever brought these particular motions to the floor of the House today to seek unanimous consent of the House.

It was discussed earlier this morning with myself and the parliamentary secretary. There was a clear undertaking from the government that we would pursue discussions on these various matters. Obviously, in a sense of not wanting to co-operate with opposition members, they have proceeded to introduce these particular motions.

It should be noted that this is a very significant point of order, very, very significant. Since the beginning of this session contained in the throne speech, leading up to the throne speech and shortly thereafter, we have been hearing the buzz words and the rhetoric with regard to non-partisanship and co-operation among the parties.

We have co-operated when we have been consulted such as on the Beaudoin-Edwards committee. We have agreed to that. On the standing committee for health and welfare we have agreed to reinstate that. With regard to elections and privileges, we have been consulted on that and with regard to the references in terms of supply to the various standing committees, but lo and behold the government House leader is at it again. He is trying to drive things down our throats.

I am informing you, Madam Speaker, and through you members opposite, that members of this caucus and of this party are not going to put up with that. We are not going to accept that kind of conduct from government members opposite.

Very briefly my point of order will conclude. On the substance of those motions, the parliamentary secretary knows very well that the contents of those bills in many of those instances is that we have opposed them and opposed them vigorously. If they wish to proceed with them, they have an opportunity to lay the legislation before the House of Commons. But if they were so desirous of having all that legislation introduced, consummated and passed by Parliament, why did they not extend the sittings of the House and not call for a new Parliament?

The fact of the matter is that they do not want co-operation from opposition parties; they do not want that at all. They want to have it their way and to heck with those of us in the opposition.

I wish to inform you, sadly, Madam Speaker, that we in the opposition will not accept that kind of conduct from

the parliamentary secretary who we always believed to be an honourable person. But obviously he has taken instructions from the thug of thugs.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I realize that the hon. member had a message which he wanted to put across, but I still do not see where there was a point of order.

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, I do not wish to extend the debate. I just simply wish to express to the House that no, we on this side of the House have not abandoned any desire to co-operate and to provide every opportunity for consultation with the hon. members.

I want to indicate to the House and to members present that what I did do was have meetings with the two opposition House leaders earlier this morning. We had some discussions. I had a change in circumstances at about 10 to 10.15 this morning which I tried to relate to the hon. members. I was in fact successful in communicating that to the House leader of the New Democratic Party, but was waiting for and have not yet received a return phone call from the House leader of the Liberals so I had to proceed.

I apologize to the hon. member. But perhaps in the future what he can do is return my calls. Give us a chance to discuss these things and we can then resolve them without having battles on the floor.

Mr. Dingwall: To my colleague opposite, I have never heard such blarney in all of my 11 years on the floor of the House of Commons.

In point of fact, the parliamentary secretary and I met in his office this morning at 9.40. The parliamentary secretary made the request at 9.50, prior to the House leader of the New Democratic Party coming, that we have to meet on a daily basis to discuss the various motions and matters which are going to be laid before members of Parliament on each and every day.

At that time, we concluded that we would meet again to discuss further the possibility of the reinstatement of bills. Now, to come into the House of Commons and say at 10.10, when we are on an opposition day—and the opposition House leader should be here with his official critic for transport to participate in that day—he drags out a phoney, lame excuse that he called and the phone call was not returned.

If there is not a demonstrable way of misleading the House, I do not know what better fact is. If the hon. member does not believe that it is misleading, I will withdraw that. But I will say this to the hon. member: You are awfully careless with the truth.

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, I do not wish to extend this discussion or debate any further. I simply want to state that what I have said is true and I stand by what I have said.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

THRONE SPEECH BACKGROUND PAPER

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order to express to the House and to you, that I believe that an essential document for the functioning of our Parliament has not been provided for members of this House.

When the throne speech was presented to members of both Houses by His Excellency the Governor General, it was accompanied by a background paper which was provided to all members of the media. Members of the media, who were consulted only moments ago by myself and my colleagues, stated that they all received this document. No member of this House has received this document which accompanied the Throne Speech and which was entitled *Background Paper*. In other words, an explanatory note to the Throne Speech that was supposed to tell all of us how the document worked was given to members of the media and to no member on this side of the House, and it was probably not even given to the Chair.

It is essential that if this House is going to function, and if members are to be able to do their jobs, they must have access to all of those documents, a document which is supposed to be the original paper that tells us how the whole session is going to work.

Under the definition of privilege in Beauchesne's fifth edition citation 16 is stated:

> Parliamentary privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively as a constituent part of the High Court of Parliament, and by Members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals.

If we cannot even get a copy of the totality of the throne speech of this Parliament, how can we as parliamentarians do our job?

There has been neglect on the part of the government, at the very least.

An hon. member: And negligence.

Mr. Boudria: Probably even worse. I want to know, why in this House, you and I and other members of this House were not given a copy of the document, which is an explanatory document to the throne speech, at the same time that it was given to every single member of the media in this country.

The opposition House leader just indicated the lack of co-operation we are getting from the government. It is even worse when we cannot even get a copy of the throne speech.

Madam Speaker, I hope you and your officials will examine this situation because it goes to the very root of how this Parliament can or cannot function by the way this government is operating.

• (1220)

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I do not believe that the hon. member has a case of privilege. I looked at the throne speech. I did not see anything in it that indicated an addendum or an annex that was attached to it, so I do not know what the hon. member was protesting about. If in fact the press received background briefings or press briefings, that is a normal practice that many of us engage in, including the hon. member who from time to time gives the press materials.

It is clearly not a question of privilege. It is clearly a matter of debate. I am sorry that the hon. member has chosen to use his Opposition Day to do that.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Madam Speaker, one of the principles on which Parliament operates is that Her Majesty the Queen is not to be injected into partisan debate. I regret very much that the deputy House leader for the government is taking this step. I hope that this will be noted in your ruling.

I want to draw your attention to a column which appeared in *The Toronto Sun* on May 15 written by Douglas Fisher. This column comments on the throne speech. It speaks of the background paper which in the words of Mr. Fisher elaborates on the throne speech and which he calls "an accompanying paper".

Mr. Fisher goes on to quote the portion of the throne speech which says that the government will ask MPs to "consider new procedures for assessing legislation, for raising grievances on behalf of constituents and for questioning governments to further enhance the role of individual members and their greater independence". Then Mr. Fisher goes to say: "The background paper says much of the public debate about reform of Parliament is focused on free votes".

The background paper apparently also talks about the government's desire "to avoid what is visually and physically reinforcing the we and them phenomenon which largely dictates the outcome of votes."

This is not in the throne speech. This, according to Mr. Fisher, is in the background paper which, in the words of Mr. Fisher, elaborates on the throne speech. In other words, it gives information about the government's plans and intentions sketched out in the throne speech. Information which, if it pertains to the throne speech, should have been given to members no less than to the press.

It is clear from this column by Mr. Fisher, a long-standing commentator on Parliament and a former member of Parliament, that this background paper was more than just a press summary of the throne speech. It developed the government's ideas as set forth in the throne speech beyond the actual words of the throne speech. If that was the case, then the government had an obligation to present that background paper to Parliament in the same way, and frankly, at the very least, before it did so to the press.

Not having taken this step, if this is not a breach of the privileges of the House, certainly we have a valid point of order and I ask you to rule accordingly. By the way, I am sure that the assistant deputy House leader, the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, would want to make clear that if you find a prima facie case of privilege, one of us in the Official Opposition will be more than happy to move the appropriate motion.

Mr. Cooper: I believe that the press person that my hon. friend refers to is probably Mr. Doug Fisher, who is a well-known watcher of Parliament. Someone whose reputation is highly regarded as an individual who knows a lot about this institution and the way that it functions. I think what the hon. member may want to do is sit down

with Mr. Fisher in terms of the definitions that he used of any documents that he may or may not have had.

I do want to say that if the hon. member had been interested in the kind of issues that this government was concerned about and wants to see the House act upon, then all he would have had to have done is either watched or read the speech of the government House leader delivered in this House on Wednesday. The House leader went into detail about the kind of parliamentary reform and the kind of changes that we feel are necessary to try to restore to this institution, and to members, the confidence that I think has been lacking in us as demonstrated by the people of Canada.

I think that is what needs to be done. They can talk to Mr. Fisher. They can read the House leader's speech and it will give a clear indication of the kind of direction, the kind of commitment that this government has made in the past to parliamentary reform, has made in the present and will continue to do so in the future.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I listened very carefully to the remarks made by the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and the hon. parliamentary secretary.

I think the debate that just ended is much more a political than a procedural debate. I do not believe it would be necessary for the government to present a document that was prepared for other purposes. For now, I do not consider there is a question of privilege. If, in the future, one were to submit others arguments to the Speaker, this decision could always be reviewed but for now, I do not consider there is a case of privilege.

We will continue with Routine Proceedings. Presentation of petitions; the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel.

* * *

PETITIONS

LEBANON

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Madam Speaker, I have the honour today to present a petition signed by Montrealers of Lebanese origin who are asking the government of Canada to take step as soon as possible at the United Nations so that the Security Council of the United Nations reaffirms the independence and sovereignty of Lebanon and guarantees its territorial integrity. Also, that the Security Council intervenes in order to insure the complete removal from Lebanese territory of foreign forces that are presently on Lebanese soil.

I would like to say, Madam Speaker, that the government of Canada has a responsability in this issue.

Lebanon is a beautiful country which deserves to be protected, and the government of Canada should take its responsabilities within the Security Council of the United Nations.

[*English*]

CANADA POST

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

Pursuant to Standing Order 36, I rise to present a petition signed by residents of Marcelin, Saskatchewan, who have recently been informed that Canada Post plans to close their community post office which is currently staffed by a postmaster who has done a fine job for the past three years that the post office has been under review.

The petitioners state that the Marcelin post office has been serving them well. They call on Parliament to support full service post offices like the one in Marcelin and to reject any proposal that would result in the closing of an existing post office.

I have another petition which is my duty and honour to present. This petition is signed by nearly 300 residents of the Saskatchewan community of Canwood, where Canada Post corporation has announced that the full service post office will close in early July.

The petitioners say their post office has served them well and they call on Parliament, first, to support the maintenance of rural postal services from existing full service post offices like the one in Canwood, and second, to reject any proposal that would result in the closing of this existing post office.

I hope the government will heed the wishes of my constituents.

Supply

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition that has been signed by Canadians right across this country. In this petition they are asking the government to make good on its promise, made in 1986 to take whatever measures are necessary to ensure that sexual orientation is a prohibited grounds of discrimination in Canada.

The government has yet to introduce any type of legislative amendment to the Canadian Human Rights Act, despite it being over five years since they made that promise.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission has consistently called for an amendment to the act.

The petitioners also say that in Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba and in the Yukon, the provincial governments have made these provisions in their human rights legislation.

They call upon the government to ensure that it brings forward, immediately, an amendment to add sexual orientation to the Canadian Human Rights Act as a prohibited grounds of discrimination.

* * *

• (1230)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I ask that all the questions be allowed to stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Shall all the questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—TRUCKING INDUSTRY

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Marchi (p. 233).

Mr. Dingwall: Madam Speaker, I do not wish to take away from the time of the minister unduly, but I believe there might be a disposition within the House that opposition members be given the opportunity to split their time as they see fit, 10 minutes and 10 minutes. I think that is in keeping with the traditions of this particular House and I am sure that members would want to concur.

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, I would like to indicate our full co-operation and concurrence and, in fact, it is consistent with the rule changes that we recently brought in.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I would like to resume my speech in this important debate where it was interrupted at 11 o'clock this morning for the Business of the House.

So, Madam Speaker, as I was saying this morning, our government is aware of the truckers' situation. Let me repeat that we have already acted. Last year, we asked officials in my department to do a comprehensive study of the factors involved in cross-border competitiveness.

The study was divided into eight parts; the purposes of this study are to determine the nature and parameters of the Canadian share of the cross-border market, to evaluate the competitiveness of Canadian trucking companies in these markets and to analyze the impact of factors that can affect their ability to compete. The priority of all concerned is the comparative study of the Canadian and American tax systems. That is why we speeded up the process in that particular area.

The firm of Peat, Marwick, Thorne has thus undertaken a thorough study of the tax systems in effect in both countries and their impact on the cross-border competitiveness of Canadian transportation. This study is to be printed this weekend, and I will then send it to task force members. Until then, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the contents of the study, since the task force has not yet made it public.

[*English*]

Believe me, if I could I would because I believe it will, once and for all, lay to rest much of the negative misinformation that is currently being circulated about Canadian taxes.

The study has been extremely helpful in clarifying the issues. It shows, for example, that broad generalizations cannot be made about taxes and the trucking industry. There is not one over-all factor that explains disadvantages and advantages. Taxes obviously are not the only matter of concern to truckers.

[*Translation*]

For the other expenses concerning trends in cross-border transportation, analyses of the economic conditions for Canadian carriers operating in cross-border markets, a comparison of their economic performance, the costs of Canadian and American truckers in the cross-border market and an evaluation of alternative standards for cabotage, a study will cover and summarize all the action taken.

This study must be completed for the task force to review it and draw conclusions and make recommendations next week. All concerned must be present at the discussion table to be able to review this very important aspect of the studies. I am sure that every member of the task force will participate in this review and in making recommendations.

I would like to add a few words about the methodology of these studies. I am convinced that the way they were conducted can only give great credibility to their findings. So that no group in particular be targeted by any part of the studies, the task force was comprised of two groups of truck owners, one of them representing seven associations represented, as well as the three unions representing the majority of the transport companies employees, the Canadian Trucking Association, the Truckers Council which represents hundreds of truck fleet operations and six national freight associations.

[*English*]

As the provinces play a very prominent role in the administration of trucking regulations, each province and territory has a place on the task force.

Finally, because many federal departments are touched by the issues on the table, six federal departments are represented. No point of view was overlooked, as 40 different organizations are represented. Not all members attended every task force meeting but a good cross-section of each industry and government was present at each one. They were present and actively participated in the selection of consultants. They have criticized the draft reports and sent the consultants back to do again various parts or all of the study in order to meet their demands. They are expected to meet for the sixth time on June 4 to criticize the wrap-up study and formulate their recommendations for action.

I fully expect that there will be work for everyone coming out of these recommendations, for the federal and provincial governments and for the industry itself. No one will get off scot-free. The task force has worked as a team. Even though some of its members have not always seen eye to eye, they have, in the vast majority of cases, gone away from meetings with a feeling of positive accomplishment.

I only wish that other jurisdictions were as co-operative on other issues as they have been with regard to the studies.

[*Translation*]

It is ironic that, just a few weeks ago, the Premier of Ontario wrote the Ontario Truckers Association to tell them, and I quote: "Having worked closely with Ed Philip, the Ontario Minister of Transport, you are certainly aware that we are presently reviewing the short term tax measures affecting the trucking industry."

I bet the Ontario Trucking Association was surprised when it found out that the real intentions of the government had to do with tax measures concerning the trucking industry. Over the past few days, many figures were quoted concerning the number of banckruptcies in the trucking industry in accounts from truckers, from the media and from the members opposite.

While there is a proportional increase in the percentage of banckruptcies in this industry, it does not exceed what can be expected in such a cyclical industry as trucking.

I know that this is of little comfort to those affected, but the number of banckruptcies in the US trucking industry also reached a record high in 1990.

Some claim also that the American carriers are taking all the work away from Canadian companies. It may seem like that because the figures from Statistics Canada indicate that tonnage carried by trucks between Canada

and the United States dropped 7 per cent between 1988 and 1989, and declined an additional 3 per cent last year.

Before 1988, Madam Speaker, Canadians had an apparent advantage because of the deregulation of the trucking industry in the United States in 1980. It is a fact that since January 1, 1988, there are more U.S. carriers in Canada. This, combined with a drop in traffic as a result of the recession, accounts for the difference in market share, compared with what the situation was like before.

I would like to focus a few moments on the impact of the recession. We can give many reasons why the present recession hurts as much as it does. One is that we had previously enjoyed a period of unprecedented strong economic growth.

Entry controls in the trucking industry were relaxed in the early 80s, soon after U.S. deregulation. During the five years prior to January 1, 1988, 95 per cent of trucking licences were issued by provincial transport commissions.

Many new Canadian companies started operations during this period, and we have good reason to believe that many will survive to enjoy the next period of growth which all economists say will start in a matter of weeks. These companies are challenging old concepts and bringing innovative solutions to the industry. We need these companies to become competitive on new world markets.

• (1240)

Our truckers would never have acquired the requisite "lean and mean" approach if we had continued to hide them behind the protective walls of regulation. We have good reason to believe the economy will recover in the fall. Our truckers will be ready to respond to this economic renewal and to the higher wages the Free Trade Agreement will bring as a result.

Meanwhile, I can assure you, Madam Speaker, that I and my colleagues on this side of the House have listened to the genuine demands made by the hard-working and determined men and women in the trucking industry. We are actively trying to find ways to help them weather the present storm. We have asked all parties, including governments, labour, the trucking industry and the business community to co-operate with us. I am convinced, Madam Speaker, that in the course of the process that is now going on, which includes all parties involved in this area, we will find the kind of solutions that will help these men and women who are truck owners and who represent a very substantial part of the vitality of Canada's trucking industry.

[*English*]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, I listened to the minister attentively. I would like to ask him a couple of questions.

He referred to the fact that as minister he is not able to refer to some of the findings of the studies that have been commissioned by this government. I am wondering how he reconciles that comment with that of his predecessor who, in a letter to the Canadian Trucking Association, said quite clearly that he would not be prepared to wait until the final chapter is written on those studies, and that he would like to commence on some of the obvious findings rather than waiting.

It seems that the comments of today's minister are very much at odds with those of his predecessor.

Second, I am wondering if he could perhaps explain what he meant in today's *Toronto Star* where he is quoted as saying that there is "one major component" of the cost of doing business as a trucker in Canada that can make our drivers uncompetitive with American drivers. He has suggested that there is one trump card in a deck of options that he has focused on. I am wondering whether he can clarify for this House and for Canadians what that one major piece of the puzzle is.

Last, could he inform us or provide us with an update—again, I made reference to the fact that I thanked him for meeting with the delegation. He has been meeting for over a day. The meetings are still ongoing. Could he give us an update as to how the discussions are going. Are there any specific items on the table that he can tell us about and any commitments that have been made to show that there is indeed momentum and not just meetings? Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, in reply to the first question, I think that what I said earlier contradicts in no way what my predecessor wrote in his letter because, aside from these studies, work that could be conducted in-house, within the Department, was indeed undertaken. As a matter of fact, we have been provided with partial findings of these internal projects to allow us to determine, once the studies are completed and the findings submitted to the

Department, whether we will be able to answer this or that question and, more importantly, discuss the facts.

As regards the status of the present round of discussions, I have no indication that they are over. So, I have to assume they are ongoing. The meeting started yesterday afternoon, at 5:30 p.m., and went late into the evening. Just the fact that they have agreed to continue the discussions this morning is certainly a very clear indication that they are relatively happy with how things are going. Otherwise, they would have left the table a long time ago.

However, I am not at liberty to disclose specific items to my hon. colleague from York West. It was agreed from the outset between the representatives of the independent truckers at the table and my senior officials that, as long as the discussions were not finalized, neither side would comment on the contents of the discussions. Of course, I intend to honour that commitment.

[*English*]

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the minister about some remarks he made before the Question Period started in which he said that the Canadian Trucking Association refused to co-operate in drafting a code of ethics for truckers. My office has received a call from Mr. Ken MacLaren, the executive vice-president of the Canadian Trucking Association, in which he said: "The government is hiding behind studies. The trucking industry has not been consulted about the direction or the content of studies".

More seriously, Mr. MacLaren denies that the Canadian Trucking Association has refused to co-operate in drafting a code of ethics for truckers.

Now if I know Mr. MacLaren I am sure the minister will be getting a letter with smoke coming out of the envelope very shortly. I want to know if he can present to this House whatever evidence he has to refute Mr. MacLaren. He was most adamant in saying to my office only half an hour ago that at no time did the Canadian Trucking Association refuse to co-operate in drafting a code of ethics, and that they were not consulted about the direction or content of studies.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I will certainly not get into a debate here on what someone might or might not have said. The information I obtained from throughout my department indicates that what I said just now is accurate. I will recheck after this debate to ensure that my words indeed reflect the actual situation, but nothing leads me to believe the opposite for the time being.

[*English*]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, I had asked a second question of the minister. I am wondering if he went on honestly to the last question. I appreciate that if an agreement was made with the truckers not to release detail it is something that the minister and the truckers will have to honour.

However, the minister did speculate out loud with some of the media yesterday. He was specific in saying that there is one major component that can make the truckers either competitive or non-competitive. I assume that it is uncompetitive and therefore some improvement is necessary to that one major component.

Perhaps the minister would share with us today, or the Minister of State for Transport later on during this debate, what that one major component is so that we in the opposition can address ourselves to it as well.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I would really like to satisfy the wish and request of the hon. member opposite, but in discussions with the owner operators yesterday morning, we identified, an important component of their operating costs. After we did so, we mutually agreed to extend the talks last night. If I commented on this important component of operating costs, I would not keep my word because that is precisely one of the subjects of our discussion and the main subject of the discussions now going on.

• (1250)

[*English*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, I could not agree more with the vice-president, who says that the government is hiding behind studies.

I would like to ask the minister what his department has been doing for the last three years. Presumably, before the department embarked on the deregulation of the industry, which was a precursor to the free trade agreement, there should have been some studies done.

In the same way as the Department of Finance kept most of those studies secret from the public, I believe that there were studies done in his department as to what the effect of deregulation would be and what the specific effect of the government's tax policies will be. If studies were not done then clearly the government moved in a manner which showed complete and utter disregard for the jobs of Canadians.

The minister said that he is waiting until the studies come in. His predecessor said he did not have to wait for the studies to come in. I would like to ask him specifically what action he is prepared to announce today in the House of Commons to give some hope to those truckers and their families who will remain here on the Hill. The tie-ups across the province of Ontario have had an effect on its already reeling economy. Is the minister going to continue to allow that to happen and is he going to continue to play political Ping-Pong with his friend Premier Rae of Ontario who, like the minister, is not prepared to hit this problem head on and provide some real solutions to the truckers?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, when the hon. member for Hamilton East makes statements like the one she just made, she does not lead us all to practical solutions. As I said in this House several times, it is precisely to determine whether the perceptions and allegations of the Canadian tax system putting owner operators at a disadvantage are accurate or not. The government did not decide to conduct studies—I repeat it and I will go on repeating it forever—it was the various interested parties. The provincial governments, in spite of what our friends opposite might say, have a tremondous responsibility in this issue because of the taxes they impose on diesel fuel.

It is therefore at the request of the interested parties that we created this task force made up of all interested groups and this task force decided to conduct studies to establish the facts.

[*English*]

I would like to tell my hon. colleague that in the end there are many people who are saying that deregulation has not been detrimental to the trucking industry, and that in fact is has had significant positive benefits to the whole trucking sector.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Madam Speaker, I want to first say to my colleague from York West that I am very pleased that he and his party moved this motion today, and I want to compliment him on his speech because it is about the same as I would have said. I probably could endorse 90 per cent of the remarks he made.

When we get into these kinds of crises, we all forget some essential things about transportation. Without a good, efficient, functioning transportation system, all modes that operate at a reasonable profit and the entire economy of the country grind to a halt. Transportation is the foundation of any economy of any country.

Successive governments have played fast and loose with transportation policy in the name of so-called free enterprise, competition, competitiveness and so forth. Today it is not just the trucking industry that is hurting and is in real trouble, but the railroads as well. There are essentially only two of those. Why? Because of the very thing that the minister just said, that deregulation helped them, when the opposite is the case.

I do not know if the minister was here when I sat on the standing committee when we dealt with the government white paper on deregulation for over two years. We held hearings all across the country. Repeatedly, we were promised by the government that something would be done about many things, including the differences in the tax laws between Canada and the United States.

When we were dealing with the legislation in 1987, which took effect in January 1988, we were promised that with deregulation something would be done about a number of matters and still all we are having are studies.

I keep hearing about the word "competitiveness". The word "competitiveness" has been in the government's vocabulary *ad nauseam* for a long time. "A level playing field", that is another one.

By the very laws, rules and regulations that the federal government and all 10 provinces are carrying out, they are hurting the competitive capacity of the trucking and railway industries in Canada. They are at a disadvantage with the United States operators. Last year in the province of Ontario alone, 675 trucking firms went bankrupt. That is as a direct result of deregulation.

Everybody wants into the act and all that happens is they take turns going broke. When they go broke because of laws and regulations, or lack of laws and regulations, by the federal government, it means the federal government itself is to blame for any lack of competitiveness in the trucking industry in the railroads.

Then there is this level playing field. If you walk out on a baseball diamond or on a football field, you will see that they are not level. They are sloped. They are higher in the middle than on the sides and the ends.

This level playing field that the government has devised under the free trade agreement and deregulation is sloped. It is sloped all down hill to the U.S.A. What the hell is the use of having a level playing field if according to our own laws, rules and regulations, or lack of, the other guy has the ball on our 10-yard line all the time? We have to start from behind. It does not matter whether it is the trucking industry, and it is not just peculiar to Ontario and Quebec. It is the case in every province across Canada.

American railroads can do things in Canada that Canadian railroads cannot do in the United States, depending on what state they are in. That part of the playing field has never been made level. That is part of deregulation and the free trade agreement.

The tax laws have been gone into, the depreciation schedules. I will not repeat what my friend from York West had to say, but let me remind the Chair that the submission to the federal minister's task force by the Canadian Trucking Association recommended that: "In the case of the depreciation rate issue, the Canadian Trucking Association urges the Government of Canada to take immediate actions to equalize the depreciation schedules for tractors and trailers in Canada with those in the United States. It is anticipated that by undertaking this action approximately 20 per cent of the current competitive disadvantage experienced by the Canadian based motor carriers would be eliminated".

• (1300)

That should also apply to the Canadian railroads, which are victimized by the same kind of depreciation schedule for their rolling stock as our trucking industry is.

In the case of truck tractors, in the United States a tractor owner can write off one-third of it in the first year; in Canada it is 15 per cent. In the second year he can write off another 45 per cent of it; in Canada, 25 per cent. By the fourth year the American carrier can write off the remaining 7 per cent; in the thirteenth year the Canadian carrier can write off the last .5 per cent.

It is similar in the case of trailers: 20 per cent depreciation for a U.S. carrier in the first year, 15 per cent for Canadian; 32 per cent for an American carrier in the second year, 25 per cent for Canadian, and so on down through the piece.

I do not understand the stubbornness. This matter of depreciation schedules was also raised with the previous Liberal government and we got nowhere.

I have been through 14 ministers of transport since I came here in 1968. They should have a revolving door in the minister's office. Every damn one of them, Liberal or Tory, it did not make any difference, would not act.

There is another matter about fuel taxes. All the provinces have a fuel tax and the federal government has a fuel tax. In the United States, fuel taxes are earmarked; 97 per cent of its fuel taxes go into highway infrastructure of all kinds and 7 per cent into mass transit. In Canada, the federal government which collects something in the order of $600 million, puts 5 per cent, is for mainly the Trans-Canada Highway through national parks and nothing else. The government threw out the entire revolving fund for grade separations. Rail line relocation has disappeared.

If the federal government would at least use the fuel taxes it collects to finish four-laning the Trans-Canada Highway, northern Ontario alone would be a $2 billion to $3 billion tab. In the western provinces we are looking at another $1 billion. When we drive through northern Ontario heading west, any resemblance between that and the Trans-Canada Highway is laughable. They could at least spend the fuel taxes on transportation but, no, it

goes into general revenue and the government can do whatever it likes with it.

The finance department does not like dedicated taxes. There are some that should be dedicated or earmarked and the fuel tax is one of them. It is a user fee and you use those taxes for the infrastructure—roads, bridges, highways, and grade separations or whatever—as the Americans do. I am not all that complimentary about very much in the United States, but that is one thing it uses some good sense on. We cannot get it here. Since you are not going to use those fuel taxes for transportation then why not reduce them? Otherwise you are collecting taxes under false pretences. It is a transportation user tax and it is not being used on transportation.

There is another matter that I have raised in this House repeatedly since the mid-1970s, in the days of the late unlamented Otto Lang, figuratively speaking.

An hon. member: He was Liberal, was he not?

Mr. Benjamin: Oh, yes. What is the difference?

An hon. member: Or even the good party.

Mr. Benjamin: Yes. They are the good guys now, you see. If they had done all the things they said today back when they were in power, there would not be a Tory government in place. But that is all right.

The whole matter of interprovincial and international trucking or any kind of interprovincial-international transportation, under our Constitution, comes under federal jurisdiction. There are no ifs, ands or buts about it.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the federal government of that day transferred the administration and the responsibility for that over to the provinces. Ever since then we have had a jungle. We have had 13 jurisdictions: 2 territories, 10 provinces and the federal government, running in 13 directions. It does not matter whether it is load limits, speed limits, size of trucks or safety standards, the jungle is still there. That is something else that we were repeatedly promised. In the two years we spent on the white paper on deregulation and in the almost one year we spent on the bill itself, we were repeatedly told by the government and the then Ministers of Transport that meetings were going on.

I think it was three different Tory Ministers of Transport who came before the transport committee with their annual estimates and a statement and assured us, time after time, of how they were negotiating with the provinces to arrive at a standard that applies across the country.

We have still got some more studies. After all these years, where is this standard? The federal government, through an Order in Council or whatever it takes, has the constitutional jurisdiction to say to the provinces: "We are setting the standards. If you will not agree among yourselves, if you will not negotiate the common standards across the country, then we will do it for you because we have the constitutional authority".

I am sick and tired of various provincial governments in their parochial little centres, and that is of all parties, that do not consider the whole country. We are the ones who have to consider the whole country. If we do not, who the hell is going to? I am tired of these baronial premiers who worry only about their own little bailiwick and not about their fellow Canadians.

• (1310)

There is another area. My colleague from York West mentioned that as well. I liked pretty well all of his nine points. In general, I can support them and I am sure my colleagues will.

I had discussions with Canadian Trucking Association representatives a year ago in which they told me that five or six medium and large Canadian trucking companies had just picked up their head offices and their operations and moved across the border. It is still going on and it is going to get worse. We will end up without a Canadian trucking industry worthy of the name.

The problem is deregulation. If you can find a bank manager to lend you the money, lease a second-hand tractor and, if necessary, a second-hand trailer, you can automatically get a licence and go into business the next day.

The established trucker who has his own mechanics, maintenance and everything else and has put 20, 30 or 40 years into his business has to compete with that. That is one of the results of deregulation. It threw the industry

into a jungle. It is survival of the fittest. That applies to Mother Nature, but deregulation is not our mother and it is not natural, nor is it fit.

In a society supposedly trying to keep this country together from east to west and from the 49th parallel to the Arctic, all the government does is to continue to divide us. All it does is allow this kind of squabbling to go on without having the courage to take some decisive actions.

Tommy Douglas taught me that I would rather lose for doing something than win for doing nothing. When the devil are you going to take action to re-regulate.

I am glad to note that Ontario has placed a two year moratorium on new licences in the trucking industry. I hope all the provinces do that. It is overdue. We need more trucking companies like we need a hole in the head.

I want to say to the hon. member for York West that we appreciate the motion he moved. In general, we liked the contents of his speech and I hope the government will decide as a result of today's debate that there are some actions they can and should take.

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague who just spoke probably stopped his watch 90 years ago. He is talking to us about the socialist rhetoric that has failed most of the countries in the world that have implemented it. The only countries in the world that are successfully governed by socialists are succeeding because they have returned to the free market and the laws of the free market.

The hon. member said that deregulation has caused all these problems. He asked a question, but I have still not decided in my mind what competitiveness means.

I would like to say to the hon. member that competitiveness—

Mr. Benjamin: I do not remember that.

Mr. Corbeil: Maybe he does not remember from one minute to the next what he said. That is precisely what he said.

The capacity to compete with others is very closely tied to deregulation. Regulation prevents players in any given field from having the flexibility necessary to meet the competition from other countries.

I would like to show hon. member through a little bit of arithmetic. He talked about the federal excise tax which, as I said this morning and I will repeat it again, is 4 cents a litre. The federal excise tax in the U.S. is 6.2 cents. The federal excise tax on fuel in the U.S. is almost 60 per cent higher than in Canada, per litre. In the U.S., it is 6.2 cents and ours is 4 cents.

The hon. member also wants to ignore the fact that the provincial sales tax on fuel is the crippling aspect of the situation. The fuel tax in Michigan, with which most Ontario truckers compete, is 4.6 cents per litre.

By the end of this year, when the announced increases are implemented by his friend from the branch in Toronto, it will be 14.3 cents. He complains about the federal excise tax and the taxing system which is 60 per cent or at least 40 per cent less in Canada than in the U.S.

At the same time he does not see much wrong with the fact that the government with which he is friends is imposing a provincial fuel tax that is 300 per cent of the one that is implemented by the corresponding U.S. state.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I am glad we got another 10-minute speech out of the minister.

I was complaining about all the sales and excise taxes but at least the provinces, all of them, spend as much as they collect from fuel taxes, or more, on highways, roads, streets, sidewalks and mass transit. They do not specifically earmark it, but that is where the money is spent.

The federal government's contribution to the transportation infrastructure in this country is abysmal. If the government is not going to use the tax it is collecting for transportation then it should get rid of it.

My point was that despite all this talk from the government and in the throne speech about competitiveness it cannot happen because the laws we have, whether they are deregulation or provincial and federal taxes, prohibit Canadian trucking and railway industries from really competing.

Unless those laws are changed, the deck is stacked against them. The government has allowed the other side, the Americans, to have the ball on our 10–yard line all the time in a so–called level playing field. That is not fair ball.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by commending my hon. friend on his very fine, articulate, and at times very passionate speech in defence of some national responsibilities that ought to be discharged somewhat more forcefully.

The minister compared fuel taxes between the United States and Canada. It says in my statistics—perhaps we can take another look at it—that the American federal tax is 4.6 cents a litre whereas ours is 4.0 cents a litre.

Theirs is in fact slightly higher. However, what the minister failed to mention is that the base price for diesel fuel in the United States is 18.6 cents a litre compared to 37.9 cents a litre in Canada.

• (1320)

Therefore, while the two excise taxes charged by the two national governments are almost the same, the big differential is in the spread between the base prices. That is why I believe we on this side have been making an argument that we need to obviously be very concerned with both the federal and provincial excise taxes simply because the base prices are very, very different.

I am wondering if the hon. member can perhaps make a comment on that debate and, second, if he would be able to offer his analysis and his party's views on the fact that the government seems so intent on issuing study after study after the advent of deregulation, when in fact those studies ought to have properly been done before the deregulation door was swung open. I am wondering what his rationale would be for a government which studies the down effects after a policy has been undertaken, as opposed to having it done in the reverse order.

Mr. Benjamin: The hon. gentleman is quite correct about his analysis and the statistics he has. I might add that slightly less than 40 cents per litre, depending on the volume purchased, is the diesel fuel cost in Ontario. The cost of diesel fuel on the more concentrated U.S. trucking routes is 26 cents.

I heard on CBC Radio news this morning of 33 cents cost in upper New York State compared to 53 cents in Canada, and 56 cents on gasoline.

That kind of handicap destroys any possibility for competitiveness. Surely that requires both the federal and provincial governments acting in concert, and not more studies. We have had studies up to our ears.

I remember the two years we spent on the white paper, and we heard witnesses from Halifax to Victoria. Their big corporations wanted deregulation, but we did not hear that very much from the transportation industry.

I want to say that the whole ideological binge that the government is on has got to stop. Their policies have proven to be harmful, are hurting this country, hurting its sovereignty, hurting its independence, and hurting a hell of a lot of people in this country.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The time for questions and comments has expired. Resuming debate. The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

The hon. minister of Labour has something more to say?

M. Corbeil: Mr. Speaker, during a previous intervention, the previous speaker—

[*English*]

The speaker mentioned previously that something I had said in my speech was incorrect because he had an indication from an outside source that this was not the case.

I am informed that there have been three meetings of the federal–provincial working group on this matter. This was chaired by Manitoba. The Canadian Trucking Association refused to attend. The owners and operators coalition has also tried and the same organization has refused.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Very well. Back to the debate. The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, you probably noticed, like I did, that this was not a point of order.

I am glad to be able to take part in this debate today, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague, the hon. member for York West, for presenting this motion to the House.

[*English*]

Canada's trucking industry is a $12 billion business. It employs directly and indirectly almost half a million Canadians. It is indeed big business and it is a business that we should all strive to help, to assist and hope to conserve, both for the near and distant future.

A little more than a year ago the government was made aware of the difficulties of this industry, if it did not know even before then through the blockages that occurred at a number of border points.

[*Translation*]

At that time, Mr. Speaker, the government was already aware of the problems. In fact, in 1988, the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel and I made speeches in the House against the deregulation bill, the bill tabled by the government opposite to deregulate the transportation industry.

We said at the time that the rules were not the same on both sides of the border and that deregulation would immediately give U.S. truckers an advantage. Perhaps the minister would care to check *Hansard* to see what opposition members said. Unfortunately, all of this proved to be true. I say unfortunately, because a lot of my constituents are hurting now.

[*English*]

On April 26 of this year a number of my colleagues and I were holding task force hearings on the deindustrialization of our country. In Alexandria, Ontario, we met with a number of truckers who came to tell us the state the trucking industry was in.

Three days later, on April 29, I sent an open letter to the Minister of Transport and had it hand delivered to his office here on Parliament Hill. To this date the letter remains unanswered, not even an acknowledgement has yet been received by my office. In that letter I outlined for the minister the problems that were related to us by Mrs. Janet Keusch who was here a few days ago and met with the minister.

They told us very clearly the troubles the industry was in. They told us that not only was Glengarry Transport, GTL, having big problems but so were they, the small truckers, the truckers, the brokers, and the independent operators of the difficulties.

They told us about the depreciation rules that they felt were unfair. They told us about the fuel that was considerably more expensive in Canada—I am reading from the letter that I sent to the minister—insurances which are very high, the unreasonably high deductibles that they have to deal with on insurance, and of course they told us about the border problems where U.S. truckers come here with little or no verification as to the safety of their vehicles.

Most of all they talked to us about the GST which stands for, they say, "government squashes truckers". The GST, the minister tells us, is reimbursed to the truckers for their fuel and input costs. When? I have yet to find a trucker who has received a GST cheque. Today is May 17. The GST has been in effect since January 1.

[*Translation*]

Since January 1, the truckers in my riding and across Canada lend this government money every time they pay the GST. They file for their refund but they never get the money, Mr. Speaker. To justify its position, the government says: They will get interest on their refund. Mr. Speaker, when his company is bankrupt, receiving $3 or $10 in interest is no help to a trucker who just lost his business, his home and all his assets. That is something the government should understand.

[*English*]

Now the government tells us it has seven studies which were started a year ago. Why does it take this long to have studies done? Why can we not get at least interim relief for the truckers? And why has that not been contemplated before now? This is a little hard to understand.

The Minister of Transport will know of the letter sent by his predecessor, the member for Simcoe North, in which he said earlier this year that he would not wait for the outcome of the studies. I quote from the letter of January 11, 1991, which was sent to Mr. A. K. Maclaren.

• (1330)

It says:

I have no intention, however, of waiting until all the studies are complete, to take any action which becomes evidently necessary—

The highways are blocked with truckers. Is it not evidently necessary that something has to be done? Glengarry Transport, Canada's fourth largest trucking company, has gone bankrupt and 1,800 people have lost their jobs. Is it not evidently necessary that something has to be done?

According to a May 9 story in *The Financial Post* Kingsway Transport is for sale, Federal Industries wants to get rid of it because they are not making any money with the company. Is it not evidently necessary that something has to be done?

The letter of April 29 that I sent to the minister remains unanswered. Three times I tried on behalf of my constituents to get a meeting with the minister, for Glengarry Transport. Once I managed to get a call back from one of his assistants. The meeting was never held between that minister and Glengarry Transport.

The closest I managed to get to the minister was in the lobby with three women, one of whom was from my riding. The minister, in his condescending way, refused to let me be there with my constituents. To make it worse, he did not want to appear outside the House of Commons within the same television screen in case there were cameras there with the MP representing the people in question. That is the kind of work that was done by that minister across the way, and I point the finger at him.

In the moment or two that I have left, I must say, though, at the very least his seat mate, the Associate Minister of Transport, did agree to meet with the people of GTL. She did try. I know it was at the last minute. We were only 24 hours away from the bankruptcy, but when I failed to get a meeting with the senior Minister of Transport, at least I managed to get one with the Minister of State for Transport, who at least was willing to hear the concerns of my constituents.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I say to the Minister of Transport—I realize he may be a little newer at this game than some of us—that it is high time he helped the industry and my constituents, 1,800 people in Canada in the case of Glengarry, and the 656 other companies that went bankrupt last year and all other Canadians who lost their jobs.

In a letter dated January 11, the minister's predecessor told us he would not wait for the results of the studies. If that is still the government's policy, I would like to know now whether the government intends at least to take certain measures to help trucking companies, before it announces further measures later on.

[*English*]

Finally, to the people sitting at our left, they should remember the last increase in the price of diesel fuel by the the Government of Ontario. While both the federal government and the Government of Ontario are arguing with each other, trying to figure out which of the two is the worst culprit, my constituents are going bankrupt. The people of my riding do not have jobs. People elsewhere in Canada in the trucking industry need help.

[*Translation*]

So I want to ask the minister today, in this very last minute, this last hour which may be crucial for many truckers, to help them by at least announcing a number of measures.

I know he had several meetings with the truckers during the past few days, and I hope we will get at least a few measures that will give hope to the people who are about to lose everything, everything—excuse the repetition—as a result of this government's deregulation policy which was introduced in 1988.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Five-minute period for questions and comments.

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State and to Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue on the same theme as my colleague, the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. I would also like to let him know my concerns and that I too understand the truckers, as I just said to his colleague from York West.

These people have problems, Mr. Speaker. They did long before the GST, long befere deregulation, maybe even before some of my colleagues came to this place, except for the hon. member who just spoke. He has been here for at least 25 years. As I was saying, these people do have problems, not only fuel and tax problems, but

also major problems with insurance, licences, buying trucks and repairs.

I can remember garage owners I was dealing with telling me 15 years ago: "Truckers are all fine people. They are having a rough time, but we cannot fix their trucks if they cannot pay the bill." I can tell you that, 15 years ago, many of my colleagues had never heard of the GST stood for. I can see that the opposition always comes up with the same suggestion: "Take a step forward, a step backward, a step forward. Remove the GST; that will solve the problem."

Even if we removed all taxes—GST and federal tax—tomorrow morning, these guys would not go a block that they would face the same problem. They would come back and say: "Mister Minister, we are still experiencing problems." The minister mentioned that the report is about to be released. I hope so. The truckers are not looking for a quick fix or a two bit solution. They want a long term solution to their problem. Were licences issued? I remember the provinces used to make the decisions and issue licences. I went to get one myself at the Quebec Transport Commission. So, they made the decisions. Unfortunately, they made the wrong decisions at some point because there were too many requests. We cannot prevent people from earning a living, but regulations may be needed in certain circumstances.

The "forward, backward" solution the Liberals are suggesting is not to remove the GST, for the truckers do not pay GST or, if they do, they can get a refund.

An hon. member: They never got it!

Mr. Della Noce: They never got it. Did they ask for a it? My colleague mentioned that GTL Transport just went bankrupt. I would like to point out to him that there was no GST in 1990. What would the ideal solution be in his view? Would it be to remove the GST or to keep the truckers safely protected by regulation?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russel has the floor for two minutes.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, first the hon. member opposite just told us that the industry had problems before 1988. First, in the case of Glengarry Transport, that is not true. The company was founded in 1948. For 40 consecutive years, GTL made profits, from 1948 to 1988. In 1988, the company started to incur losses and this has continued until 1991. That means, since deregulation. I want to tell the hon. member opposite, Mr. Speaker, that at last report, GTL was losing a million dollars a month. This is a company that made profits until 1988 and that had always been profitable.

The hon. member opposite asks us what we Liberals propose to do. I thank the hon. member for giving me the opportunity to read once more the proposals of my colleague, the hon. member for York West—

[*English*]

The hon. member for York West proposed earlier today—I will repeat it for the benefit of my colleague across the way—quicker write-off provisions, federal excise tax relief on diesel fuel, more fairness for the GST on billing.

He wants to have a better system for the GST rebate on fuel, deduction of licence expenses, meetings of federal and provincial transport ministers to solve long-term problems and federal-provincial trade-off issues, stricter enforcement and higher penalties for American firms engaging in cabotage and a temporary moratorium on new interprovincial licences.

I thank my colleague for asking those questions again. They were all answered about an hour ago, but it gives us another chance to put them on the record.

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity today to speak on a very important industry to the province of Ontario and to Canada.

As the truckers outside this Parliament park their rigs, they wait for action from this government.

If I may, on behalf of the truckers, Dale Hellier, Diane Bell, Dave Wallace and many more offer their thanks to the OPP, the RCMP and the security officers for the courtesy that has been shown to them while they have been here in Ottawa on the Hill. It has been greatly appreciated.

• (1340)

Driving a truck is more than a job, it is a way of life and the current federal government is destroying that dream for many. I have been a truck driver travelling all over the prairies. I know the intense feeling of independence,

of getting the job done on time and with a great deal of pride.

I drove auto transport to Saskatchewan, through small towns in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Manitoba. I also drove in the sugar beet industry and drove the grain runs in southwestern Ontario for many years.

The trucking industry is crucially important to Ontario. It is the lifeblood of every community, especially in the smaller and rural areas. Virtually every person in the province, whether they realize it or not, depends on trucks to keep the products we all use and consume every day moving and available.

Trucks move every product and commodity: consumer goods like appliances and furniture; bulk commodities like grain and fertilizer; delicate products such as fresh fruit, meat and vegetables; major products such as cars, steel, livestock and heavy machinery; and the most intricate products such as scientific instruments and computers. They serve every Ontario community accessible by road, and every day, in some way, they contribute to the lives of every person in Ontario and Canada.

Think of the human factor. Hospitals, food and grocery stores, drug stores and gas stations cannot operate without direct transportation. Indeed, in Ontario, truck transportation accounts for nearly 70 per cent of the total freight shipped. Trucks generate more gross income than all other modes of transportation combined, estimated to be $24 billion just five years ago.

The industry employs over 250,000 people in Ontario; they are drivers, mechanics, computer specialists, marketing experts, terminal workers, accountants and administrators. In fact, the trucking industry employs fully five per cent of the provincial labour force. As well, the Ontario trucking industry, responsible for nearly half of all the trucking activity in Canada, spends over $5 billion in operating expenses.

In addition, it is worthy to note that every sector of the economy relies to some degree on trucking services. As a result, trucking activities have higher than average multipliers or spin-off effects in Ontario. So if the federal government, at this time, would let them have a rebate they would receive the money back many times over with men being employed and able to operate.

A recent study by Coopers and Lybrand said that a one dollar increase in trucking activity generates more than two dollars worth of goods and services in other sectors. So the money the government does not receive today by allowing them a few breaks will come back manyfold. When the trucking industry is hurting we are all hurting.

Trucking firms paid the federal government more than $70 million in federal corporate income tax. Ontario motor carriers paid over $170 million in federal excise taxes on the diesel fuel they consumed. The little bit of taxes on the fuel saved now could keep these people working and more money in circulation. Of course, none of that money will help to rebuild the road and highway system, so important to truckers and an efficient economy.

I hope that sets in everyone's mind just how important a profitable trucking industry is to Canada and especially Ontario.

I met with many truckers outside on Wednesday. I speak their language. There were no bureaucrats or cabinet ministers or studies or task forces or committees or politics. We spoke straight up with no bull. These people are hurting. Their pride is being devastated. One of the drivers from Windsor, a 21 year veteran, said he could not help but break down and cry. His frustration was very evident; he has lost his truck, his home and his family.

These truckers, the independent and free spirits of the open road, are having their dreams shattered by deregulation and the big American firms. All they want is a level playing field. Then watch us compete.

A trucker from Ridgetown in my riding was laid off just last month by Central Transport, a division of McKinlay. Two years ago there were 240 drivers; today there are just 67 left, as the routes are being gobbled up by the Americans, with little or no reaction from the federal government. That is just one example of many, many hundreds in my own riding who have lost their trucks and their jobs.

It has been brought to my attention that the American trucks are engaging in cabotage, something that is

supposedly illegal. Americans are dropping off loads from General Motors in Oshawa, and then taking another load from there to London or Hamilton. They are only supposed to be allowed one drop, one hook.

I would like to know from the government how many American trucks have been inspected and verified at weigh scales to prevent cabotage. Truckers tell me that because of government cutbacks the number of inspectors has been reduced. Since deregulation, how many additional inspectors have been hired by Transport Canada to enforce our rules? How many charges have been laid?

The truckers' concerns are well know, and my colleague from York West has outlined them extremely well. It was nearly one year ago that truckers were forced to block border points to get the attention of this government. The issues are still the same. But the only response over a year has been the creation of studies. Meanwhile, small and independent truckers are going under every day, losing their trucks, their homes, their families and their dignity.

Because deregulation has relaxed or eliminated government regulation of routes and tariffs, it has opened the door for more competitors, bringing predatory rates.

Because Canadians pay higher taxes and fuel costs, deregulation has left them vulnerable to low-cost Americans. Since 1986, the Ontario trucking industry has lost over 6,000 jobs to the U.S. through no fault of our truckers. It costs about 20 per cent more to send a shipment in a Canadian truck than an American one. With deregulation our firms are left wide open for bankruptcy. Depreciation rates for Canadian trucks are based on 13 years instead of four as in the United States. There is no level playing field on the trans-border issue.

The former Minister of Transport met truckers last year at the Windsor border crossing. He listened. He even sent out a news release that said he will act on the grievances of Canadian truckers. But this is government by task force, action through shuffling paper and bureaucrats and no results. So we have truckers and their families parked outside Parliament Hill and blocking major highways in Ontario.

Why does it take that sort of protest to get the attention of this government? Why does this government not listen? We have native blockades at Oka, people protesting CBC cutbacks, slashes to VIA Rail, army base closures. The list goes on. This government, I am afraid, is destroying people's way of life through their policies, a plan to tear Canada apart.

The Ontario trucking industry must be saved from oblivion. Since 1988, the year of deregulation, no trucking firm has been in the black. I do not follow the government's logic, that to be competitive with the Americans, we tilt the playing field in their favour and throw our truckers to the wolves. We just make it impossible for people to compete.

It must also be mentioned that the Ontario socialist government has a role to play here. The NDP's recent budget was practically the straw that broke the camel's back.

A huge increase in the diesel fuel tax, $15 more tax for every fill-up; $4,000 more every year just in taxes. That is the socialist solution to our trucking woes, while the Tories in this House seem to ignore the real problems and set up task forces that are covered with a years' worth of dust.

Trucking is essential to Ontario and to Canada, especially as we try to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Trucking is used for 70 per cent of Ontario's exports to the U.S. and 75 per cent of our imports. Trucking is the lifeblood of our economy. It must be saved.

In closing, I cannot stress too strongly to this government that they are ignoring the people who are losing their jobs, their trucks, their homes, their families and their livelihood. My riding has been devastated.

Many thousands of truckers, including the hundreds here in Ottawa are just trying to make a living, but the government is tying their hands behind their backs. The recession is hitting hard. Give us a level playing field.

• (1350)

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member for Kent for his comments on the nine suggestions proposed by the member for York West. The member for Kent obviously approves of them.

The indication was that the Leader of the Official Opposition also approved of them. As we have heard that this is not a problem that has occurred overnight, that it has been accumulating for over two or three years, I am wondering if the hon. member could tell me what

the cost of these particular suggestions that his party is making is.

Obviously the suggestions did not just come off the top of his head. I am sure his party has carefully analysed the particular cost of this program. Perhaps if the number is not at his fingertips some of his members could help him. Clearly this policy has been supported by the leader of his party. Could he give me some idea of the cost of these suggestions and whether the constituents in his riding of Kent support the use of taxpayers' money for these programs?

Mr. Crawford: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question. Certainly there will be a cost. The cost will be minimal relative to the returns created by people working. It is just the same as putting a man on welfare when he should be working. The return to the government would be much more with him working. The cost of what the truckers pay to run, for repairs, tires, and fuel and the people who are involved with them, whether truck-stop waitresses, mechanics, everyone that is supported by the truckers through their financial payments to them, all of this will come back to the government. The very little that we would be spending initially would be paid back many thousand times over.

I am happy to see we have the ex-minister of finance with us. If he could give me the figure on how much the GST is going to bring in, maybe I could elaborate further on how much money these suggestions would cost. I cannot give a figure right now. As the hon. member for York West mentioned, it is still in the study phase.

If the hon. trade minister could just give me the figures on the GST then maybe we could come up with a figure.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, we have taken a look at the cost. For instance, through the excise tax on diesel fuel, both in trucking and in aviation, this government raised approximately $300 million. That includes on aviation, so revenues from trucking are considerably less.

If we take a fraction of that $300 million, the revenue lost to the Treasury is very much a cost worth paying for an industry that directly employs 600,000 people across the country, a multi-billion dollar industry that is going down the drain. The cost of unemployment insurance, the cost of welfare to those unemployed people, the cost of losing that infrastructure, the cost of losing 600,000 jobs, the cost of losing multiplier-effect jobs would be a heavier toll for this government to pay.

The government can either pay a cost now worth paying or face a much bigger cost later, after it has lost the industry. Perhaps the hon. member for Kent can make some comments based on this.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I am sorry, but the time allowed for questions and comments has now expired. We shall hear from the Minister for International Trade.

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in this debate.

I want to pick up on a point that was a topic in Question Period earlier today. Two members were commenting on the cynicism with which Canadians are viewing their members of Parliament these days.

One of the reasons for that is there is too loose a use of so-called truth and a lot of use of myths. We can recall what the member for Etobicoke North said about the free trade agreement.

He said, back in 1988 or 1989: "Every sparrow that falls we are going to blame on the free trade agreement". This is just one of those examples. In the motion that was put today the Liberals have found another sparrow that they are going to blame on the free trade agreement.

I want to substantiate what I say, not with a few generalizations but with facts.

No one in this House is happy when they hear the stories of the truckers. My colleague, the Minister of Transport, has met with the truckers and their wives. They have spent a good amount of time talking about the difficulties that they are facing. We acknowledge and recognize those difficulties.

Let us find out, as members of Parliament, what is causing these difficulties. Let us go to the source of these difficulties and not base our statements on a number of myths.

My purpose today is to talk about the free trade agreement and its impact on the truckers. I cannot let the occasion go by without recalling for the House a decision that we took in the design of the goods and services tax on how we would treat the question of tax on gasoline.

We had a tax under the old tax system of 19 per cent. It was going to drop to 7 per cent under the new tax, but we felt that if we just dropped it to 7 per cent the provinces would take the revenue from the consumer. It would have probably been the easiest $500 million the provinces ever took.

We took a decision that we would keep the price to the consumer the same. We had two ways of doing that. One was to increase the excise tax. The other was to apply the GST on the provincial taxes, broaden the tax base and get more moneys out of the goods and services tax.

We took the second approach. The principal reason we took the second approach was that the tax paid under the goods and services tax could be recovered by people in the transportation industry so they would not have to pay that tax. If we had gained those revenues through the excise tax, we would not have been able to provide the truckers with the credit.

However, because we did it through the goods and services tax, they got the credit. I have heard, from the member for Hamilton East and from other members directly in front of me, that the GST is the the cause of the truckers' problems when the truckers are beneficiaries under the goods and services tax in two ways.

First, as I have just described, the truckers get a full credit on the GST paid in the cost of their fuel. They get it 21 days after they present their application or they get interest paid by the government.

The second reason that the truckers benefit from the GST is because under the old tax there was a hidden tax in the cost of a truck and in the cost of a trailer. All of that is recoverable under the GST so that their costs are being reduced.

Mr. Crawford: They don't buy that.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): My friend from Chatham over here says that he does not buy that.

If he did not deal in myths, mistruths, or misinterpretation and distortion of the facts, then he would understand it. This is essentially the point that I want to make to my colleagues here in the House today so that we can deal in the facts and not in distortions of the truth like we are hearing in the House today.

• (1400)

Madam Speaker, my role today is to talk about the free trade agreement. I have two principal points and then some examples to make.

My first point is that transportation, at the request of the Americans, was not a part of the free trade agreement. Therefore, there is nothing in the free trade agreement that applies to the trucking industry. I look at this motion today, which blames the problem on the free trade agreement. Now I hear the critic for transport for the Liberal Party saying that the problem started before that. He is saying it again, Mr. Speaker. The problem was before the free trade agreement came into effect. Then why did he make reference to the free trade agreement in the motion today? For what other reason?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I know it is raining outside, but there does not have to be a storm in here.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. That is my first point, that there is nothing in the free trade agreement that affects the trucking industry in a direct sense in either a positive or negative way.

The point I do want to make is that the volume of trade since 1988 has increased by about 12 per cent. That means business, because that trade has to move on various forms of transportation, including trucking.

Exports are up 12 per cent since 1988. Imports are up 11.6 per cent and the balance of trade is up from $14 billion surplus to a $17 billion surplus. So the basis for the business of the truckers has increased since the free trade agreement came in.

I hear again the member opposite saying that the free trade agreement had nothing to do with it. Then why is the reference in the motion that the free trade agreement is the cause of the problems of the truckers outside here? That is the sort of thing that breeds cynicism in the minds of Canadians today.

I also want to look a bit into the future and relate my comments to what some people are saying about the impact of the free trade agreement on their businesses, because we are hearing a broad range of stories from members opposite about lay-offs and plant closings that

they blame on the free trade agreement—more sparrows that fall that are blamed on the free trade agreement.

I want to talk about some people who are saying good things about the free trade agreement. I want to mention a company, Trimac of Calgary. Trimac is one of the largest trucking and service companies in Canada. They expected to see a greater amount of north-south traffic as a result of the free trade agreement, and Bud McCaig has said:

> We anticipated that free trade would impact favourably on the bulk chemical transportation sector. Since we are the largest bulk carrier in Canada and well positioned on both sides of the border, we expected that it would impact positively on us as well. While it is difficult to quantify statistically right now, my feeling is that cross-border trade volumes are up, and that free trade has been positive.

Weyerhauser Canada's investments over the last two years at their plants in Prince Albert and Saskatoon have resulted in increased production destined for U.S. markets. The investments have also resulted in an increase in the firm's shipping volume. I want to quote here from Bill Gainer, vice-president of Weyerhauser. He says:

> We are part of a competitive North American and world market. We have enhanced our competitiveness and we will be investing more.

Jay Lilje, president of Allied Van Lines, says his company's 1989 purchase, in a bid to capture opportunities offered by free trade of the Canadian operations of U.S. based Mayflower Transit Inc. have:

> —strengthened Allied Van Line's transborder operations, which we see growing with free trade, and liberalization of cross-border movements.

He indicates that the company is quite pleased with the results of the acquisition, particularly in the context of the free trade agreement.

Construction is well advanced on Freightliner of Canada's new truck manufacturing facility in St. Thomas. Why would they be making trucks, Madam Speaker? Because people are buying trucks. According to company president John Mosier, the decision to build the St. Thomas factory, which will employ 1,100 people when completed, was taken as a direct result of the free trade agreement.

The point that I want to make here is that if we as members of Parliament are going to remove this element of cynicism which is poisoning the atmosphere in the economy and in society today, we have to deal with facts. I have demonstrated here how the free trade agreement has been a benefit for the Canadian economy, has been a benefit for the Canadian truckers.

There are problems. We acknowledge that, but let us get the facts right, let us get the facts on the table and make the decision based on the facts, not on the myths and distortions.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): I have a very simple question to ask the hon. minister. Having cited the great benefits that have come to ordinary truckers in Canada, I wonder whether he would be willing, with me, to put on his raincoat and rain hat and walk out on to the steps in front of these buildings and talk to those people and tell them and their wives and their children how much free trade and deregulation has benefited them. Will you join me? I will meet you out there in five minutes.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, this was an incredible feat. They go to their club house and they pull out the heavy hitters—just like they did in the 1988 campaign—and they were supposed to give us the truth and the facts. Here is a minister who strolls in and who rarely visits his riding and talks to average Canadians in Etobicoke Centre, and he has the audacity not only in the throne speech to say that the free trade deal has been the security blanket for the economy, but comes in here and suggests that somehow the free trade agreement has helped the truckers.

If the minister had cared to tune in this morning and early afternoon, he would have heard that the trucking industry was given away, was sacrificed before the free trade rounds. And what we had suggested, Mr. Minister, was that you would have had the duty and the responsibility if you had any concern during the free trade rounds to have equalized the two fields, to have obtained for our tuckers an adjustment program, just like your Prime Minister said during the 1988 campaign, just like you

said, sir, from the Atlantic to the Pacific .You said: "We will bring in the greatest adjustment programs in the western world".

I ask the minister, through the Chair, where are those programs that were promised in 1988? Where are those programs that the Prime Minister promised? Why does he not give us the truth and the facts rather than spinning out these false dreams that he has been spinning out for six years?

Another thing we said about the GST, again if the minister would have cared, is first, we urged the Minister of Transport to increase the time of those rebates. Does the minister know that since January 1 no trucking firm has received its GST rebates and, therefore, its cash flow hurts. The second thing we asked the Minister of Transport was to give the trucking companies extra time with which to remit their GST obtained from the shippers, because the trucking companies have to remit those receipts in 45 days, but the shipping companies don't pay the truckers until 50, 60 and 90 days. That is what we have said about the GST. Those are the facts. The minister is the myth maker and the dream breaker.

• (1410)

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to talk about the adjustment programs. As a result of the change in the unemployment insurance program, we have introduced an increase of $550 million this year, which will grow to $750 million in two or three year's time, of increased amounts for training. These moneys will go to people who are out of jobs, who are looking for additional skills so they can get back into the labour force with better skills to get better jobs and better opportunities. That is on top of the $1.7 billion of the Canadian Jobs Strategy that we brought in in 1984.

I remind my hon. friend that back in 1984 almost the total amount of the moneys that were going into the job market were passive moneys, income support moneys, not active moneys, moneys that would help people gain better jobs through increased training.

The Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development, the OECD, has done studies on this that show the change; show that we are still below where we should be relative to other countries. We have made a clear commitment, reinforced in the Speech from the Throne, to move in that direction. These are a fundamentally different set of policies than were followed by the Liberal Party before 1984.

My friend talked about the GST. I am advised that 70 per cent of the refund requests received thus far have been actioned within the 21 days. The other 30 per cent—

An hon. member: That could be false.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): These numbers are supported by figures and facts in Revenue Canada. Let me comment, Madam Speaker, on the other 30 per cent. Sixty per cent of the other 30 per cent are from incorrectly completed returns. The balance requires some form of follow-up from Revenue Canada.

We are working on this and I am sure that the Department of National Revenue will have, in a very short period of time, the whole system normalized.

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, the issue underlying today's motion, the competitive problems confronting our country's trucking industry, is one that deeply concerns me and every member of our government. The need for a dynamic, competitive transportation sector is real, not just for those who earn their living and support their families through this industry, but also because of the role it plays across the broad spectrum of Canada's economy.

But painful dilemmas will not be solved by political grandstanding, and you will not find effective answers by placing blame where it does not belong.

That is why I want to set the record straight for my hon. friends in the opposition concerning the federal tax system. It is not the source of the problem here today. In fact, because of the extensive tax reforms our government has put in place, this is one area where the trucking industry, and Canadian business in general, is better positioned today than it was just a few years ago.

I know there are people who do not want to believe that. Federal taxation makes a convenient target for those who would prefer to think there are easy, instant solutions for serious difficulties. But the facts tell a different story.

Truckers have identified higher diesel fuel costs in Canada as one of the critical disadvantages they face in competing with American firms both here and in the United States. It has been argued that federal taxes on

diesel fuel sales are a significant part of that burden, but that just is not true.

Instead, federal excise taxes on diesel fuel are actually lower in Canada than the federal tax in the United States, 4 cents a litre here compared to 6.2 cents there. In other words, Washington's taxes on diesel fuel are 50 per cent higher than ours.

The only other federal tax on fuel sales in Canada is the GST. And, yes, there is no equivalent federal tax south of the border. The GST is not a hobble on Canada's truckers, not a handicap they face. Instead of tilting the playing field in favour of American competitors, the GST has eliminated disadvantages created by previous Canadian governments through the destructive federal sales tax.

Under the GST, truckers recover every single cent of sales tax they pay on fuel used for business purposes. That means that the GST does not add to fuel costs.

This is not the only benefit the GST delivers, as the minister just said. Under the old manufacturers' sales tax, Canadian businesses, including truckers, ended up paying tax that was included in the price of many goods and services they needed to run their operations.

Some of those costs were direct, such as the telecommunications service tax. Others were less visible, but they were still there. This was because the producers of goods and services paid the FST on many of the items they used to do business and passed them on their customers. But that does not happen under the GST.

Through the use of the input tax credit, businesses at every level now recover all the tax they pay on their commercial transactions. There is no hidden tax passed on through this system. This has already reduced the cost of many items and is helping service providers, such as maintenance garages and mechanics, control their costs and prices. This is helping Canadians compete, not put them at a disadvantage.

There is another issue that truckers have raised and I want to review it. They have pointed out correctly that Canadian tax depreciation rates on tractors and trailers are not as generous as those in the United States.

However, that criticism overlooks that the U.S. truckers must pay a 12 per cent excise tax on the purchase of heavy trucks and trailers. There is no such tax in Canada. This more than offsets the faster depreciation available in the United States.

The facts I have just outlined are the bottom line realities. They provide dollar and cents evidence that federal excise taxes, the GST and depreciation schedules have not sacrificed the interests of domestic transporters. As Monday's Speech from the Throne made clear, this is a government committed to helping Canadians meet competitive challenges, so we can all benefit from that success.

But this does not mean that truckers are crying wolf about the total tax burden on fuel purchases. American prices are lower and state level taxation is a definite contributing factor. We have to confront the fact that provincial taxes on diesel fuel can run double or more than those in neighbouring American states.

Earlier this year if you fuelled up your truck in British Columbia, you paid 11.4 cents a litre in provincial tax. In Washington State, across the border, it was 6.8 cents.

In Saskatchewan you paid 10 cents, 5.3 cents in North Dakota.

In Ontario you were paying 10.9 cents compared to just 4.6 cents a litre in Michigan.

In Quebec, it was 13.5 cents a litre, four times higher than the 3.1 cents that the same trucker would be paying in New York State.

Following the recent provincial budget, this disparity has become even worse. Ontario's tax on diesel was boosted 1.7 cents with an equal increase due next January.

In reviewing these figures, I am not trying to suggest that provincial governments alone have the responsibility for assisting our freight trucking section to deal with their problems. This is a national problem and one that will only be resolved through mutual commitment and partnership by all levels of government working with the industry, much as the task forces the previous minister set up and the current minister is dealing with.

Let me also suggest a basic, critical principle that we must apply to identifying answers. That is, the solution must not be based on actions that would jeopardize our ability to stay the course in holding down our deficit

during difficult times and bringing it down dramatically once economic growth is fully restored.

I know my hon. friends across the floor do not share that view. Spending restraint is not a prescription that they are familiar with. We saw that during the 1981–1982 recession, when our deficit doubled in just two years and then continued to grow as we entered recovery, reaching $38.5 billion a year in 1984–85. The all time record.

Today we are still living with the consequences of those deficits and the $200 billion national debt we inherited. If it was not for the for the interest payments on that debt, we would not be in the deficit position now and we would have the resources to better help the many individuals and business sectors that have been hit hard by another recession.

Just last year, $43 billion in Canadian taxpayers' dollars went just to pay the interest charges on the debt. That is $43 billion that could have been used to lower the debt or lower taxes, $43 billion that was not available to increase unemployment insurance entitlements or for education and apprenticeship programs or to contribute to funding health care programs or to boost family allowances and pensions. That is the part of the tragedy of deficits and debt left to us by the Liberal government.

There is another aspect to that tragedy, one that ties directly to the competitive challenges faced by truckers and virtually every other business sector. The blunt fact is deficits and debt contribute to inflation and to inflationary expectations and by doing so put further pressure on interest rates. There is no member in this House who has not heard our constituents, individuals, local businesses and industry associations say that lower interest rates are essential to get the economy moving and reduce investment costs. But, as the February budget so clearly described, the only way rates can be brought down and kept down is to reduce inflation. To do that, government must play its part, including keeping its own costs under control.

• (1420)

Our policies are working. Inflation has stabilized and interest rates have dropped 5 per cent in the last year. Controlling spending does not come easily. There are always ways in which to spend more, always groups and interests, such as the troubled trucking sector, with real problems who can make passionate and convincing appeals for assistance. However, good economic management and real leadership mean a striking and realistic balance between specific sectors and interests and the needs of the wider, national community, including taxpayers.

It is clear that Canadians feel they are already taxed too much. They do not want governments to go deeper into debt with the automatic consequences that tax burdens will rise in the future.

This takes me back to the issue of taxation and its impact on truckers and other industries challenged to compete in the North American and international markets.

There are a couple of issues here I would like to touch on briefly in my final moments. Since first coming to office in 1984, our government has recognized the need to ensure our total national tax system did not place Canadians at a competitive disadvantage. At the same time, we were also committed to improving the fairness of the tax system and maintaining its ability to support the programs and services Canadians value.

We acted on this commitment, not just through the GST, but also through extensive reforms to the personal and corporate income tax systems that took effect in 1988. We are convinced that those reforms have delivered real benefits.

Again, I realize this seems to be a fly in the face of conventional public wisdom. There seems to be a common misunderstanding that we are among the most heavily taxed nations in the world. In particular, Canadians often point to the United States and see it as a taxation nirvana. Figures from the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, the OECD, in 1988, the last year that figures were available, paint a somewhat different picture. On an international basis, the figures show that the burden of total taxation in Canada, by all levels of government, amounted to 34 per cent of our gross domestic product. This was actually lower than 16 of the 24 OECD countries. In fact, among the major group of seven industrial nations, only Japan and the United States had taxes as low as ours. In Japan, taxation was equal to 31.3 per cent of GDP, while in the U.S. it was 29.8 per cent. That was not dramatically lower than our 34 per cent.

While there are many aspects to the relationship between taxes and business, it is a fact that Canadian companies do not face as great a competitive handicap as many would like to believe.

But with respect to our competitiveness with the United States, we have to face the reality that American productivity has grown much stronger than ours in recent years and Canadian labour costs now exceed theirs. Factors like this go a long way to explaining why Canadian firms and workers are finding it harder to compete.

However, there is another aspect to the tax story that we also need to remind ourselves of on a regular basis. We have agreed, as a nation, to allocate tax resources so that every Canadian has access to public health care. We also provide further resources to cover the cost of post-secondary education. Both of these are areas where America places the bulk of the burden on the individual and the private sector.

I do not know of many, if any, Canadians who would trade our medicare system for that in the U.S. The cost of private health care insurance is something that is frequently overlooked when critics compare our tax levels to those of American firms.

I do not want to shift today's debate away from the real problems Canadian truckers face. They are serious, there is a hardship, and we need to look at the problem seriously. However, I know it is essential that, in developing a strategy, this House and all interested Canadians recognize that there is no simple, quick fix solutions that our government can impose by fiat. The perception that the federal taxation is the source of the problem is based on wishful thinking or partisan politics— not fact. Any prescriptions based on such a misunderstanding will run the real risk of missing the mark and could even damage our prospects to strengthen our competitiveness as a nation.

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Madam Speaker, the idle trucks that are lined up just outside the door here along Wellington Street are really just a microcosm of Canada's labour force. They represent Canada's unemployed men and women. It just happens to be the truckers. That just happens to be the transportation industry in Canada. That is the industry which moves the nation. When that stops, as it has stopped today, it says so much about the inner workings of a nation. It says a once proud occupation has been silenced, that of the truckers, the guys who took pride in their rigs pounding down the nation's highways. They have been silenced because of the mismanagement of the current government and its economic policies.

This is not because they wanted to be silenced. Their rigs are in good shape and they are ready to go, so that is not the problem. They have kept their rigs in good shape because it is a proud occupation and they know that they are in a very competitive business. They know that the tax write-off on their equipment is spread over many years, unlike their U.S. competitors who can write theirs off in a matter of four years or so. They know that they are working at a terrible disadvantage because their competitors can get an annual tax break of several thousands of dollars on the purchase of that very expensive equipment.

They know too that they are trying to survive in an industry when their competitors in the U.S. can buy diesel fuel for slightly more than half the price they pay in Canada. In spite of these handicaps, they would like to keep on trucking, as they say.

However, now they cannot because every mile they drive means they are losing money and time has run out. When they buy a tank of diesel fuel they do not stop to think how much is tax and how much is cost. They only know one figure and that is the one that is registered up on the pump. That is what they pay.

All they hear from the new Minister of Transport is: "You'll have to become more competitive". It is pretty hard to be competitive if you do not have any money in your pocket. This is a government that has its hands in all four of their pockets, right up to the elbow in most cases, and then the minister says: "Come on boys, be more competitive".

Instead of losing more money than they have already lost they decided to park their rigs out on Wellington Street. I talked to one young man outside the other day. He said he would like to be back at work. I asked him how he could afford to have his rig parked here. He said: "If it wasn't parked here, it would be parked somewhere else". It does not really matter to him whether it is parked on Wellington Street or parked outside his home.

These people are really representative of Canada's labour force today. They are disappointed. They are disillusioned that their lives and that of their families have been turned around so suddenly. "Gone are the days", they say, "when there was work out there to be done" and they were willing to do it. They met the payments on their equipment. They took great pride in what they did well and the knowledge that they would be

able to look after the needs of their families in those good years.

It just happens to be truckers that have ascended outside the door here recently. It could have been the farmers of this nation. They have been burdened and bludgeoned by debt for so long that they have become discouraged and disillusioned the same as the truckers.

A callous government is how they described the Tory government, as one which does not seem to understand just how tenuous their livelihood is, whether it is trucking or farming these days in Canada.

Instead of truckers or farmers, it could have been the small town merchants, the restaurant owners and the gas station operators of this nation, who just like the truckers are watching their lifestyles disappear as economic conditions in Canada due to the GST, the high dollar, the high interest rate and the over-all cost of doing business in this country has forced their regular customers, their neighbours to go to a foreign country on a regular basis to do their shopping.

All this is happening in spite of the government having studies over a year ago indicating that these devastations of our economy were on the horizon if the government failed to alter their economic policies.

• (1430)

The government knew this was going to happen and sat idly by. It is unfortunate that the truckers have to illustrate their plight in the manner we see out in front of the Parliament Buildings, but I want to congratulate them for their ingenuity. If that is what it takes to get the government's attention, perhaps the truckers' efforts are not in vain after all. We will have to wait and see.

The government's tax policies and fiscal measures have resulted in 1.4 million Canadians being unemployed. After a Speech from the Throne just a few days ago with no new measures in it, none whatsoever, to suggest that the government is even cognizant of the malaise that has fallen over Canada, what alternatives do the truckers have?

I think the truckers with their rigs standing still are symbolic. They are a reflection of so many aspects of Canadian life today. Perhaps it is time for the government to admit what the overwhelming majority of Canadians already know, that this government has caused the nation to come to a halt and is now completely barren of any new initiatives which could get the wheels of the nation turning once again.

Perhaps it is time for the government to be honest with Canadians just this one time. Perhaps the government could admit it has no programs to offer, resign and call an election so Canadians can once more be given a choice.

I think—and the polls would support me—that given a choice today, Canadians would choose to bury the remnants of this government and opt for a government with a new set of priorities for all Canadians.

They would opt for a new government whose number one priority is to address the very real problems of doing business in this country today. The very real problems are dramatically symbolized by the idle rigs outside the House of Commons at this very moment. It is so un-Canadian to have these men and women sitting idle when they would like to get their equipment to work.

They would like to put their expertise and their energies to work but they cannot do it. It is a losing cause.

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a question of my colleague who just spoke.

The representation that he is making today on behalf of the truckers is not new. The Liberal Party, the opposition, has opposed deregulation. We said, years ago, that deregulation would be bad for the trucking industry.

Certainly on numerous occasions, we intervened before the House to indicate the danger of deregulation in Canada. Indeed, it has put our trucking industry in a very difficult position *vis-à-vis* the American trucking industry.

Would my colleague comment on some of the proposals that have been put forward by our party in this debate in order to help the government a solution to this problem?

On behalf of the Official Opposition, the member for York West put forward a proposal today that is extremely important and could help the government find a solution to the problems of the trucking industry.

I would like to ask my colleague to elaborate on this proposal put forward by our colleague from York West.

Mr. Jordan: Madam Speaker, I have a copy of that paper which my colleague presented earlier today.

When it comes to something like deregulation, we are still a northern nation. We live along a little ribbon around the 49th parallel, but the bulk of Canada is in more extreme weather conditions than exists anywhere in the United States.

We have to realize what is practical, in terms of competing. Take, for example, the dairy industry. Anyone who thinks that we can compete with the dairy industry in southern Virginia probably does not know anything about the dairy industry. Go down there and watch that industry in mass production.

They can make it from some of those places in the United States into Canada. It is a long overnight haul. One of those trucks could bring a litre of milk for every man, woman, and child in my riding in one trip. Can we compete with that? Anyone who thinks we can does not know the dairy industry and what is necessary to compete.

That is typical I think. Canadians say: "We can compete. We are honest, hard working people". Of course, we are honest, hard working people but we have to be realistic. There are areas in which we can compete and there are areas in which we cannot compete.

I do not think we can compete in the transportation industry, not when we see these fellows waiting out there. They cannot compete. They cannot let a fellow who can fill up his tank and save a couple of hundred dollars come across, take away their livelihood, and compete with that.

I wish the government would put it in terms that I could understand. I would try to understand, if the government could explain it to me. I cannot understand. I do not understand how anyone could think we could compete in the dairy industry either. I know enough about it. I know that we cannot compete. The government should realize that there are areas in which we can compete and that is not one of them. I do not think we can compete in this area, with the deregulation as it applies to the transportation industry, either.

The Tories talk about the GST as a great success story, the free trade agreement as a great success story. Canadians had better not accept too many more of these Tory success stories. They have resulted in 1.4 million people being unemployed. It is just too much. We cannot take any more Tory success stories.

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Madam Speaker, I speak today in this debate with much regret and bitterness, because this debate reminds me of debates we had here in this House in 1987 when the Conservative government insisted on presenting Bills C-18 and C-19 which at that time seemed to us in the Opposition to be a death sentence for the whole trucking industry in Canada.

Despite our objections, despite the repeated requests from this side of the House to delay that bill, unless we had guarantees from the Americans, the then-Minister of Transport went ahead with his bill, with the consequences we see today.

We are not glad to see these truckers occupy part of Wellington Street here in Ottawa and protest as they are doing on the highways of Ontario. These truckers are suffering unfair competition from American truckers. We in the opposition had warned the government three years ago that this would happen, and we were not the only ones to say so.

I refer you to a debate that took place on February 5, 1987, where, in a statement I made then, I repeated the words of Gerry Reimer, Vice-President of Reimer Express Lines of Winnipeg, and I quote what he said then: "American companies can come here and cut rates to smithereens for a year or two and all domestic truckers will be gone."

• (1440)

I would also like to quote a leading Canadian business executive, Mr. John Kennedy, the president of Kingsway Transport, of Rexdale, Ontario, who said in 1987: "There is no doubt that deregulation will have disastrous effects on the financial position of the trucking industry in

Canada. Ultimately, it will lead to a wave of mergers, takeovers and bankruptcies."

Madam Speaker, three or four years later, we find ourselves in a situation where Canadian truckers are giving up hope of getting any assistance from the Conservative government. At the time, the government refused to listen to the industry, and to the opposition members who opposed these bills and were telling it that deregulation would be harmful to the trucking industry. They were saying that tens of thousands of jobs would be lost if the government were to implement deregulation.

So today, about three and a half years later, we find ourselves with the terrible conclusion that, indeed, approximately 35,000 to 40,000 jobs have been lost in the trucking industry in Canada, jobs that we will never get back, that are now in the United States, that have been lost in Canada because of the incompetence of the Conservative government. Those were jobs that allowed thousands of Canadian families to make a decent living here in Canada and that were totally lost to American transportation companies competing with Canadian companies, with the approval and the blessing of the Conservative government.

Madam Speaker, it is obvious that today something must be done before the whole industry disappears, as suggested by representatives of the trucking industry three and a half years ago. It seems obvious to me that if the government has no other alternatives than to study this issue over and over again, it should immediately implement the proposals made by my colleague from York West, who has specific proposals to assist representatives of the trucking industry who are here in Ottawa. What they want from the government is not studies, but decisions that will solve their problems and save the thousands of jobs which still exist in the Canadian trucking industry.

Obviously, one of the worst problems was that according to Bill C–19, the government at the time proposed that businesses drop the public convenience and necessity criterion. I must recall that the criterion existed in Canada since 1954 for the very purpose of protecting the trucking industry. The criterion was effective, as, between 1960 and 1970, the Canadian trucking industry prospered and rendered great services, not only to our country, but to thousands of its workers.

But, at the request of some important shippers, a few companies, obviously very rich, very important and very close to the government, deregulation was brought in, without regards to the small truckers' interests, but to please a few big shippers in Canada. That is what happened, again. It is easy to understand: a Conservative governement listens to the big and the wealthy in our society, but it remains completely deaf to the interests of the less fortunate. So, it agreed to the request of the big shippers and proceeded with deregulating a Canadian industry which was then in good shape. But that is not the case anymore, because deregulation here produced exactly the same results as in the United States where it had been implemented a few years before, supposedly to allow for more competition on the marketplace.

But, what did we see in the United States? Over there, deregulation favoured the largest companies. Four very large companies are controlling almost all the trucking market in United States and today, they literarily gobble up the small trucking companies in Canada.

We said all that in 1987 to a Conservative government who did not want to listen. Today, we live with the consequences of this harmful, completely inappropriate and unacceptable policy of the Conservative government. Today, we tell them: For God's sake, stop your useless studies and do something. Follow the recommendations of our colleague from York West, solve the problems of the truckers and save the few jobs left in this industry.

[*English*]

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Madam Speaker, on Wednesday and Thursday of this week, residents in my riding and in other part of metropolitan Toronto were terribly inconvenienced by the demonstration by the truckers.

I, myself, spent an extra two hours on highway 2 trying to get through in order to avoid highway 104. I also spent a very short period after I got on to highway 104 at Port Union Road all the way over to Yonge Street viewing the suffering of people trying to get home.

It was an extremely impressive demonstration. There were enormous trucks as far as the eye could see and

there were enormous numbers of frustrated motorists. Every single arterial road in my riding was clogged.

There was the possibility of very serious consequences. North York General Hospital, which is at the edge of my riding, has the highest volume emergency department in Canada and that hospital had one of the major access roads to it clogged.

I think that this was an incredible demonstration that should never be repeated. I think the truckers are certainly right in their frustration at the lack of co-operation of government in Canada.

• (1450)

Consumers do not want to pay more for goods and services in Canada than they would in the United States. Clearly, they are voting with their feet. If we do not get our industries competitive, we are going to lose a lot of business and people will move to the United States and industry will leave.

This issue is one that is important to us all and very important to consumers. If there are those who think that regulating the industry and protecting the transportation industry in order to keep out competition is the way to go, they are very, very wrong. It is impossible in the global marketplace. It is key to many of the industries in Canada.

Transportation costs are high throughout Canada, and we have got to get those costs lower. We have been trying, at the federal level with our government, to lower those costs. Clearly, the GST, as the minister has explained, has been extremely helpful. One thing that has to be done to help truckers and other businesses is for the provincial governments to harmonize with the GST. Right away, they could give an enormous rebate to many of these truckers so they could compete because American truckers would also have to pay the GST on any services delivered in Canada and it is fully rebatable.

Look at the tax situation. The taxes at the federal level are much, much lower than the Americans and the problem is at the provincial level. The provincial governments are gouging. When you look at Ontario, we have had a budget that has shown no restraint; 5.8 per cent increase in civil servants' wages. That goes all the way through the economy.

I know people at Metropolitan Toronto Council are talking about the fact that they cannot do anything less with the civil servants there. It is an extremely difficult circumstance and what we have to do is become more competitive.

Mr. Ouellet: Madam Speaker, a short answer to the intervention of the hon. member would be what Kevin Ford, a married father of three, who drives for a small Guelph, Ontario hauler, said here yesterday when he was interviewed by the press. He said: "There are days when you have to work 20 hours to make ends meet". This trucker had to give up his house and two cars to keep his family afloat.

There are some inconveniences to people who live in residential Toronto, but you have to think of these drivers who also had homes but because of the incompetence of the Conservative government have lost their homes. If the government had moved earlier on this matter there would be no blockage today.

Last year in the summer, independent truckers blocked several border crossings in Ontario and Quebec to draw attention to the problem they have with U.S. truckers paying less for their rigs, fuels, parts, maintenance and insurance.

The then Minister of Transport decided to study the matter. He established a study that was to cover seven points. This week, the new Minister of Transport is telling us that the study is not finished, that it might not be finished before sometime next year. Well surely these truckers want action and they are not going to—

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: The time for questions and comments is over. Debate. The honourable Minister of State.

[*English*]

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport): Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate on trucking as there is a need to set the record straight, particularly about as what was just said a few minutes ago across the floor.

There is a need, as well, to explain the enormous amount of complex work that has gone on over the past 12 months.

During the past few days, hon. members of the opposition have criticized the government for its approach taken over the past year. This is not unusual or unexpected. The government has been following an approach of careful targeting of the issue; a difficult job with a moving target. It has been doing this with the

agreement and support of a large segment of the trucking industry.

During the past week, we have witnessed a number of demonstrations by truckers here in Ottawa and elsewhere which had their genesis in a series of demonstrations which began in Quebec in mid-May 1990. Then, a group of independent truckers demonstrated by blocking highways and the border crossing at Lacolle.

The Quebec Minister of Transport listened to the demands of these independent truckers and agreed to set up a commission to study their demands. The creation of the commission had been one of the principal requests of the truckers themselves.

The provincial minister invited the participation of the federal government in the work of the commission, and in recognizing the shared jurisdiction between the federal government and the provincial government in extra provincial trucking matters, the former Minister of Transport agreed. A senior official of the department participated fully in all the deliberations of what came to be known as the Charbonneau commission.

Approximately one week after the Quebec truckers demonstrated, a group calling itself "Canadian Truckers Fighting Back" blocked the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor. Another sympathetic group closed additional international crossing in southern Ontario at Sarnia, Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and Gananoque.

The Ontario Minister of Transportation agreed to meet the blockaders at Windsor, because of the extreme importance of that transportation link to the health of the Canadian automobile industry.

The auto industry in southern Ontario and in the U.S., which relies on just-in-time delivery, was rapidly coming to a stand still because of the bridge closures. Once again, recognizing the shared federal-provincial responsibility in international trucking issues, the federal government responded quickly and effectively. The former Minister of Transport flew overnight to Windsor and met with the truckers in the early morning to get to the bottom of their complaints.

After several hours of discussions, the demonstrators agreed that the cancellation of the free trade agreement and the setting aside of the deregulation of the trucking industry were not responsible or reasonable proposals, which shows that the truckers themselves were a little more reasonable than some of the members opposite.

A short list of action items was adopted which the minister agreed to raise with his federal colleagues and best efforts were assured.

These issues were:

(1) U.S. carriers doing cabotage in Canada.

(2) Unfair, even predatory pricing practices by U.S. carriers.

(3) Collection of federal fuel taxes from U.S. carriers.

Also during the meeting in Windsor, the Minister of Transport agreed with the Ontario Minister of Transportation that a federal official be nominated to the Ontario Ministry of Transportation's Trucking Industry Adjustment Committee.

This provincial committee had been struck several weeks earlier to address the rising industry concerns which eventually culminated in the blockade.

The Ministers of Employment and Immigration and National Revenue were asked to investigate and report on cabotage.

The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs was asked to investigate the alleged unfair pricing practices and the Minister of National Revenue was also asked to investigate the possibility of collecting federal excise taxes from U.S. carriers.

The Minister of Transport met representatives of owner operators and the three major trucking unions in Ottawa on June 27, 1990. At that time progress was reported on the three issues.

Stepped up enforcement of existing laws and regulations against illegal cabotage would be undertaken in conjunction with the provinces. Several blitzes have been conducted during the past year in co-operation with provincial authorities.

The issue of collecting federal tax on diesel fuel and its application to all trucking operations in Canada have been examined by the Department of Finance. It concluded that federal taxes on fuel are not a significant factor in the fuel price differences, *vis-à-vis* the United States. I think that has been amply illustrated today during the speeches.

At the time, diesel fuel sold in Canada was subject to total federal sales tax and excise taxes of 6.8 cents per litre, about 2.8 cents and 4 cents per litre, respectively.

• (1500)

The former federal sales tax has since been replaced by the goods and services tax, as of January 1, 1991. Since then, Canadian truckers have been able to fully recover the GST paid on diesel fuel. The result has been a net reduction in the total federal tax on diesel fuel, from 6.8 cents to 4 cents per litre.

Under the GST, the federal sales tax paid by truckers on fuel in Canada is significantly less than the comparable U.S. tax.

On the predatory pricing issue, the transport minister said that he was advised by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs that the director of investigations and research under the Competition Act would examine any information brought to his attention regarding possible violations of the act.

During a meeting in May with the truckers, they had been advised to report their complaints to the director. Since then, the director has indicated that he has not yet received any new complaints or information that would raise an issue under the Competition Act.

At the conclusion of the June 27 meeting with the three major trucking unions and the representatives of the owner-operators, the minister decided to set up a ministerial level task force to examine the issues in depth.

Membership on the task force was open to all bona fide identifiable stakeholders in trucking: unions, carriers, shippers, and owner-operator organizations. The provinces and any involved federal government departments were invited to participate as observers so that the task force would be composed of all the stakeholders, with government only there in an observing position.

With respect to the owner-operator organization, modest organizational requirements were imposed upon them, basically to ensure that they had identifiable membership and an elected executive, that is, people they had agreed would speak on their behalf.

Departmental officials were instructed to work with any newly formed owner-operator organization, to ensure they would meet this minimum criteria.

August 13 and August 14 were decided upon as the meeting dates in Toronto. The task force met as scheduled in August and was chaired in its entirety by the minister. In attendance were representatives from 16 industry groups. Five issues were distilled out of the two days of very frank, open discussions which the minister promised to take to his provincial colleagues at a meeting at the end of September.

Those issues were cabotage, Canada-U.S. tax regimes, driver education and training, uniformity of safety and other regulations, and load broker regulation. Although a strong consensus was reached at the task force meeting, there was a sense among the members that they did not share a common information base or even a common understanding of why an issue was important to a particular group within the stakeholder group.

Timely facts on trucking in Canada, especially facts on international trucking, are hard to come by. This realization was one of the reasons the task force agreed to conduct a comprehensive set of studies after the Council of Ministers meeting.

At the September meeting of the federal-provincial Ministers of Transport, the provincial ministers, without exception, committed themselves to work with the federal government in order to enhance cabotage enforcement. The provincial ministers also reviewed their commitment to uniform trucking regulations and pledged provincial support for the employment and immigration committee on driver training.

Last, but not least, they agreed to set up a working group to study owner-operator issues—items such as load broker regulation, the need for an industry standard code of ethics to govern carrier to owner-operator relationships, and so on.

The working group of officials set to work immediately and over the past seven or eight months has worked hard and consulted widely. They are due to present a report at the end of this month.

If there is a negative note to these efforts, it is that the carrier associations have consistently and steadfastly refused to co-operate on the issue of their relationship with the owner-operators.

The reason they advance for not participating in the discussions is that they have no mandate to undertake labour negotiations since they are in the domain of the direct discussions of individual trucking companies.

This is, in my view, a narrow and somewhat legalistic interpretation of the problem. While we have succeeded in convincing the two senior levels of government and the National Coalition of Owner-Operator Associations to sit down and hammer out a model code of practice, the Canadian Trucking Association has stayed away. Nevertheless, it is not too late to join in the process and I sincerely hope they will reconsider their position.

Let me turn now to the studies, as much has been made in this House over the last few days, and especially this afternoon, about the set of studies being undertaken by the minister's task force. As I mentioned earlier, one of the major frustrations surrounding the discussion of the Canadian trucking industry is the virtually complete lack of reliable information, statistical or otherwise. Consequently, the task force agreed to embark upon a set of studies which would rectify this problem.

The objectives of the study are very straightforward and are threefold: first, to determine the nature and extent of the Canadian trucking share of the trans-border markets; to assess the over-all competitiveness of Canadian trucking firms in those trans-border markets; and, to analyse the relative significance of factors affecting that competitiveness.

The project comprises the following individual study components: a survey of trans-border movements at approximately 15 major crossing points across Canada, a review of trends in trans-border trucking markets and a thorough examination of Canadian shares in those markets, an analysis of the economics of the Canadian trucking industry operating in trans-border markets, an examination of the current financial status of Canadian trucking firms, a comparison of Canadian and U.S. trucking costs in trans-border markets, a review of Canada-U.S. tax regimes, and an assessment of a potential Canada-U.S. cabotage agreement. There is also to be a final study to draw together the threads of the individual detailed studies.

At this point I wish to emphasize the complete openness that has been adopted in the conduct of these studies. While federal officials have normally chaired the meetings, the task force members have selected the consultants, commented on the draft reports and are currently in the process of reviewing the final text of most of the studies. A session is being scheduled for early June to put the finishing touches on these studies, not next year as was mentioned earlier by the opposition.

Frankly, while we are duty bound to honour the process that we have started with the task force, that is to allow them the last word on the study contents, we will be very pleased to make these reports public so as to lay to rest the simple minded remarks of the members opposite.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, how can Canadians believe that the minister of state or the Minister of Transport are the least bit serious about the truckers who are lining up in front of the House of Commons when their plight is just like the 1,000 Department of National Defence workers and the 120 Bank of Canada workers who have just been laid off in the last half hour?

Eleven hundred workers were laid off in the last half hour, 1,000 from the Department of National Defence and 120 from the Bank of Canada. These workers are victims of the same right-wing agenda that says: "Make the men and women of Canada pay for the fiscal policies of this government".

• (1510)

I would suggest if this government does not tax Canadians out of their jobs as is happening with the truckers, it will recession them out of their jobs as is being done by the workers from the Bank of Canada.

I would like the Minister of State for Transport to please tell us just how this government cares about the workers in Canada.

Mrs. Martin: Madam Speaker, the policies of this government have been undertaken because we do care about Canadians.

We are concerned about the future of Canada. We are concerned about the children of the present and the future. The problems we are facing in this country today and the reasons for some of these lay-offs that have had to take place are due to the fact that we have some very difficult fiscal problems in this country.

Some of these fiscal problems were started years ago when other governments attempted to fight recessions by spending, spending, spending. They were not spending those days' dollars. They were spending today's dollars, tomorrow's dollars, our children's and our grandchildren's dollars.

The Government of Ontario, run by a party which is the same as the party this member belongs to, is doing the very same thing in Ontario today that did not work for Canada in 1981–82, will not work for Ontario today and it is adding to the problems of this country.

I have children and I want to see them have a future. I want the Canadians of today to have jobs. That is why we are making the difficult economic decisions that have to be made to make us competitive in a global marketplace. We cannot build a wall around Canada and live by supplying the Canadian market only.

We can survive only by being competitive in a global market. Being competitive means working smarter and addressing problems, not by throwing money at them. That is the easy way out.

Any government can throw money it does not have by continuing to borrow on the future to try to solve a problem. Throwing money at problems does not solve them. Working at problems is what solves the problems of this country. Working together, management, labour, government and education. We cannot be competitive in this country if we do not have well-trained young people.

We cannot have our young people dropping out of school because they do not have a challenge, because they are not taught properly and because they are not given proper advice by the counsellors in the schools. We cannot be driving all our children into university educations.

We have to look at the trades. I attended a Skills Canada training competition last weekend in my riding, which brought together 200 students from across this country. They were building framings for housing. They were repairing motors. They were working on tin plates to fix furnaces and piping. They were working on electronic boards.

They were competing in a skills competition which proves that we have well skilled young people in this country who want to get involved in the jobs of the future that are high-skilled. They are going to Louisville, Kentucky to compete. Canadians went last year and there was only one state in the U.S. that got more medals than Canada did at that competition.

They did it because we have young people who are interested in the skills and trades and who want to have jobs in the future. You cannot have jobs in the future of this country if you throw away the money today.

That is why we are taking very hard economic decisions. They are not easy. We do not like to sit here, make decisions and then read in the paper the next day that 1,000 jobs have been lost.

You do not have a monopoly on compassion in the NDP or in the socialist party of this country. There is as much compassion on this side of the House as there is on that side of the House.

We sat here and read statements about the Minister for International Trade from people who were saying: "Yes, there are problems with free trade in some industries but it is also helping industries."

The opposition members say: "That's bull." It is bull when they do not believe in it. When they get up and make false statements, they think they are speaking the truth. One does not hear those comments from this side of the House, at least not from the members who are here today.

We have no monopoly on behaviour in this House. If there were a little more decorum in this House, Canadians might start to believe a little more that we do things in this House.

That decorum comes from all sides of the House. It is something that all members should pay very special attention to. All members from all parties have a responsibility in this House to show the young people in this country that decisions that are made in this House are very important. That is why, as the Prime Minister said, this is the constituent assembly of Canada, this is where the decisions are going to be made, and this is where they are made with a great deal of heart, consideration and understanding, regardless of what the opposition says.

We are talking about governments in general. When the people of Canada don't believe in governments it is not only the government in power that they don't believe

in, it is all politicians, because of the behaviour of all politicians. We all have a role to play.

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): I appreciated very much the contribution of the minister to the debate today. I think she had a lot of good information and had a lot to contribute to us.

I was impressed with the number of studies that are going on. As it has been stated many times today, truckers are demanding more than just studies.

I would just like to ask the minister a couple of questions. One of the big questions raised frequently is that of cabotage. My question is: Does the government have evidence that this indeed is going on? I have made inquiries myself and I have got mixed answers. So I would appreciate the minister contributing in that area.

It has been reported that there have been 3,300 new licences issued in Ontario alone to truckers in the last six months. To me, this would suggest that there has been a tremendous expansion in a time of recession. I was wondering if she could comment on that. Does she have information on this?

Mrs. Martin: When it comes to the cabotage issue, as I mentioned in my remarks, there was co-operation between the provinces and the federal government in looking at cabotage.

I would just like to read, if I may, the following:

> There were 2,862 truckers who passed inspection stations. Of these, 344 truckers, both American and Canadian, were referred to the custom officials. Of eight of the ten customs infractions discovered, only two involved cabotage, but all ten involved Canadian companies using U.S. vehicles illegally. Five hundred American drivers were checked for immigration infractions, 11 were found to have minor criminality infractions and two others were arrested and removed under escort for serious criminality infractions. No infractions involving cabotage by U.S. drivers were found.

In Manitoba, during the summer of 1990, an RCMP officer while on regular duty laid a charge against a U.S. driver for cabotage. Some half dozen letters had been received from owner-operators in trucking companies reporting incidents of suspected cabotage. These have all been referred to customs or immigration for action. We have been sending information out outlining Canadian immigration laws to U.S. drivers at border entry points. The same pamphlets are being mailed by Transport Canada to U.S. carriers licensed to operate in Canada to make sure that they understand the laws of Canada when it comes to cabotage and our custom regulations.

As to the 3,300 additional licences that my hon. friend mentioned, I am afraid I do not have the facts to confirm that. Certainly, if there have been 3,300 additional licences in Ontario alone that have been issued at this time of what appears to be an over-supply on the market, I would wonder at the provincial government issuing those licences.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): I want to participate in today's debate.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Point of order, the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Madam Speaker, I don't wish to interfere unduly with the remarks of my colleagues, but I just wish to seek clarification from the Chair.

It was the understanding of members on this side that there was a rotation agreed to and which was being pursued by the Chair. Members in this party, like the party to the left, have travel plans to make and we were hoping to be able to participate in the debate which concludes at 4 o'clock. I am wondering whether the Chair has now departed from the rotation which was previously agreed to and was our understanding, and perhaps the Chair would be kind enough to explain to members exactly what is happening. We will abide by the Chair's ruling.

• (1520)

Madam Deputy Speaker: The rotation which has been agreed to has been going on all day. This is a normal opposition day and I do not see any changes in the way we have been operating today than we have on other days. It might be a good idea for future reference that we do get the House leaders and chair occupants together and establish a different rotation. This is the way things have been going for quite a while and I have recognized the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

Mr. Angus: Madam Speaker, on the same point if I may, I know that the Table did check and found that the manner in which the rotation today had been recorded was actually at odds with the normal procedure. That is why I am now up.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Earlier in the day, as I had written the rotation, the representative of the Liberal Party would normally have been recognized. We did look as to what the rotation had been previously and realized

that I had made a mistake and we then advised the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan that a representative of his party would be next. The hon. members from the Liberal Party were advised that I had made a mistake and everything seemed to be normal.

I think that we should use the time for hon. members to make their representations and not for long points of order again.

I will recognize the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

Mr. Dingwall: Point of order, Madam Speaker. We will consent to the Chair's ruling and abide by that ruling, but since this is a non-votable motion and the House is deemed to close at four o'clock, I am wondering if members would see the clock past four for a few moments, keeping in mind that it is a non-votable motion, in order that the two remaining speakers from our party could have the floor for ten minutes each. I am wondering if hon. members would agree to that in view of the fact that an honest mistake has been made.

Mr. Angus: Madam Speaker, I think that might be premature. I certainly would have no difficulty, but depending on how long I go and whether there is a question or comment period, there might be the time to allow the other two members to complete their time.

Mr. Dingwall: Okay, agreed.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate today and before I get into the comments about the motion brought forward by the Official Opposition I want to publicly congratulate the new Minister of Transport and the recycled Minister of State for Transport in their new positions. I look forward to working with them.

I want to suggest that today's debate, what has been happening outside this building on the streets of Ottawa, what has been happening on the streets and highways of Toronto and what has been happening at the Ambassador Bridge, is not just about transport. It is not just about trucking.

It is an indication of the kind of anger that has been building in this country since 1984. It is an anger over the way in which the Conservative Party as the Government of Canada has been changing this country. It is intertwined between taxation, deregulation, the free trade agreement with the United States, the impending Canada-U.S.-Mexico free trade agreement, the cuts to VIA Rail, the cuts to CBC, the cuts to Canada Post and privatization, and it is almost as if people began to wake up in the last two or three months and said "My God what has happened to us? What have they done to us?"

The truckers, unlike most of us, have found the tool by which to express that anger. They have the vehicles which can be used to occupy space on roads, to blockade highways and entranceways, they have the tool by which to express their anger. In some ways, it is no different than what the workers at the Caterpillar plant did when they saw their jobs being lost and their factory being closed and sent to the United States: they occupied that space.

I want to suggest, very strongly, that if concrete steps are not taken soon to deal with the very legitimate grievances of the truckers, whether it be the owner-operators or the trucking companies and their employees, more and more Canadians will find their own way to express their visible anger to the Government of Canada.

It is important that the government works diligently to do that because I do not want to see this escalate. It is not in the best interest of the economy of this country. Politically it may be the best thing that could have happened in many, many years because it would put the pressure on the government to reverse the direction it has been taking us into, but other people will lose if it does accelerate.

I have met with the truckers and I have met with their spouses and their children and they have had it up to here. They have been waiting for the federal government for a year to take some concrete action. Instead, the government has got studies, it has promises of action and then decisions which say: "Well, it is really a minor item so we are not going to worry about it." It may be a minor item, but it is one more straw on the backs of these men and women whom we need to carry our raw materials and our finished products to market, whether within Canada or in the U.S. We have not been treating them fairly.

When this government deregulated trucking a number of years ago, it did not just match what the United States did, it went even farther by giving American truckers access to Canada without getting reciprocal agreements with the United States, putting our people at a disadvantage.

The anger is real, the frustration is real and the hardship is real.

The Minister of State for Transport, in her answer to my colleague, talked about tomorrow's children and tomorrow's grandchildren and that is why the government has embarked on this deficit reduction approach to managing this country. She pooh-poohed what Floyd Laughren has done in Ontario in terms of trying to fight the recession. I want to say to that minister: kids who cannot have food today are not going to be the leaders tomorrow.

Studies have shown that children who have poor food intake are poor students and have the highest dropout rate. They will not be tomorrow's leaders. We have to recognize that we have to do things today as well as think about tomorrow.

I am not saying it is any one policy, but it is that whole range of taxes and deregulation and free trade and the psychological aspect. Owner-operator truckers have no breaks whatsoever. They cannot get welfare because they have got this asset called a rig. If they want to get welfare they can sell the rig, if somebody would buy it, but then they have no livelihood, no chance. Because they are an independent operation they do not qualify for unemployment insurance.

• (1530)

They would be more than happy to pay unemployment insurance premiums if they could qualify.

As it stands, when times are tough it is their life-long, hard-earned savings they have to draw on in order to keep the mortgage payments up on the rig. I will not call them loan payments. They are a mortgage payment, there is no question about it, to provide a roof over their heads and food on the table.

Some of the truckers I have talked to have been losing those homes, are in danger of losing those rigs. One fellow told me this afternoon that he has had to dip into his son's educational savings, money he set aside so that his son could go to university some day. They have had to dip into those savings in order to make ends meet today.

They cannot wait for June for these studies to be completed. In fact, when the minister of state was speaking she made reference to the studies becoming public. I hoped that what she meant was that in this House today, either she or the minister will table them so they could be distributed appropriately and we could all have copies. If not, hopefully, within the next two or three days that can happen.

These people want to work for a living. They are not looking for hand-outs. They are looking for some breaks.

It boggled my mind when one fellow told me that when he blew the motor in his rig, the money he spent to buy a new motor was classified as a capital gain and he was taxed accordingly. Does that make sense? A capital gain to replace an engine that blew. I gather that the folks at finance said it was an improvement to his vehicle. That improvement cost him two or three years of payments.

The truckers themselves have asked for a number of solutions, dealing with everything from capital depreciation to both provincial and federal excise taxes to the federal government following the leadership of Ed Philip in Ontario by putting a moratorium on new licences within the federal jurisdiction, particularly those from the United States. They want American truckers to start paying the same taxes in Canada Canadian truckers have to pay.

Maybe the minister of state is right when she said that when they examined it they found it to be a negligible amount. It may very well be, but it is still unfair. It is unfair that an American company who hires American workers to operate American-built rigs to carry American products into Canada can do so without contributing one red cent to the operations of the Government of Canada which provides services to the trucking industry.

It is a question of fairness. Fairness in taxation; fairness in how the truckers are treated. Also, the cabotage. The minister of state referred to the number of checks they have done and the number of people found in violation. However, it is a psychological threat. The word gets out in the industry and it becomes very real in terms of its impact on cargoes.

When truckers are fighting for nickels and dimes because there are too many truckers and too few cargoes they look for every nickel and dime they can find because that is their livelihood. That is their way of putting food on the table. These folks are hurting.

We have seen some action from the provincial level. The provincial government of Ontario did put on a moratorium. It indicated it would control the brokers, licence them and bond them. That is one of the measures the truckers have been calling for.

I am not going to deny that the Ontario government raised the fuel tax. This government also has to accept the fact that in the over-all scheme of things the fuel tax component is only one part of the equation.

Yes, it needs to be dealt with, but so does the write-off, the capital depreciation, so does unfair competition, so does deregulation. Those items have to be addressed as well and they have to be addressed quickly.

Earlier today the Minister of Transport for Ontario, Ed Philip, wrote to the federal Minister of Transport. My understanding is that his letter has now been released publicly but that the federal minister's response has not yet been completed and made available. I would not mind in the question and comment period if the minister would respond.

Just by way of background, Ed Philip and I first worked together as members of the Ontario legislature. One of the things that we did was participate in the Select Committee on the Highway Transportation of Goods back in 1976-77, which was the first Ontario study of trucking deregulation. We said back then to Ontario: "Don't do it". Just like my colleague for Regina-Lumsden and I said in this House on the white paper *Freedom to Move,* as well as the NTA and companion legislation, "Don't deregulate trucking or rail or air like you are going to". It is an issue that Ed Philip and I have been involved in for many, many years, fighting to protect the workers in the province of Ontario and in Canada.

I would like to read into the record Ed Philip's letter of May 16:

> I am writing with regards to the current situation facing Ontario's trucking industry. As you know, the activities of the past few days have brought the plight of the trucking industry and the desperation of many individual truckers into clear focus. I believe it is incumbent upon you and I to take the representations of the truckers very seriously.
>
> I met with two delegations of truckers yesterday, and discussed with them the measures that Ontario has already taken to begin to address the problems in the industry. They understood, however, that Ontario's role is limited in that the basic problems—an oversupply of trucking capacity as a result of deregulation, and competition with U.S. trucking companies due to free trade and other federal economic policies—are clearly within federal jurisdiction. I assured them that I would contact you to raise these concerns on their behalf.
>
> You will know, Ontario has already taken measures to begin to address the problems in the trucking industry. We have, for example, announced a moratorium on the issuance of operating authorities under the Truck Transportation Act. We have announced our intention to license and require bonding for load brokers. We have increased enforcement to ensure compliance with provincial regulations. In addition, we are nearing completion of an in-depth study of trans-border competitiveness issues, which will provide us with a base to assess all cost factors relating to U.S.-Ontario competition.
>
> I realize you are also undertaking a number of studies, but I feel it is also of vital importance that you give some indication of support for the plight of the truckers by announcing measures similar to those taken by Ontario. In particular, an announcement of a moratorium on interprovincial and trans-border trucking licenses should be made immediately, to arrest the precipitous decline of the Canadian trucking industry.
>
> I am prepared to meet with you as soon as it can be arranged to discuss these matters further. You and I have a responsibility to explore all avenues which will help to stabilize and ultimately to restore the financial viability of Ontario's and Canada's trucking industry. I will not sit by while this industry goes under, and I believe you will not either. I look forward to meeting you soon.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Ed Philip,
>
> Minister.

I would echo that appeal for the federal government to, at the very least, place a moratorium on interprovincial and trans-border trucking licences. I think, based on the comments by the Minister of State for Transport, there may be some willingness by the government to do it because of her comments about how awful it was that so many new licences were issued in Ontario in the last six months.

Ontario recognized that they had to find a solution to that problem and the two-year moratorium was part of that solution. I would encourage the government to continue on.

• (1540)

I would also encourage the government to continue, as I know it is doing today, its meetings between officials of the department and representatives of the truckers. Only through that mechanism can the government

understand the impact on these human beings and the transportation economy of this country.

I want to take my last couple of minutes to return to what I said at the beginning. This is not just about trucking. This is not just about transportation. This is about real anger out there at the direction in which this country is going. There is a real feeling that we are being torn apart.

Instead of the east-west linkage that Sir John A. Macdonald built in this country, starting with the Canadian Pacific Railway, we have too much north-south. When the truckers argue that they are being unfairly competed against by the American truckers, that is part and parcel of what other Canadians are feeling.

I spent the last 10 days before the House resumed holding a series of working sessions in my riding, particularly in the rural part, to ask people to draft their own throne speech and to give us the agenda items for the Government of Canada.

One thing came out of that totally unprompted. All I asked was: "What do you want Canada to do for your community, for your family, your province, your country and/or your planet?" That is the only question that I put to them. Time and time again they said: "It is as if we woke up one morning and the country was different. We lost the things that linked us together such as VIA Rail, CBC, Canada Post and those kinds of institutions".

They were crying out in anger because they did not like the way this country was being changed. They were afraid they were going to be forced to become American when all our lives we wanted to be different.

We wanted to be Canadians. They are prepared to pay the price to do that. There is no question about it. They recognize that those kinds of things do not come cheap. They recognize that in a perfect world, the north-south linkages would fit the market model.

Canada does not fit the market model. This government does not understand that. This government does not understand that there is a reason why Canada should exist separately from the United States. The only way we can do that is by having east-west transportation linkages, by having viable transportation entities in this country whether that means trucking, rail, air or marine. We have to be able to have our own.

At the rate we are going, at the level of bankruptcies we have seen, and at the rate of movement of trucking companies to the United States, we are not going to have our own domestic truck industry in this country.

We will have to rely on somebody else's trucks regulated by somebody else, controlled and owned by somebody else, driven by somebody else and with not one Canadian, perhaps other than a dispatcher or a broker, having any kind of employment related to the trucking industry.

It is time this government woke up to the fact that it has been taking this country in the wrong direction. We have to go east-west, not north-south. That is why we have to find solutions to the trucking problem, as well as the other problems that ail this country which were created by this government.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Madam Speaker, I want to begin my remarks by saying that I have no doubt of the compassion in the mind and heart of the hon. junior minister of transport. I have no doubt whatsoever.

Unfortunately, the Canadian people and the truckers in particular have some doubts. The reason they have doubts is because actions speak louder than words.

Since Monday we have seen in this city of Ottawa and, on our television sets, in and around Toronto on Highway 401 the manifestation of the frustration, the anger and the fear of the truck drivers who are being forced out of existence and are losing their livelihood in this country. This morning I met with a some of the wives and children of these truckers. I saw the apprehension on the faces of the women who understood what the future held for them and it was not very pretty. I saw the faces of the children who did not understand. They only knew that their parents were frightened and that something was terribly wrong.

This is something that those of us in Atlantic Canada can understand and empathize with all too well. We have seen in Atlantic Canada so much of the infrastructure that makes us competitive and even faintly prosperous as Canadians go the way of extinction. In Atlantic Canada we are losing our trains. Our highways are in abysmal shape. Our great ports, most particularly in the city that I

have the great honour to represent, the city of Halifax, are in danger of shutting down and the Minister of Transport knows this and knows it well.

We know all these things are taking place and we know why these things are taking place. They are taking place because of an absolutely overblown, over-optimistic, and overbearing belief in the survival of the fittest and the somehow deity-given right of the free market to control all our lives.

This is not something that is easily recognizable to Canadians in our 124-year history. Canada is the second largest country in the world with an amazing geography. We have somewhere in the vicinity of 27 million people strung across this huge expanse of country. We are located next to one of the largest, richest, most competitive, and most populous countries on the face of the earth. All of those things drive Canadians into a different mode from our neighbours to the south. They have to. We cannot survive. We certainly cannot survive as a country if we opt for the American free market spirit. It will not work here. It cannot work here. It has not worked here, and it does not work here.

With regard to the trucking industry in particular, the industry was deregulated in 1988 before the free trade agreement. We heard the Minister for International Trade come in and make all kinds of comments about how free trade had nothing to do with the problems in this country. I have no comment to make about that. The Canadian people will and have judged on that already.

The deregulation of the trucking industry fell absolutely within the purview of this theory of free market and survival of the fittest. What has happened? We do not have the survival of anybody. The trucking industry, the Canadian trucking industry, is dying. That is why Wellington Street is choked with trucks. That is why Highway 401 was choked with trucks. That is why those people came and met with the Liberal caucus on Monday. That is why those women were here yesterday meeting with my leader and today meeting with other members of the Liberal caucus.

The fittest who survive in Canada now in the trucking industry are Americans.

It is a wonderful country to the south and I wish it well, but let Americans go survive in their own country. Do not let them survive on the basis of a Canadian government that says: "You have every bit as much right to work and prosper in our country as you do in your own". That is not Canadian. That is not the way we do things. That is not what we expect.

Under deregulation this government tells us that anyone who has a truck can operate and anyone can work. Well sometimes the arguments that we present in this House are somewhat confusing to the Canadian people. There is one argument that people understand and that is prices. They understand the difference between prices in Canada and prices in the United States. Our border towns are in great suffering because of cross-border shopping.

• (1550)

I saw in the paper just last week that a mayor of a New York town wanted to nominate the Prime Minister for man of the year in his town because of what he had done for the economy for upper New York state.

I am sure that the minister of fisheries would agree with me on what happens when you tell Canadians about changes in gas prices. Look at the difference in gas prices for these truckers between Canada and the United States. I heard the Minister of Transport and other members on the government side say that the subsidy is higher in Canada. Well, with the greatest of respect, as we would say back home, big deal. The subsidy may be higher in Canada, but the prices are so much lower in the United States that effectively it is almost one-half the cost to fill your tank in the U.S. than in Canada.

How can we expect our truckers to survive in this atmosphere? We cannot. That is why they are out there. That is why they have been here this week and they deserve better than they have been getting from this government. Pious words like "we are full of compassion, we care about Canadians" are not going to do anything for them. They are not going to put food on the tables of these people or shoes on their children's feet. These words are not going pay their mortgages. Decent work is going to pay their mortgages, the ability to compete in what is one of the most superb countries—if

not the most superb country—in the world, if we run it the way it has to be run.

This is not the United States of America. We do not have 280 million people. We have 27 million people and we have to deal with what we have. We are happy that we only have 27 million people. We do not have the concomitant problems that we would have if we had these huge populations.

If you tie the hands of Canadian truckers, if you tie the hands of Canadian workers, prosperity will become a myth. It has become a myth in the bankruptcies that have taken place and in the number of people unemployed. Worst of all, it has become a myth in the minds of Canadians who look at this government and see no compassion, no assistance, and most of all, no hope.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Madam Speaker, I have a few words on this particular issue. If you know the geography of this country you will realize that Newfoundland is not on the border between the United States and Canada directly in the same sense that a community like Kingston and the Islands does, for instance, or like some of those communities right along the parallel.

Nevertheless, this is an issue that affects us too. It affects us in Newfoundland and it affects us as Canadians generally. I want to say in the limited time available this afternoon that, as a person who arrives on Parliament Hill every morning and who leaves it every night, I have been rather impressed with the way the truckers have conducted their demonstration. It seems to me they ought to be an example for others. They have managed to do things that many demonstrations have failed to do. They have managed to be effective, and certainly that has to be the purpose of any demonstration of that sort. They managed to get the message across, to get the public's attention both across the country and here, in particular terms, to the attention of the decision makers, including the Minister of Transport, whom I am pleased to see in his place at this time.

They have managed to do it with minimum of aggravation. They have parked their rigs but the traffic flow has not been unduly interrupted. I congratulate them, because they got their message across in spades in a very responsible way.

I was out chatting with some of the truckers in the last few days and was overhearing some of their conversations and I was very impressed in terms of the focus they have brought to this particular issue. I thank them and their families on behalf of other members for the way in which they have focused this issue. It is high time somebody focused on this issue. This issue is only the tip of the iceberg of a larger issue: how a number of initiatives of this government are leading us as lambs to the slaughter. It is terrifying, terrifying if you are a truck driver, a consumer or a worker. Nobody is immune it seems to the wrecking ball of this particular government.

The thing that has astounded me as a Canadian in the past few days is to hear the clinical, detached view being mouthed by the Minister of Transport in Question Period and in this debate today by his Minister of State, and by other ministers of the Crown who in clinical fashion think we are dealing somehow with how to perform some remote operation on some inanimate object literally millions of miles away from us. We are talking about real people here, we are talking about people who are losing their rigs, who have lost their bank accounts, who see their livelihood go down the drain, who cannot meet payments and who cannot buy the groceries. We are talking about real live issues here.

It is aggravating for me as an ordinary human being to sit here and to watch the television when I am out in the lobby and to hear members of that crowd over there talk about it as though somehow it is a game of Monopoly or something. I wish to God they would realize the damage that their policies are doing. It is frightful. Do they realize that they, the cabinet ministers and the members of that Tory caucus, are themselves being led as lambs to the slaughter? Do they realize that?

The Prime Minister knows full well what he has unleashed with his series of policies. When he came to government he came for a particular purpose, as we all did, except his purpose is a lot more diabolical than yours could ever be, Madam Speaker, or mine or almost anybody else's in this House. He came to continue what he had done so well in Labrador City. His test plan, his lab operation was called Schefferville, and he did such a job of devastating that he then took his formula to the country as a whole. He is now doing to the country what he did to Schefferville. He is now doing it through the free trade agreement, through deregulation and through other initiatives. He is now affecting his poison. He is now pursuing exactly his agenda of making us a poor cousin of the Americans, of making us the fifty-first state

economically and of making us an appendage economically. That has been his agenda from day one.

You look at his initiatives and they are all aimed that way. If you spent your corporate life and your business life taking orders from Cleveland, it is not difficult to get used to taking orders from Washington.

The minister can shrug and can put on the old bluff and pretend "My leader, right or wrong." He can do that all he wants, he does not understand what I am talking about because he is not from Newfoundland and he was not one of the people who got the axe in Schefferville. He would not know. He has to believe that his man from Baie Comeau has got some principle left. Well, I have news for him. I have got news for him. If that person from Baie Comeau had any principle left he would not be doing this to the people of this country, he would not be doing this to the truckers of this country. You do yourself a disservice in defending that kind of skulduggery. You do yourself a disservice. I thought better of you than that. I never thought of you as a clown, I never thought of you as a puppet.

Mr. Corbeil: Stupid little fella.

Mr. Simmons: Ah, we hear it. This is the minister who is going to solve the truckers' problems. This is the minister who wants to bring "cerebral approaches" to the solution, this is the man who wants to rise above it all.

Let me repeat for you, Madam Speaker, because I am sure you missed it. He just called me a stupid little fella. That is his idea of a debate. No wonder he finds himself defending the indefensible, defending the guy from Baie Comeau who wants to sell us, lock, stock and barrel, to the United States.

Who wants to destroy Canada? You say I want to destroy Canada? Am I the person running the truckers into the ground? The minister and his Prime Minister are the ones—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. It being four o'clock p.m.—

An hon. member: Let him finish.

Madam Deputy Speaker: There was a question at one point raised by the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond. There was not agreement. What was said was: "Let's see how much time there is left."

Actually, if time had to be given to us, there would be actually a minute and a half left to the hon. member's 10 minutes.

The hon. member for York West was rising?

Mr. Marchi: Madam Speaker, the hon. member from Thunder Bay said that if there is no question and answer, there may be time to get both speakers in.

I know he used the word "may". I think we took him in good faith. I know my colleague was simply wrapping up. If you would accord him the extra minute that he needs to finish this debate, I would appreciate it, given the fact that we did change the procedure. We are playing by your rules, Madam Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: We did not change procedure. Is there unanimous consent to give the hon. member an extra minute and a half to complete his remarks?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Unanimous consent has just been withdrawn.

It being 4 o'clock p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 81(17) proceedings on the motion have expired.

[*Translation*]

The House stands adjourned until Tuesday, May 21, at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 4.02 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 21, 1991

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 36(8) of the Standing Orders, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government responses to several petitions.

EDUCATION

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present the following petition which deals with the massive reductions in education by the government, a little less than $500 million during the last budget.

These Canadians point out that these reductions, these cuts, are a contradiction of not only what was said in the throne speech, but also of the government's agenda with respect to increased productivity. How can you have increased productivity by taking those kinds of actions?

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, we have circulated a proposal for national education standards across the country as part of a private members' initiative. The response has been phenomenal.

I have with me a petition signed by people from Alma, Gatineau, Hull, Quebec, Saskatchewan and from my own riding of Ottawa Centre. All of these petitioners would like to see the House of Commons press the government to set national education standards in consultation and co-operation with the provincial governments, the territories and professionals in the education field, as well as with the unions, parents, youth, non-governmental agencies and normal citizens. I submit this petition in accordance with Standing Order 36.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the government the hypocrisy of its statements with respect to illiteracy and obliterating it in the near future.

Along with the increase in the role it wishes to play in education, it continues to tax books, which imposes ignorance on our population. Taxing books is a terrible mortgage on our future. It is hard enough to read and not watch television. We must make every effort to make reading accessible and therefore the petitioners call on the government to withdraw the tax on reading, the tax on books.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it agreed that all the questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from Thursday, May 16, consideration of the motion of Mr. Pronovost for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his Speech at the opening of the session; and of the amendment thereto of Mr. Chrétien (p. 24) and amendment to the amendment of Mr. Lapierre (p. 209).

Mrs. Edna Anderson (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have the opportunity to continue in the throne speech debate where I left off on Thursday. I

want to reiterate that I see the challenge that we face in this session of Parliament as being threefold.

First, we must recognize the real limits of the capacity of Canada and Canadians to deal with change.

Second, we must pursue policies that will work to expand these limits.

Third, we must pursue these policies in a more open and more democratic way.

What does this mean in practical terms? Let me talk about one of the most pressing and tragic issues facing Canada today, one that concerns me greatly. At least one in ten women in Canada is battered by her male partner. A million women in Canada are battered weekly. Half of all women murdered each year die at the hands of their partners.

The prevalence of such violence in Canada is nothing less than shocking. Some say this violence is increasing as the advances made by women in society triggers a backlash, while others claim that the abuse women suffer at the hands of men is simply part of the uneven distribution of power in society. The challenge for everyone involved in this issue is to find a way of preventing the violence from occurring in the first place by changing deep-seated attitudes. We in this House can change laws in a matter of months, but attitudes, values and behaviour can take far longer to change. Recently our government announced a four-year, $136 million family violence action plan. The plan supports projects and programs that will increase public awareness and preventive action. Funding will be provided to women's groups and to other community organizations to raise awareness of family violence and to mobilize community action. We want to change attitudes that cause this violence, call the abusers to account and help the innocent victims.

• (1010)

I was pleased to see announced in the throne speech the appointment of a panel to inquire further into this serious problem of violence against women in our society. Government alone cannot ensure behavioural change, but it can certainly provide support to the important community work that is carried on every day; the work of community organizations and professional associations, schools and universities, the business community, and labour unions.

In other words, we are recognizing that real progress will take time and that the federal government does not have a magic solution. We are taking concrete steps to change peoples' attitudes, and we are involving a wide range of actors in the action plan: all levels of government, the voluntary and educational sectors, business and labour.

Another issue of concern, especially in these difficult economic times, is immigration. Like every member of Parliament, I see first hand in my constituency the human costs of an over-burdened system, separated families, and weeks, months and years for refugee status to be determined. Like every member of Parliament, I talk to constituents who ask why we are accepting so many immigrants when unemployment is so high. This is not such an easy question to answer sometimes. The arguments about future growth, the aging population, the need for certain skills and entrepreneurial talents and our duty toward the oppressed and the less fortunate are not always convincing for someone afraid of losing their job or afraid of different languages or cultures.

It is fair to say the stresses and strains placed on society by immigration policies are real. The impact of the refugee determination system on the health and welfare costs faced by provinces and municipalities is certainly real. The rise in public incidents of racism is certainly real. Perhaps we should take these as warning signs that the capacity of society to accept change is being tested and that we must find ways to review our ability to successfully bring new Canadians into the main stream.

The Speech from the Throne spoke of the importance of lifelong learning and of working to develop a learning culture in Canada. These are an important part of our economy and make us prosperous and more competitive. They can do this by increasing our capacity to adapt to change, to make the imperatives of the world economy a force for growth and for development.

If all the actors in the play—the provinces, business, employees, educators and students—can work together we can reach the goals that were set out: cutting illiteracy in half; doubling the number of university graduates in maths and sciences; quadrupling the amount of training in the workplace. It is important to stress once again that we do not want to turn the world upside down to revolutionize our economy or our system of government. After all they are only tools, tools that

are supposed to work for us, instead of us working for them.

It is the end result that matters; the happiness, the prosperity, the security of Canadians. Too radical change threatens this security.

Likewise, the inevitable changes that we will see in the next few years must be made to further our collective happiness, increase our collective prosperity and enhance our collective security. We must all work together to pursue policies that will expand our capacity to compete internationally, to reduce and eliminate violence against women, and to develop efficient and responsive government institutions. We must pursue these goals in an open, fair and democratic way.

This means listening to Canadians, appreciating their dreams and aspirations, and recognizing the warning signs when change goes too far, too fast. This means that we, as members of Parliament, must act as the eyes and the ears and the voices of our constituents. It also means that all Canadians have a responsibility to actively join in the search for solutions and to become personally more productive, more tolerant and more involved in our community and society.

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq): I am very pleased to speak in this debate today on the government throne speech opening the third session of the 34th Parliament.

The throne speech contains three themes: unity, prosperity and government responsiveness. I would like to speak to each of these themes as an aboriginal person and as a northerner.

As an aboriginal person and a northerner, I am disappointed with the throne speech. It is basically a rehash of previous government commitments and a review of long-standing and on-going government activities. We have heard the promises about national unity, job creation and economic prosperity before. We have heard the promises about government responsiveness before. We we have seen them unfilled.

Aboriginal people and the north were mentioned in the 1989 throne speech, and I said then that I was worried about the extent of the government's commitment to northern and aboriginal aspirations. The government's action in cutting programs for aboriginal people and northerners since 1989 has borne out my concerns.

This session of Parliament will be a critical session in Canadian history. The north and the aboriginal people are looking for more than just honourable mention in this government's agenda. We want to see concrete specific steps taken to include us as participants and not as mere observers or onlookers in Canada's constitutional renewal.

This government has several constitutional activities ongoing. The Spicer commission is to report July 1 and so is the special joint committee on the process for amending the constitution.

Aboriginal people and northerners have participated, albeit with some hesitation and concerns, in both these endeavours. Our reluctance to participate comes from a deep suspicion about where all this effort is leading and whether northern and aboriginal concerns are really going to be listened to and acted upon this time.

Where in the government's constitutional plans do aboriginal people fit in? We do not know yet, but aboriginal people must play a part, a pro-active part.

The new minister of constitutional affairs recently went to to both the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, and I commend him for travelling north so soon after his appointment. The minister met with only a few people and he is vague about the specific role he sees for aboriginal people and northerners. We still do not know how institutions will be reformed to better reflect northern and aboriginal concerns. We do not know whether northern and aboriginal people will have a participatory seat at the constitutional table. We do not know if the government is committed to completing the outstanding constitutional agenda of 1983 which is so important to northerners and aboriginal people. We still do not know if the government is committed to recognizing aboriginal self-government in the constitution.

I am pleased that the minister agrees that the north and aboriginal people have to be involved in the next round of constitutional talks. I want to urge the minister and the government to ensure that northerners and aboriginal people are involved in their own right and not as adjuncts of the federal government.

• (1020)

I have said before and I say again, this federal government cannot claim to speak for northerners and aboriginal people in constitutional negotiations. The failure of the last constitutional round proved this. The new constitutional relationship that aboriginal people and northerners are seeking must involve them as participants in their own right.

The government's constitutional proposal when it is unveiled, must reflect this necessity. If it does not, I predict more failure. Process, as the government should know by now, can be as important as substance. The process has to be fully inclusive, not exclusive.

In contrast to the views of the leader of the New Democratic Party, I believe politicians have a role to play in constitutional renewal. I see it, however, as politicians working with the people and not in isolation from them. It was the isolation of certain politicians from the people that caused the Meech Lake Accord to fail. This kind of isolation and ivory tower Constitution making must not, and I believe will not, happen again in Canada.

On economic matters, the government has asked Canadians, and I quote from the throne speech: "to participate in fashioning a new agenda for prosperity."

But how are northerners to contribute? Where is the assurance that the north will share in this prosperity?

The north is not mentioned in the government's economic discussion. It speaks of reducing interest rates and creating new investment, but where is the economic plan for the north?

The government is not offering to assist in creating a better climate for investment in the north. Where are the initiatives to help northern businesses reduce the cost of doing business?

Unlike the throne speech of 1989, this throne speech makes no reference to regional development. There is no discussion of the economic and employment needs of the regions in Canada, or of the impact of the current recession.

As a northerner, I cannot help but notice the emphasis on southern Canada. I do not see anything in this throne speech which would assist the struggling and developing economies of northern Canada. I do not see any initiatives which would address the serious employment needs of northern and aboriginal youth.

What we have seen in the past few years is the government's deficit reduction efforts being carried out on the backs of northerners. The goods and services tax is a prime example. Northerners are paying more than their fair share of the GST because the government refused to recognize the unique higher costs in the north.

This past February, the Liberal task force on the economy and the recession visited both northern territories. Our task force heard time and time again about the need for a substantial and revised federal commitment to the north.

The north's unique needs must be recognized by the federal government. Our people, our economic problems and potential are different from mainstream Canada. Federal economic policies must reflect and accommodate our differences.

This means making bold policy and program innovations based on the knowledge and experience of northerners. It means rejecting the old ways of twisting and turning northern realities to try to fit them into a southern Canadian framework.

These contortions do not work. Training, education and employment policies must be developed by northerners for northerners, not by southerners for northerners. I urge this government to adopt this approach as it ventures deeper into the field of education.

With respect to education, the problem is not so much one of money, as attitude. The throne speech talks about reaching a national consensus on performance, goals, partnerships and priorities for learning. The government should speak to the Ontario government.

The government suggests a goal of cutting illiteracy rates in half, but what is the definition of literacy? Is it the inability to read and write, or is it the inability to read and write English and French?

The government wants to double the number of post-secondary graduates in mathematics, science and engineering. Why then has the government been cutting research and development, science and technology funds since it was elected?

The leader of my party pointed out in his speech last week that despite the promise the Prime Minister made in 1984 to double research and development funding, R and D spending has declined from 1.42 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product in 1984 to 1.28 per cent today, a decline of more than 10 per cent.

We agree that Canada must position itself to participate fully in the global economy. There are opportunities we can seize, but these opportunities are not all in southern Canada. There are northern and circumpolar opportunities in science and technology and research and development which should be pursued.

I urge the government to include the north in its global strategic planning. It should not continue to let the Canadian north fall behind.

Northerners are somewhat sceptical about the proposed North American free trade deal. The Canada–U.S. deal did nothing for us. The government could have sought amendments to the Marine Mammals Act, but it did not.

I want to raise a concern as well about the effects on northern preference of the government's intention to eliminate hiring policies that give preference to provincial residents over those from other provinces. I hope that the government recognizes the large and special problem we have in the north of fly-in, fly-out workers and the pressing need to develop our own local trained labour force.

With respect to the environment, we have seen some backtracking by this government. The recent federal budget stretched green plan funding over six years instead of the five years promised initially. The Arctic environmental strategy, so important to northern Canada and to the world, is a step forward but a very small one. The funding, while welcome, is a drop in the bucket. The plan, for example, proposes cleaning up only 13 contaminated sites out of the 800 identified across the north, and there is much more the plan does not deal with.

The government's commitment to consult with aboriginal people on the terms of reference and membership of the proposed royal commission on aboriginal affairs is a positive one. The terms of reference as announced by the Prime Minister in British Columbia, however, were too narrow. Aboriginal issues are not just social, cultural and economic issues. Aboriginal issues are political issues involving the fundamental relationships between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples and governments. The royal commission's mandate must reflect this.

But why did the government need to get such a high-profile person, namely the Right Hon. Brian Dickson, a former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, to serve as a special representative of the Prime Minister? This would seem to be an admission by the government that it does not have the credibility to do the job itself.

In addition, it appears the government did not consult aboriginal people on the selection of this special representative. The president of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada issued a press release about this matter which reads:

> Chief Justice Dickson's track record speaks for itself, but the fact that the Prime Minister appointed him without consulting us speaks volumes about the new respect for aboriginal people he claims to have developed recently.
>
> The Prime Minister made a promise to consult aboriginal people about the royal commission, so he should have consulted us about the person he is delegating that work to.

The Inuit Tapirisat of Canada has every confidence in Chief Justice Dickson but is reserving final judgment, as I do, until it sees whether its recommendations to him are reflected in his recommendations to the government and whether the government implements those recommendations.

I want to comment here about the government's land claims policy. The government speaks of a reformed policy, but Canadians should know that the government has not reformed the basis of its land claim's policy.

If the government is serious about improving relations with aboriginal people, it must amend its claims policy. No amount of rhetoric about accelerating claims settlements will lead to the agreements the government says it wants, as long as the basis of the policy remains unchanged. There are fundamental problems with the current policy, foremost among them the continued insistence of the government that aboriginal people must extinguish their rights in claims settlements. The government must remove this offensive requirement immediately if it really wants to see progress made.

• (1030)

I urge the government to work with aboriginal people to develop a mechanism which would achieve certainty and clarity in claims settlements without extinguishment.

Aboriginal justice is another area touched on in the throne speech. The government says it will consult aboriginal people on changes in the system of administering justice. Given the government's track record on consultations, how serious is the government? Can aboriginal people believe the government is willing to make meaningful reforms?

The problems between aboriginal people and the justice system have increasingly come to the attention of the general public. We have had the Marshall inquiry in Nova Scotia. It said that the justice system failed Donald Marshall at every turn. Two recent reports have documented similar failures in Alberta.

Manitoba's massive aboriginal justice inquiry will report this summer and it will likely make the same condemnations of the current system.

Saskatchewan is beginning its own review. A meeting will be held in the north, in September, of provincial and territorial justice ministers and aboriginal leaders.

I would like to comment on another issue in terms of aboriginal justice that happened recently in British Columbia and Iqaluit. Kitty Nowdluk, who was a victim in a rape assault case, declined to testify in Iqaluit last year. Because of that refusal she had to undergo a very embarrassing experience when she was arrested in British Columbia. She was taken to Iqaluit through Edmonton and Yellowknife, back to Edmonton, over to Ottawa, and finally back to Iqaluit. She spent time in jail at every stop because she did not want to go to Iqaluit to testify in the rape case in which she was the victim.

She was made a victim of the circumstances and was treated as a criminal. How fair is the justice system when it arrests the victim instead of putting the criminal in jail? I wanted to comment on that while we were talking about the aboriginal justice system.

I want to conclude by making reference to the royal commission on electoral reform. This commission may recommend a process for aboriginal electoral districts as a means of securing more equitable representation for aboriginal people in the Parliament of Canada.

I would like to elaborate further on that electoral reform. I am a member of a committee that will be making recommendations on aboriginal electoral reform. The aboriginal people are going to be recommending that there be some means of ensuring more aboriginal participation in this House. The way to do that, we believe, is to ensure that there be some way of creating constituencies that reflect a large number of aboriginal people across this country. It does not mean, and I must stress this, that we want guarantees to ensure that aboriginal people get elected. What it means is that we want to ensure the process is there by which aboriginal people can get represented down here. We presently do not have that same problem in the Northwest Territories because the aboriginal people are the majority there. I urge this House to react favourably to the Electoral Reform Commission when it comes up with its recommendations.

I urge this Parliament to give this idea the thoughtful consideration it deserves as one means of changing the way Ottawa works for all Canadians and all aboriginal people.

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, I listened with intrigue to the hon. member's remarks dealing with the throne speech. I have had the very distinct pleasure of being able to visit Cambridge Bay, which is about 2,000 miles straight north of the city I live in. I was absolutely amazed at all things I found in Cambridge Bay. I am not sure how close Cambridge Bay is to the hon. member's home.

Just to give some idea of how impressed I was, when you arrive in the community you find absolutely no roads, no fences, no power lines. It is a self-contained community. One immediately becomes very much aware of how difficult life must be, particularly given the harsh climate and the fact that the ability to produce things from the soil is not available to the community.

I noticed that the hon. member made reference to the fact that the throne speech did not make specific reference to assisting opportunities to become involved or to make jobs or work easier for employers. I note that is perhaps a much easier statement to make than it is one to put bricks and mortar to. For example, I met an individual who was the taxi operator, the day operator, a mortician, he dug graves, he was a general contractor

and on an on. It is tough to eke out a living in the north. There is certainly no question about that.

The hon. member went on to say that he is somewhat concerned with the elimination of borders, to bring in people to assist employers to provide work on the most cost-effective basis. I understand his concern with local employment, but on the other hand if business is to do business and be competitive, then I think they need to have all opportunities open to them.

He made some mention with respect to the Right Hon. Brian Dickson and his role and the system he has been put in charge of with respect to making certain things happen. He expressed some concern that, perhaps, this process did not proceed in a way he found favour with.

Therefore, my question to him is: If he were the Prime Minister and were to begin this process, how would he like this process to begin? How would he like to see this process evolve? Also, if he has time, what conclusions would he like to see?

Mr. Anawak: Mr. Speaker, I probably will not have the pleasure of being the Prime Minister in my lifetime, so it is a rhetorical question.

I just want to make a couple of comments. I am sorry that I missed part of the question with regard to the Right Hon. Brian Dickson. In terms of freeing the interprovincial barriers, one must realize that in the north today a majority of the construction companies or other companies that operate in the north started out from down here and have somewhat continued, although we are making great strides to get northern owned companies operating in the north.

When a majority of the companies are from down here, the thing that happens is that it is easier, cheaper for them to bring in their own people. In this case, I am talking about construction companies which are in the process of building houses and other construction. When construction workers come north, they leave home. They want to get back home as soon as possible, so they are prepared to work 16 hour days, long days, seven days a week.

• (1040)

The construction companies prefer them because they can finish the job faster and, therefore, the companies can make more money in the process.

As a result, the local people do not get as much of a chance to work for those construction firms as they would like because they have their own lives to live, they have their homes, and they have their families in that community. They have other commitments, whether it is in regional or municipal politics, and so have to do other work. They have outside interests other than the present construction that is going on.

I just wanted to make that point to show that the money that is spent is taken back out again because the construction firm and the construction labourers are not from that community. The money is used to build a house or whatever and is taken right back out again. Therefore, the money does not create the economic opportunities that it should.

I must make a further comment about the Right Hon. Brian Dickson. I never disagreed with his appointment, I just question the fact that the appointment was made without consultation with the aboriginal people.

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, the member referred to economic matters during his speech and noted the absence of an economic plan for the north in the throne speech. He also spoke of the need to reduce the cost of doing business for northern businesses.

The member is a diligent, hard-working member of the committee of the House on industry, science and technology. I know that he has lots of ideas about what can be done to promote the northern economy. I wonder whether he would care to expand on this briefly.

Mr. Anawak: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that this government announced last week, on Friday I think, in all its generosity, was that it had decided to maintain what is called a postal rate subsidy for food in the north. After the government cut it from $19 million, it will now be maintained at $15 million.

When we told the government that it should maintain the subsidy, it was adamant about eliminating it in the next 15 years. Keeping it is one way of ensuring that Canadians have a fair chance of being able to buy their produce and other food stuffs in the north in order to operate cheaper and better.

I believe there has to be more tax incentives introduced by the government, either this government or the territorial government, to ensure that northern companies operating in the north are better able to compete with the government, which is the largest employer in the north. We have a saying in the north that the private sector trains and the government hires. The private sector trains people to do certain jobs and then the government comes along, either the territorial government or federal government, plucks away those very people. That makes it extremely hard for the private sector to keep its employees and ensure that they have better productivity in the north.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to rise in the House this morning to speak in this debate on the Speech from the Throne and to express my full support for the objectives set forth by the government in this historic document.

As was mentioned by the Governor General, His Excellency Ray Hnatyshyn, national unity, prosperity, the environment and education are among the genuine concerns of Canadian men and women.

When I took up my new duties a few weeks ago, I had to go back to school, as it were, and read a number of papers.

One of these described Transport Canada's mission as helping to maintain a safe national transportation system that respects the environment and is responsive to the needs of a competitive economy and to the goals this country has set itself.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the department for which I am responsible is the linchpin of our action in this country. If there is any area and that is also valued as a symbol of the unity of this country, transportation is certainly one of them.

If we were to cross Canada from Cape Spear, Newfoundland, to St. Elias, Yukon, that would be a total of 5,187 kilometres. If we crossed Canadian territory from Ellesmere Island to Middle Island in Lake Erie, that would be a total of 4,627 kilometres. About 14 million people live in the narrow strip, 1,000 kilometres long, between Quebec City and Windsor, which represents only 2 per cent of our territory. About 48 per cent of our population lives in Canada's 10 largest urban centres.

Mr. Speaker, one can scarcely imagine how strong our sense of unity had to be to forge and maintain the ties that keep this country together. I believe that sense of unity is still very much alive in the hearts of every Canadian in this country.

Since the beginning of Confederation, it was transportation that linked Quebec to the Maritimes, British Columbia to the Prairies, and Ontario to the East and to the West.

Historically, transportation has been one of the factors that helped unite this country. The construction of the railways brought the West into Confederation, and when we think of Canadian history, we often tend to think of those who built the railways as nation-builders. In fact, the railways started to expand in Canada during the second half of the nineteenth century when it was perceived as an important tool for uniting and opening up the country. Companies and private citizens started to invest massively in railway construction. The network extended in many directions and finally culminated in the transcontinental line built by Canadian Pacific.

When the "Last Spike" was driven in 1885, the railways became a symbol of the determination of Canadians. Has that determination disappeared? I don't think so, although Canadians may be less aware of it. We must therefore renew that awareness of their values, their strengths and their determination to be united with in a prosperous country.

[*English*]

Transportation was not only fundamental to the creation of our nation, but also has been and continues to be a mainspring of our country's economic growth. We estimate that the transportation services sector currently employs 700,000 people and generates $41 billion annually in economic benefits.

Transportation is more than just another economic sector. Since the earliest days of Confederation, the industry has been the main agent of the physical and political cohesion of our country. A strong and competitive transportation system is as necessary today as it was in 1867 to promote the development of all of Canada's regions.

Distance makes a transportation policy essential to our national well-being and influences our transportation priorities. Further, because the greater part of our country is so sparsely populated, domestic transportation is particularly important to strengthen our national unity, encourage national and regional development and provide services to remote areas.

• (1050)

We all know that Canada's economic future depends on our ability to compete internationally.

[*Translation*]

We believe that the planning of a new national rail system for freight transport complements the study of the national rail network and will help us develop an integrated surface freight transportation strategy.

The railways' rate of return for freight transportation was rather low in the past and there is no prospect of improvement if the present trend continues.

But those are not the only problems: Canadian ports have expressed many concerns about the competitive advantages that American ports enjoy and the possible diversion of containers destined for Canada to ports and railways in the United States.

The continued viability of Canadian ports as an essential link in the surface transportation system cannot be assumed. The success of our main ports on the east and west coasts is closely tied to the ability of our railways and trucking companies to provide services and rates that are competitive with those offered by American ports, railroads and trucking companies.

The task force report on Canadian ports that will soon be made public should provide an interesting analysis of the above issues and other aspects of the overall problem. The many interrelationships of the surface transportation system suggest that we cannot successfully meet all the challenges of transportation unless we consider the system as a whole.

Transport Canada is working on the first step of this strategy, which involves predicting what our surface transport system could be like and how it will function in a few decades. This document should be released shortly for comment to the railways, trucking companies, port authorities and provincial governments, among others.

We believe that this strategy will encourage intermodal transportation and help all modes of transportation look forward to a prosperous future and increased competitiveness. Our ambitions should not be limited by the size of our domestic market. Canada is home to some of the largest paper companies in the world and they produce twice as much wood as the Canadian market needs.

Canada is also the headquarters of one of the world's largest textile companies which earns 68 per cent of its revenue abroad. Bombardier sells 90 per cent of its transportation products abroad. I could continue this list for a long time.

All these industries contribute directly to the welfare of all Canadians. The government can help stimulate some of these industries and keep our industries competitive, but cannot do it alone. All concerned must cooperate, both private enterprise and workers and their unions. All those who are in any way involved with the country's productivity must work in the same direction.

[*English*]

Today, Canadians are increasingly concerned about their ability to compete. These concerns range from broad economic issues such as inflation, interest rates and the exchange rate to problems with our productivity performance like the effectiveness of investments, the burden of government and the business climate.

Government's have a responsibility to create an environment that encourages the growth of competitive and successful enterprises. The 1991 budget announced actions to restore fiscal balance and move toward price stability. This will lead to a stable-wide economic environment, increase the confidence in the Canadian economy and will strengthen Canada's ability to compete in a tough, economic world.

Boosting productivity growth and prosperity is far more than a job just for government. The private sector must take full advantage of the opportunities created by the actions of governments. In order to maximize productivity growth, the quality of investments in infrastructure, machinery and equipment, training, education and research and technology must be scrutinized. As well, consideration must be given to private sector spending in the areas of training and research and to other areas, such as education, where by international standards Canada's level of spending compares well but its performance does not. Prosperity and competitiveness are

not only issues for business, labour and government. All Canadians can help to strengthen Canada's competitive ability by identifying and developing an awareness of the problem. Only then can they be a part of developing solutions.

[*Translation*]

I hope that all Canadians, business as well as labour, are thinking about innovative solutions that will strengthen Canada's ability to grow and regain the prosperity that made it the envy of so many other countries for so long. We are prepared to help Canadians explore new ways and new opportunities for cooperation between the public and private sectors to create a more favorable environment with a view to improving our productivity performance.

Cooperation could take the form of a partnership, for instance. We believe that it would provide a sound basis for solving common problems and face the challenges in an efficient way. The government is reaching out and I would like to give an example of this.

[*English*]

We are currently involved in negotiations to transfer the management and operation of several airports to local airport authorities. We expect the transfers to be completed by the end of this year at Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver and Montreal. Aviation services, including air traffic control, airport safety and security, will remain the responsibility of the federal government.

The whole point of this initiative is to allow airports to respond more directly and positively to local communities' needs and interests and to encourage the national airport network to operate in a more commercial and cost-efficient fashion. It offers communities the opportunity to share in their airports' business.

The airport transfer policy announced in 1987 has sparked interest across the country and local groups are working with Transport Canada on similar transfers in Moncton, Quebec City, Windsor, Thunder Bay, Winnipeg and Kamloops.

The federal government earlier this year transferred 38 Arctic airports in the Northwest Territories to the territorial government. Last year, 10 other airports were transferred to the Yukon territorial government. Our objective is to establish a self-sustaining airport network that promotes increased local involvement while meeting the operational objectives of the national air transportation system.

I would like to address another matter, where partnership and co-operation between all parts of society is essential, and I mean government at all levels, industry and individuals, which is the environment. The government has already put in place a series of environmental partnerships involving individuals as well as special groups, the private sector, as well as municipal and provincial governments. Those partnerships extend to the international level. In the transport field, we must try to reduce the activities that are harmful to the environment. We must try to balance the demands for long-term development with environment consideration, such as noise, pollution and congestion. These factors will remain at the centre of our work and activities.

But there will be a price to pay. For example, last November the public review panel on tanker safety and marine spills response capability filed its report. It recommends, among other measures, the improvement of our capability to clean oil spills, the financing of research in the field of cleaning equipment and the assurance that in 10 years all tankers in use in Canada will be equipped with double hulls.

In a more general manner, my department will contribute to the environmental objectives of the federal government by proceeding with changes to regulation of the transportation of dangerous goods; responding to and implementing in conjunction with Environment Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans the recommendation of the public review panel on tanker safety and marine spills response capability; working with the international marine organization toward development of an international convention on oil spill response; implementing the green plan initiatives which impact upon Transport Canada, including the federal code of environmental stewardship; the sustainable management program for the Fraser River Basin, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence pollution prevention program, et cetera; contributing to the development of regulations pursuant to the new Canadian Environmental Assessment Act; reviewing departmental practices

and procedures to integrate environmental considerations into the decision-making process at all levels, in other words the airport group's environmental strategy; augmenting departmental work on environment protection through research and development like waste management, spills and leaks, long-term climate change and fuel efficiency; and finally by reviewing the regulation of vehicle emissions to phase in more stringent standards.

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

We hope, Mr. Speaker, that these actions will all contribute to the national effort to protect the environment and to avoid repeating past mistakes.

However, there is no magic solution to this tremendous task as many seem to believe. The support and involvment of everyone, at all levels, will be required.

I would now like to talk briefly about education, which occupies a prominant place in the Speech from the Throne. My concern for education dates as far back as the days when I was Labour Minister and will certainly not fade, because education is the cornerstone of any modern society.

As Michelet, the XIX century French historian and author, wrote in his book titled "The People":"What comes first in politics? Education. Second? Education. And third? Education."

The statistics quoted in the Speech from the Throne are unbelievable, Mr. Speaker: 3 out of 10 young Canadians do not graduate from high school and 4 out of 10 adults are virtually illiterate.

Canadian industry spends half as much on its employees' training as its American counterpart, a fifth as much as the Japanese and an eight as much as the Germans. That is terrible, Mr. Speaker, is it not?

How can we ask illiterate people to make a choice when in fact they cannot understand what is being asked of them? How can we ask young people to feel useful and proud when they cannot find a job because of lack of training?

I am from Quebec, Mr. Speaker, and I have never appreciated the federal meddling in education. It is clear that, to protect its language and culture, Quebec has to exercise an exclusive jurisdiction on education.

The federal government recognizes this and reaffirms its intent to respect provincial jurisdictions in that area.

It would be tragic, however, for the government of Canada to shirk its responsability to ponder over that whole question. Although statistics do not relate to one province in particular, they vary little from province to province.

In the context of a global economy, education and training needs know no boundaries. It seems perfectly logical to me to undertake a nation-wide discussion on the subject. Each province will then be able to choose among the proposed solutions the ones that fit their objectives.

Everyone's cooperation is urgently required, otherwise Canada will take a back seat to an increasing number of countries and will be incapable of taking up the challenges inherent to the pursuit of prosperity and quality of life all Canadians want.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I have to say a few words about Montreal, one of the most beautiful cities in Canada, and one of the most cosmopolitan as well. The ongoing development of the metropolitan area of Montreal is a main concern of mine and of this government.

What I has just said about education and training in the whole country also applies to Montreal, where the industrial structure is changing. Montreal youths have to be prepared to fill the high technology positions in the high-tech industries we have helped set up through our direct assistance. I am referring to research funding in the fields of pharmaceutical products, aeronautics and space tehcnology. It is imperative to prepare our youths to acquire expertise in these high-tech sectors.

In Montreal, multiculturalism is lived in great harmony. The social climate has always been one of tolerance and cooperation between its various elements. This is in line with the desire of Montreal to be recognized as a city of international status and to accomodate as many international organization's headquarters as possible. It has the full support of our government in achieving its goals.

Canada has always been a trading nation and a flourishing trade inevitably causes the movement of goods across Canada and a abroad. These operations cannot be carried out successfully without an efficient and competitive transportation system. A first-rate Canadian transportation system is one of the main components of a unified Canada. I undertake, as Minister of Transport, to do my best to promote this level of excellence.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could ask a question, since I have four children in the Quebec school system. I would like to know whether the minister is prepared to criticize the education system in his province. Is he willing to do so?

Another item: The minister mentioned the problem of inflation when the last Budget was brought down. I believe that a study published this morning by the Consumers' Association of Canada indicates that the GST has added enormously to inflation in this country and to rising prices. Is he prepared to comment on that? Finally, I also want to mention what his colleague the Prime Minister said in Alberta to Albertans, to convince them that the GST was a good thing. The Prime Minister was quoted this morning on the CBC. He said:

[*English*]

"The GST will not cost you a nickel. The GST will not cost you a nickel".

[*Translation*]

That is what the Prime Minister said. Is he willing to comment on these two items?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, as far as education is concerned, when the federal government announces an exercise in reflection on education in this country, it does not mean the Government of Canada or the present speaker is putting the blame on a particular jurisdiction. Statistics have shown that over 30 per cent of young Canadians do not finish high school, and there are some major reasons for this. This means we must be concerned about the situation across Canada, because we will live in an increasingly global economy, so that across Canada, people will have to start asking some very serious questions about the drop-out problem. We must start asking some very serious questions about what brings young people to leave school when they are well into high school and, as a result, practically kill any chances they would have on the labour market in the years to come. Obviously, if they don't have the right education, if they don't at least finish high school or better than that, they will not be able to fill the high tech positions that the world of tomorrow is starting to create in increasing numbers.

It is certainly not our intention, not in the Speech from the Throne and not in our comments, to criticize one particular jurisdiction. We are merely asking all Canadians to take a long hard look at problems in education, to find the causes and, finally, to come up with the solutions.

As far as the GST is concerned, Mr. Speaker, this government had the guts to act after the previous government refused to do so, following reports from at least four task forces and commissions of inquiry, each of which concluded that the Government of Canada should eliminate the manufacturers' sales tax and thus enable our manufacturers to meet world competition head on. The only way to remove the tax on manufactured products was to replace it with a tax on consumption. We had the guts to do that, Mr. Speaker. For a whole year, the two Opposition Parties put up a ferocious battle against this salutary, energetic and courageous measure.

When the government finally put the bill through the House of Commons, the Opposition transferred the debate to the other place, where it did not belong, and they urged the Liberal senators to wage a fierce battle against a tax that is the best and the fairest tax we could have, a tax that will prove in the years to come, to all Canadians, how energetic and courageous we were to make this decision.

• (1110)

[*English*]

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I noticed that the hon. minister, when he was speaking, mentioned the green plan. He also mentioned the Fraser River basin and the work that is being planned there.

I wonder if the Minister of Transport is aware that the debris control program on the Fraser River, as we speak, is being dismantled because we have not had funding from two out of the three ministries responsible for federal funding in that program. Fisheries has cut back on part of its $45,000 and forestry is looking at cutting

back. The only department that has come through with its $90,000 portion has been the Coast Guard.

My question concerns what comes down the Fraser River. When I talk about what comes down I am talking about the logs and the flotsam and jetsam that come down the river during the freshet. The debris catch basin catches 135 pieces every minute during the freshet. The catching of those 135 pieces means a tremendous impact on what will not be coming down the Fraser where fisheries is taking place, where fish habitat is, where sports fishing takes place, where houseboats are and where industry is plying the Fraser.

The $180,000, which is the federal government's share of the Fraser River debris control program, is a very small price to pay for the tremendous job that debris control does. Some 90 per cent of the debris caught in that is debris as a result of natural causes and not as a result of the forest industry. The forest industry has undertaken to pay one-third, the provincial government is paying one-third and the federal government, under three ministries, is all over the map on it.

We are talking about a green plan and protecting and enhancing the Fraser River basin and the government is showing its lack of seriousness by not having full commitment to the debris control program. It should enhance that program so that the sludge left at the end, after the good stuff is cut for fire wood or chipped for pulp, could be chipped for hog fuel, if we had a way to use hog fuel, as opposed to being burned. That is how the government could be serious about the green plan and the Fraser River.

I would like to ask the hon. member if he would comment on just how serious the government is on the Fraser River basin.

Mr. Corbeil: Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with my colleague from the most western province her concern with the Fraser River, which is certainly one of the nicest waterways in this country. I have had many fortunate occasions to visit that area, and I certainly would like to see that area cleaned up as soon as possible because it would further enhance the beauty of the province of British Columbia.

I would like to reiterate here that this government has adopted a green plan which has been recognized by the knowledgeable authorities in the world as the best green plan ever adopted by any government in any country. We have repeated, many times, that we will implement that program over a given period of years.

We have to live with the constraints that we inherited from previous governments, but our commitment is there and the cleaning up of the Fraser River basin is one of the main commitments of the green plan.

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle): Mr. Speaker, I wish to join in the debate on the Speech from the Throne. There is much in the speech that one could speak on for quite a long time, not that the speech really has much substance. It does, however, touch base with a variety of issues that are important and deserve attention from this House and from members.

However, this morning I would like to touch on just two areas with which the Speech from the Throne deals. One concerns the question of national unity and the other area I would like to discuss is the question of productivity and economic growth.

First, concerning the question of national unity and the constitution and ways and means of getting constitutional change in Canada, I personally believe that what we need is a constituent assembly. I felt this way when Mr. Trudeau, of the former Liberal government, brought in its constitutional proposals. I believe a better way of dealing with a broad, sweeping change of our Constitution would be through some form of constituent assembly.

For a while, the then leader of the opposition, the hon. member for Yellowhead, supported that proposition. He advocated it for a short period of time, then he withdrew the idea. I thought he was wrong in withdrawing it. I wish he had continued to press for some form of constituent assembly.

What has occurred in the 1980s in terms of attempts at constitutional change just reinforces for me the necessity of having some form of constituent assembly. I believe our present institutions, Parliament and the provincial legislatures, as well as provincial and federal political parties are not suited to deal with the constitutional issue. I suggest that political considerations play a major part in our discussions and in our decisions concerning the Constitution. That is not surprising; whether we are

provincial or federal politicians, our concern is getting re-elected. That is the nature of the job and the role that we have. It is a job requirement, so to speak.

Our concern with the politics of it is an ingredient that is always there. I do not think I am divulging any caucus secrets, but when we sit around the table and discuss things like the Quebec veto, and I am sure this occurs in the Liberal and Conservative caucuses, a great debate occurs among the members, depending on the region you are from. The debate very often goes in terms of: "Can we sell this back home"? In other words, what are the political dimensions of this?

On top of that, going through the decade of the 1980s and toward the end of the 1980s, politics, political institutions, legislatures and parliaments have lost a lot of respect and credibility among Canadians. They see us very often as playing the political role rather than doing what the public feels is good for the country. In many ways this is simplistic, to be sure.

The fact that it is a widely held belief and feeling that we are just functioning for our own political interests and not for what is good for the country disables us from getting the credibility in dealing with this most important issue of national unity and the question of whether Canada, as we know it today, will continue to exist in the years and decades ahead.

My preference would be a process of consultation. All political parties on the federal and provincial levels would consult with various groups and get people from those groups to sit on a constituent assembly. We would have representatives from labour, business, the farming community, fishermen, women's organizations, native organizations, the arts, the universities and from a broad spectrum of Canadian society. The way I envisage it is somewhat similar to what many of the bands in my district have. There is the position called "elders", the elders of the band.

• (1120)

I would like to see a constituent assembly of elders from Canada to sit down—give them a year or two years—to discuss among themselves how this country can function. I would like them to get to know each other and the nuances of the various geographic districts as well as of the various specific interests and concerns that women, native people and that labour must have. Through discussing these interests and concerns, a proposal can come forward in which there is equality and justice for Canada. They can propose a way of governing ourselves that would make sense and that would be acceptable to the Canadian people.

I would then suggest that proposals be put forward in a national referendum so that people supporting, advocating and educating the public on them would not be just politicians. They would be the representatives of the women's organizations, native organizations, labour, business and the various groups and components that make up our broad mosaic and are members of the constituents assembly. In this way, they would find the common concerns for example of women in Quebec and outside Quebec. The question of Quebec and the distinctiveness of Quebec would be reflected in their discussions.

Personally, I see this as the only means by which we could resolve the constitutional impasse that has been created for us. I must say this constitutional impasse has, to a certain extent, been the result of political considerations that were involved and which have created, to a large extent, the situation we are in today. I do not believe that our political institutions are capable of untying the knot that we are in now.

The other area I wish to touch upon is the question of productivity and economic strategy that the Speech from the Throne talks about. Again the Speech from the Throne talks in glowing terms. Often the rhetoric in the speech is correct.

I noted, as well, one part of the speech the Speech from the Throne calls upon:

> Canadian business, workers and governments will be asked to work together to generate at least two and a half million new jobs by the year 2000 and to raise the real incomes of Canadians by at least twenty-five percent, by the same year.

In other words, the Speech from the Throne and this government calls upon business and labour to work together and to co-operate. That is a lofty notion. Excuse my cynicism when I hear it coming from this government.

This government has done more to alienate labour and to set one group of people in society against the other group in our society than any other previous government that I am aware of. This government talks about increased productivity and the importance of education. Excuse my cynicism, but this government has done more

to cut back on research and development, and post-secondary education than any government that I am aware of.

To be sure, I have not been here all that long. I have been here only since 1979, but I must say that in the 11 or 12 years that I have been a member, I have never seen such systematic cutbacks to post-secondary education, the science councils and the research councils than what has occurred under various budgets introduced by the government opposite.

There is no doubt that if we are going to survive economically, we have, as a society and as a country, to begin to focus our capacities and our assets as a nation. We must be able to bring private capital, labour, science, the public sector together to focus on certain economic strategies and goals. When you look at the successful economic models in the world today, whether they are Taiwan, Japan, Germany or other European countries, you would see, Mr. Speaker, that they have been so successful because they have been able to focus, to bring together and to harmonize the various assets they have as a country; to bring capital, the resources of the scientific community, and the public sector together to act as a co-ordinator and initiator and to ensure that public policy is in harmony with the goals.

To achieve that in this country I suggest requires quite a different attitude by this government. While this government might pay lip service to the goals, its actual record and its actual deeds have been the opposite. Rather than creating harmony, it has created disharmony; rather than being able to bring together and to focus, it has done the very opposite. It has split this country and its people into various factions and groups at war with each other.

As well, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the models of Taiwan, Japan, Germany and other European countries, you begin to notice that the public sector there plays a very important part. Even in Taiwan its steel companies are publicly owned because it fitted in with its industrial strategy.

This government opposite is so ideologically driven that it will privatize for the sake of privatization. It will not step back and ask the question: "Does it make sense to have this particular enterprise in the public sector or not". It refuses to look at the question in this light.

The government is ideologically driven. It is part of the new right that assumes that any public involvement is bad. It says, just leave it entirely to the private sector and the private sector somehow or other will create new wealth and that new wealth will be distributed creating new jobs and opportunities and so everyone will be happy and well off. It is obvious that this has not worked.

If this government is serious about an industrial strategy, it has to drop its ideologically motivated and driven agenda. It is not appropriate in the 21st century. We have seen, mainly in the English speaking world, Canada, the United States, Great Britain, go through a new right era, the era of Ronald Reagan, the era of Maggie Thatcher and the era of this particular brand of the Conservative Party, which I hasten to add is different from the old Conservative Party of Stanfield and Diefenbaker.

This Conservative Party is the new right that originates in the United States. It has captured this party and has derailed it from the great tradition of the Progressive Conservative Party.

The type of Rambo capitalism this government encourages is not the model that would allow us to remain competitive, to have the leading edge technologically, to produce an economy that has decent wages, that has the production of new wealth in order for all of its citizens to benefit.

The first thing this government has to do, if it is serious about an industrial strategy, is to understand that the state does have a role to play in the creation of wealth as well as the question of the distribution of wealth.

• (1130)

We can also look at past Liberal economic strategies. Often, to tell the truth, they did not work that well. Quite often it was a case of throwing money at the problem. It was not all that smart. A lot of the money was wasted. It did not produce what the Liberals hoped it would produce.

The whole mad scheme that the Liberals introduced in the dying days of their government of the scientific research tax credit comes to mind. Billions of dollars were wasted, a terrible waste. It just benefited smart

accountants and fly-by-night operators who took advantage of this tax loophole. Had the billions of dollars been actually used in directed grants to our universities, to our research councils, we could have gotten much more benefit out of that loss of tax revenue.

The hallmark of Liberal economic strategy very often was waste. Money was given to people who did not need the money. Grants were given to certain businesses, and not to other businesses, which gave some businesses unfair competitive advantage over other businesses.

This practice continues with this present government. We hear stories now and then about certain businesses getting grants from the government, putting at a tremendous disadvantage that business' competitors.

The question arises whether the state should be involved in selecting winners. I would shy away from that. No, the state does not pick the winners. However, surely the state, in co-ordination with labour, business, and the scientific community, can select certain areas in which we can specialize, in which we can marshal our resources to ensure that we are successful in that area. The decision of picking winners is not one that a few bureaucrats in the government should make but a decision that should be made by a larger group of people in society.

The other thing that is important when we talk about an economic strategy or a social contract is that this government has to sit down and have some honest words with their business friends, and particularly Mr. d'Aquino and the Business Council on National Issues. It happens too often that governments, whether this government or the previous Liberal government, have given tremendous tax advantages or direct grants and loans to certain businesses, which then in turn have taken those gifts and very often moved south of the border. There is a certain social responsibility that requires that companies receiving special grants and subsidies or tax treatment remain in the country.

The other thing the government has to talk to its business friends about is their responsibility to pay their fair share in taxes. I am tired of hearing the business council and members of this country's large wealthy families lecture us about getting the deficit under control, while they who have benefited most from the deficit, from the economic growth that has occurred because of the deficit, are the ones who pay the least in terms of taxes.

Talking about the types of rip-offs that occur, the Minister of Finance said in February of this year in a small press release, No. 91-018, Draft Legislation on the Income Taxation of Trusts, that when this legislation is passed by this House the government will defer billions of dollars of tax revenue that large wealthy families—the Eatons, the Bronfmans, et cetera—should start paying.

The Liberals in 1972 in their tax reform, when we changed from an inheritance tax to a capital gains tax, allowed the very wealthy families to defer paying taxes 21 years on their accumulation of wealth—the increase in the stocks and the bonds and the real estate that they held.

They were allowed to place that wealth into a trust, but there was a rule imposed that required them to start paying taxes on that wealth 21 years down the line. This government is now going to defer that for a whole other generation. I find that outrageous and obscene. If we are going to have an economic strategy with labour, management, business, and the public sector co-operating then everybody should also be paying their fair share in taxes.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wished and hoped that the comments of the hon. member would have focused on the Speech from the Throne. I was quite disappointed to see him moving his cannon away from shooting at the government to shooting at the Official Opposition. For the record, when the hon. member was talking about Liberal policies and investing money in certain programs, what problems does the hon. member have with the national health care program, one of the finest national health care programs in the world. Is he suggesting that the Liberal government, or future governments, should not be investing money in a national program such as health care?

The hon. member spoke about fair taxation. I wonder about fair taxation when the only NDP government in Canada introduced an 8 per cent tax on top of the 7 per cent GST. Is there any fairness whatsoever in that way of doing business? Why would the hon. member not go to his colleagues at the provincial level in Ontario and ask them to introduce some fairness in the provincial tax

system so we would not see the 7 per cent on top of the 8 per cent, tax on top of taxing?

What is the problem is with the hon. member when he talks about a fair taxation system and turns around and attacks the Liberal initiatives of the past? If we leave it to my colleagues in the NDP probably everyone in the country would be poor. They do not seem to like anybody getting ahead in our society and getting rich, even without taking away from those needing assistance.

He spoke about the educational system and tried to attack the government. I am not here in order to defend the government, but I was quite amazed that the first province across Canada to oppose any kind of move toward reform of the national education system was Ontario and its NDP government. I wonder what the hon. member's position is *vis-à-vis* that. Is he going to communicate to his colleagues, the NDP Government of Ontario, that there is a need to reform the educational system across the country? I would like to hear his comments.

Mr. de Jong: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises quite a few issues. First of all in my criticism of this government and previous Liberal governments I generally tried to direct my comments to the question of taxation and industrial strategy. He talked about health and what the former Liberal government did in that area.

As with many things, including the economic strategy of the former Liberal government, very often it was hit and miss. There were some successes and some failures. They introduced some good legislation in terms of health care, yet let us not forget that it was the Liberal government that started moving away from block funding.

He then asks the question about tax fairness and ends his comments by asking what I have got against wealth. I accept that the accumulation of wealth is part of our society and has some desirable aspects to it, but to have large wealth not pay a cent of tax I find a little too much. I wonder if the hon. member really believes that large wealth should not be taxed.

• (1140)

I look here at an editorial from *The Financial Post* of March 27, 1991, which talks about the deferral of the trust tax. The editorial ends up by making this statement:

> There could be substantial sums at stake in allowing trusts to defer capital gains taxes further. Taxpayers should be told how much revenue is at stake, and who will benefit most by allowing trusts to defer capital gains taxes for many years beyond the 21 already allowed.

Another editorial, by Diane Francis in the *Macleans'* issue of December 25, 1989 asks this question:

> I'm all in favour of a society that encourages the creation of wealth, but I certainly hope that courts, politicians and tax officials remember that taxes, like death, should be as unavoidable for the rich as they are for the rest of us.

There has got to be some basic fairness that everybody should pay their taxes.

On the question of education and the Ontario NDP government's decision not to participate in the national testing, I am sorry, I do not know enough about the particulars of that situation to comment on it intelligently.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member spoke quite strongly about the idea of a constituent assembly. I certainly know that we share the concern of many Canadians that there has got to be a better way of involving people across this country.

When I was going home on the plane last weekend, I talked to a gentleman who is on the citizens' forum. We got talking about the findings that are very general across Canada: citizens, generally, are hostile, cynical and disillusioned with government, with their Prime Minister and with most politicians. This also ties in with the feeling of isolation of Ottawa and government and politicians being so far from local ridings.

I was suggesting that maybe—and I would like the member's view on this—what we should be trying to do is get MPs and Parliament to establish a regular system of citizens' forums in local communities. Hopefully it would be non-partisan. Perhaps several MPs could host forums in a given city, for example, and they could be held on a regular basis, perhaps three to four times a year. They could be advertised through our householders. It would give people a chance to discuss issues, it would give a

consensus from citizens that we could bring back to Ottawa, and it would also make us more accountable to local communities and local people.

I think it would be very easy to do it without a lot of expense because we have offices in the ridings and we could rotate where it meets and so on.

I wonder what he thinks of this idea, whether it would have any validity in trying to make our democracy work more at the grassroots level.

Mr. de Jong: Mr. Speaker, I think that is a great idea. I think it has got to be done on a non-partisan basis.

I would dearly like to tour my constituency of Regina—Qu'Appelle and the constituency of my colleague from Regina, the hon. member for Regina—Wascana. We could go to both the city of Regina and to our rural communities and talk about the problems we face as a country and where the agreements and the disagreements lie so that our constituents have a better sense of what is going on here.

The real bottleneck, in terms of grassroots democracy, is in this place right here. The Speech from the Throne deals with it to a certain extent, and again excuse me for being cynical. Yes, we had the McGrath commission report and its recommendations to increase the importance of committees. At one stage we all seemed to agree that members of Parliament have got to be more independent so that what our constituents are telling us will be addressed in the House of Commons or in committees. This government has done more to hinder and obstruct committees, especially those committees that are independent and those members in their own ranks who have independent thoughts and feelings. This House is more partisan than I have seen for a long time, at least since I have been a member of Parliament.

The ability for us to act more independently as members of Parliament representing our constituents, rather than representing our political Whips, is less today than it was 10 years ago. If we are going to have real grass-roots democracy, this is the place that needs to be reformed. First and foremost, it is the thinking of this government that needs to be reformed.

Mr. Ross Stevenson (Durham): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in this debate at this time. It is one of the few opportunities for private members to address this House on the many issues that concern us and most important, on those matters that are of particular concern to the constituents who elected us.

First I want to take a moment and talk about Durham constituency, which I have the honour of representing here.

All of Durham constituency lies within the regional municipality of Durham. There are also within the Durham region two other smaller but more densely populated constituencies represented here by the members of the ridings of Ontario and Oshawa. Also one municipality in Durham lies within the federal riding of Victoria—Haliburton.

Durham is situated immediately to the east of metropolitan Toronto, and we have rich, rolling farmland and pine forests. Resort communities, such as Lake Scugog, are renowned throughout North America for their sports fishing. Also, Durham boasts a major industrial complex centred on the auto industry at Oshawa.

Durham is a community in which anyone would choose to live, so it is no surprise that it is one of the fastest growing centres on this continent. While providing ample space in which industry, commerce and families can prosper, it is readily accessible as well. Through it runs Highway 401 and principal transcontinental rail lines. GO trains and buses link Durham with Toronto and the rest of Ontario's heartland. Oshawa airport offers excellent passenger and freight service to more distant points. In short, Durham is open for business.

Anyone who gets to know Durham will agree with me that there is no better place to live, to work or to play. I say that advisedly. I have lived there most of my life and my family has been farming in that area for almost 200 years.

During the recent recess, we all had a valuable opportunity to get back to our roots, back to our constituencies, and to talk with the people we represent. That is an essential part of the democratic system. I want now to speak for a few minutes about some of the issues that are foremost in the minds of constituents, that concern me as a member of Parliament, and which I trust we will be addressing during this third session of the 34th Parliament.

As a member of Parliament, I am very pleased to see comments in the throne speech about increased independence of individual members in the House of Commons.

I doubt that there is a mature Canadian who is not deeply worried right now about our nation and how its future will evolve. It is all too easy to blame these worries on the present government and on the Prime Minister. I know many people do, including some members opposite. They are ignoring history and reality.

• (1150)

Finding ways to accommodate the demands of Quebec and French-speaking Canadians has been a top agenda item for every federal government at least since the quiet revolution in the early 1960s. Various approaches have been tried, offering Quebec particular status, seeking to make its people as one with other Canadians through bilingualism and guaranteed language rights. Succeeding governments had the best of intentions and wanted to make this work. Today, 30 years down the road, support for Quebec sovereignty has never been stronger and that province's future relationship with Canada is the most urgent question facing us now.

It is a complex question, as was detailed in last Monday's throne speech. All of us who have served through this Parliament are, or should be, aware that there are no simplistic solutions. I believe if we have a will to keep this country united, we can do so.

That is what I hope this session will achieve. I am sure that the great majority of Canadians feel the same way. We are seeking in the end a country which we each can love and cherish in our own way, though our reasons may differ due to our origins, our backgrounds, or the geographic regions in which we live. Within that we want an equality that is qualified only in a very limited way for any group or region.

We have an excellent justice system built on heritage and tradition which incorporates safeguards to ensure fair treatment for all. It bothers me and many others to see these safeguards misused perversely. Our extradition laws should be tightened so they can no longer provide a haven at the expense of our taxpayers for those who enter Canada solely to evade criminal prosecution in other countries.

Surely changes are in order to prevent similar misuse of our generous immigration provisions for refugees. Almost every day we hear of cases involving those who enter Canada illegally and seek to stall extradition or deportation by claiming refugee status to which they are not honestly entitled, with the knowledge that the required hearings process will take months, if not years, during which they remain here, often at public expense.

One sometimes wonders whether the bar associations and law societies can condone the actions of lawyers who counsel clients to abuse our laws and the charitable instincts of Canadians in this way.

Preserving and improving our environment is a very broad concern. I am confident there is an ever-increasing public demand for action and results, which is how it should be. Our world is our most precious possession. Diminishing it in any way could only lead to our own destruction.

Our basic, continuing aim must be to leave this planet in better shape than we found it for the generations which follow us.

For Durham constituency, as for all of central Canada, improving the water quality of the Great Lakes must be a priority consideration. While much has been accomplished, we still have a long way to go. Although the levels of concentration of many chemicals in the Great Lakes have decreased significantly over the last two decades, they remain above acceptable limits.

Ottawa and other governments have recognized this. Canada and the U.S. have signed agreements aimed at eventually stopping the discharge of all pollution into the Great Lakes. This is a principal focus of the federal green plan.

In late 1989, the federal government announced a five-year, $125 million clean-up, with special attention to the most severely polluted locations in the Great Lakes basin. A recent agreement with Ontario will reduce threats to the waterways from high risk contaminated sites. Because virtually all the waterway is shared with the United States, what many of us want to see is a Great Lakes clean water agreement, similar to the clean air agreement for controlling acid rain and other airborne pollutants which was signed in March by the Prime Minister and President Bush. This agreement was only achieved as a result of some unusual high-powered lobbying of Americans and their elected representatives by our government and by dedicated public interest

groups. Similar action may well be needed to achieve international co-operation necessary for a determined campaign to restore the Great Lakes.

Man-made pollution is not the only problem. The St. Lawrence seaway and the international shipping it attracts have brought some natural threats to the ecology. One of these was the sea lamprey. A more recent arrival is the zebra mussel, which has begun to plug intake pipes, affecting drinking water and threatening the very ecosystem of some Ontario lakes. Research indicates zebra mussels and other foreign pests may well have come here in the ballast water of foreign freighters which was pumped out while the ships were on the Great Lakes.

During this session I hope to introduce a Private Member's Bill amending the Canada Shipping Act to require that all ships dump ballast water while on the high seas, before entering the St. Lawrence seaway and other inland waters, with a very stiff fine for non-compliance. This should prove a significant step toward protecting and restoring the ecology of the Great Lakes, a water system which contains close to one-fifth of the world's fresh water supply and which we have too long taken for granted.

Anyone living in or near urban centres has to be concerned about municipal waste and the resulting demand for rural landfill sites in which it can be dumped. In Durham we have had to contend not only with our own waste, but with growing pressure to accept massive amounts from metro Toronto. This almost reached a crisis stage. Fortunately, public awareness of the need to reduce, re-use and recycle and of the advantages of composting has been having a noticeable impact.

I think it is worth remarking here that by next year Durham region will have achieved a 25 per cent reduction in the amount of waste going to landfill, and fully expects to make that 50 per cent by the end of the decade. It demonstrates how strong the public concern is about waste and the willingness to participate when people are given leadership.

It is important that we follow the intent of the packaging protocol which has been established. It is even more important that individuals who have already reached a 50 per cent reduction in the volume of waste leaving their homes be given leadership so they can go farther in reaching their personal objectives of minimizing household waste. I would suggest that we are now at the stage where legislation could be proposed and enacted, with the co-operation of the business community, to set specific targets and deadlines for eliminating unnecessary packaging. It need not be an onerous process. People want this. Smart industries will know that less packaging is the way to attract new customers.

In any discussion of municipal waste, another bugbear is so-called junk mail, the mass of unrequested advertising and promotion flyers which is delivered to our homes each day. Presumably it must be an important source of revenue for Canada Post at a time when it has begun to run in the black after decades of staggering deficits. Obviously, some people appreciate receiving this mail and respond to it. If it did not pay, retailers would not use this form of advertising. There are also a great many who abhor junk mail and they tell me about it constantly.

• (1200)

In attempting to deal with this issue, I think we should start by closely examining legislation that is now before the European Parliament to restrict the sale of mailing lists to direct mail organizations.

The European Community proposes that people must agree in writing before their names and addresses can be used in this way. One can anticipate the howls of protest from certain sectors of the business community. But here again, I believe they could be shown it would be smart and even profitable to stop antagonizing so many Canadians in this way.

My final words will be on the touchiest of all subjects these days—taxes. I want it understood that no one is more anxious to reduce taxes than I am. In that respect, it was my pleasure last winter to initiate and head a committee of our Ontario caucus that went through the Public Accounts of Canada and recommended a number of areas where substantial cuts should be made to federal spending.

Some of those were included in this year's budget. I regret that some other suggestions were not adopted, including cuts in the allocations for this House and its members.

I hope the Canadian public will understand just how effective this government's controls on federal spending have been. Average increases have been below 4 per cent, well under the inflation rate. Legislation outlined in the budget will restrict spending increases for future years and restrain future governments.

One might only wish that some other levels of government, including the province of Ontario, would show similar self-discipline. It is long past the time when all governments and elected public bodies must realize that, no matter how spending responsibility is rigged, jigged or shuffled about, it is the same taxpayers who pay the final tally. That includes you and me, everyone else in this House, and all the people across Canada.

The other day I spoke to an irate citizen who had just received his property tax bill. It was from his municipality, which is not in Durham, I might add. I am not sure that he did not hold me partly responsible. Certainly, he sounded so. He pointed out that his property taxes would be going up about 12 per cent this year, on the heels of a 10 per cent rise last year, with a similar 12 per cent tax boost forecast for 1992.

Yet, his personal salary increases for the past three years have barely kept up with the rate of inflation. My friend noted that almost 60 per cent of his mounting property tax is due to education.

The throne speech spoke of the "learning culture". We are putting enough money into education and retraining, but we must redeploy some of that funding to maximize the potential of every Canadian.

There is a basic message in all this, a warning which we can only ignore at our own peril. People are demanding governments that cost less and that tax less. They want government that is lean. If they do not get it, the taxpayers are going to become mean.

The taxpayers of Canada do not have deep pockets. In many cases, their fingers have already touched the bottom. Spending trends in Ottawa have been reduced significantly over the past six years. But more needs to be done. Now, other levels of government must recognize that the party is over and the onus is on them directly to stop overspending.

I have covered a number of issues in my remarks, all of which are important to me and to my Durham constituents. I believe the Speech from the Throne has outlined the correct course of action for Canada and Canadians.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, the member for Durham did speak about a number of things, as he indicated, but it seems to me that a major part of his speech was on the question of junk mail. I hope he does not think that amid all the problems we have in Canada today including national unity and economic problems, which I will get to in a moment, that junk mail is really a major concern of his constituents. Because if it is, they are certainly different from my constituents. For example, we have one in eight children who are allegedly not getting enough to eat in Edmonton and something like 50,000 people unemployed in Edmonton. I would seriously question whether his constituents' major concern is junk mail. If I misunderstand the member I hope he will correct me.

He mentioned that the party is over. But I would remind him that his government, which virtually talks about nothing but financial restraint to anybody who will listen, and not many people will, has added about $214 billion to the national debt of Canada, about $30 billion a year including this year.

I happen to have some statistics from the recent *Economist* magazine. I will just mention a couple of these things. Canada's industrial production for the last three months has gone down 10 per cent. That is one of the highest rates among the OECD countries. Our GNP is down 1 per cent on a yearly basis. Retail sales are down about 15 per cent. Unemployment, of course, is at 10.5 per cent.

The government is going to be massacred on this record in the next election, and I assume that the member will have something to say about these figures.

Let us take consumer prices. They are up on a three-month basis by 12 per cent. The only country that is worse than Canada in this regard is Sweden at 18 per cent. On a one-year basis, of course, prices are up 6.3 per cent. Again, only Sweden, Australia and the U.K. seem to be worse.

The current prime lending rate is worth noting at 10.25 per cent in Canada according to the *Economist* magazine.

What on earth does he think the people of Canada are concerned about, to end it? Does he think it is junk mail?

I am told that the member for St. Boniface will speak next on a matter of education. I might again ask the member, as I asked the last member who spoke for his party, the Minister of Transport: is he prepared to criticize the Government of Ontario which has the primary responsibility for education? Why, for example, is the Government of Ontario not prepared to take part in a cross-country test on the educational system?

Mr. Stevenson: I am quite happy to respond to what were, I believe, the questioner's three main points.

I have not gone back through my speech to check, but I believe I had two paragraphs on junk mail in a 20-minute speech, so junk mail was hardly a leading component of my speech. Possibly if the member represented an area just outside metropolitan Toronto, where just a few months ago six potential land fill sites were selected for receiving garbage from metropolitan Toronto, he would understand the sensitivity in those areas. Of course each one of those blocks represents hundreds of acres of prime agricultural land. Municipal waste, a small component of which is junk mail, is a very high-profile issue in my riding. Needless to say, the member is not aware of the significance of this issue in our part of the country.

I certainly have no problem resting my case on that particular matter.

As far as spending trends are concerned, any Canadian can check the audited *Public Accounts of Canada* and see the spending trends of Canadian governments of all political stripes since 1970. One will see I believe, since 1972 through to 1986, no government in Canada ever collected enough money to pay for programs, let alone one cent on interest and principal.

Any Canadian who has a mortgage and does not pay the interest or the principal for a period of something in the order of 16 years would have some appreciation of what their personal financial state would be. That is the situation in Canada.

• (1210)

Since 1986 we have been raising more revenues than we are spending on programs in any individual year, but it is still not enough to pay off interest on an old debt. In 1984, which was the worst year, there was a shortfall of $16 billion on programs alone, let alone the more than $22 billion shortfall on interest.

We have had a major turnaround, from running a tremendous deficit on operations to a surplus, but a surplus that still is not a big enough to pay interest on the old debt. Essentially, the build-up in total debt which occurred under the current government is compound interest accumulated on previously established debt.

While I wish that more could have been accomplished to minimize the impact of that compound interest, the facts are there for anyone to examine.

As far as the learning culture is concerned, I appreciate the comments of the member. I think the concept of the learning culture is much broader than just the educational system, although that is certainly part of it. It applies to the attitudes and the desires of individual Canadians to improve themselves at whatever job they may be doing or hope to do in the future. It does involve the entire primary, secondary, university, and subsequent retraining programs of one type or another that, as groups or individuals, we might seek to make use of. It is important that all governments co-ordinate their activities so that the money that goes into the whole learning process for Canadians is used for maximum benefit.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to address the Speech from the Throne and I want to do so from two perspectives: first, what the address does not in fact speak to and, second, what the Speech from the Throne does address.

What does the Speech from the Throne not address? I think colleagues from all sides would agree that when one reads it very carefully there is indeed nothing that attempts to respond to the plight of the almost 5 million poor in this country, most of whom are women and over 1 million of whom are children. Neither does it speak to the difficulties suffered by the 2 million Canadians who are on welfare. That is most unfortunate.

Neither does it address the whole question of the food banks. You and I know, Mr. Speaker, there is an estimated 1.8 million Canadians during the year who will in fact be fed at those food banks, in a country such as ours which is considered relatively rich. By the way, it is important to note that perhaps 40 per cent of those individuals are children and young adults.

Neither does it address the question of the unemployed, the slightly more than 1.5 million people who are out of work today in Canada.

I was talking to a young woman during the weekend who desperately wants to work, desperately wants to find a job. She is extremely articulate, presents herself particularly well, and is anxious to work. There is no employment which is sufficient to help her raise her two children. There are jobs. Some of them are part time with minimum wages and poor benefits. That is unfortunate.

A week ago last Saturday, at an open house in my constituency, I met a young man who is well educated and has special skills in the area of marketing. He is a new Canadian and a member of a visible minority. He has been unable during the last 10 years to find suitable employment.

There have been short-term jobs but they have paid very, very poorly. There has been absolutely nothing upon which they could build a future. The Speech from the Throne does not address the plight and the concerns of those individuals and many hundreds of thousands of others like them.

The speech does not address the whole question of bankruptcies either which, if one compares March of this year with one year ago, have gone up over 50 per cent. What about those four small businesses in my constituency, the federal constituency of St. Boniface, that have gone out of business? What will it do for them? What will it do for its workers, for the men and women who were employed, some of whom were working for many, many years and now are without work, but who have families, who want what you and I want for our families, who want to be able to hang on to their homes, who want to be able to feel as if they can grow and prosper in our nation. The speech did not address the question of those bankruptcies where many people are put out of work.

Some members will recall my raising in the House of Commons the plight of almost 2,000 Canadians who were victims of the bankruptcy of Route Canada. We have tried every way to get the government to try to respond to their needs. What has happened? It has shielded itself behind the investigations that are going on, rather than reach out to those men and women and try to make things right. These are men and women who had worked for many, many years. Some of them had no severance pay, no holiday pay. Some of them are still owed wages and other types of benefits.

Surely those are issues that touch the very fibre of what it is to be a citizen in Canada, and they might have been addressed.

What is there for farmers? I was speaking to a farmer yesterday who indicated to me that with the growing stress of attempting to run a farm in uncertain markets, with uncertain policies emanating from the federal and provincial governments, it is becoming increasingly difficult to operate.

What about small businesses? I met a proprietor of a small business just a few days ago in my constituency who said to me: "I wonder why I am doing this. When I look at the number of hours that I work, and when I look at the profit at the end of the day, at the end of the year, when I look at the red tape that there is with respect to a host of government regulations, both federally and provincially, when I look at the additional work that is necessitated because of the goods and services tax, I wonder why I am doing this. I," he said, "and many others are seriously considering whether or not we should continue to operate our own firms".

He asked whether there would ever be any relief in taxation because, quite apart from paper work, that is another issue. He pointed out that taxation had been increased not only at the federal level, but at the provincial and municipal levels as well. He was aware of the 34 tax increases that have been imposed by this government, which has made his workload much heavier, which has made his profits much thinner and which has increased the risks of operating a business.

This Speech from the Throne did not address the whole issue of day care for parents who need assistance. I met a young woman who was married and had a child. She is no longer with her husband and has an infant. She has a job that pays around the $6 per hour mark. She has no place to put her child. Even if there was, if she could find one, with the wage that she earns she probably could not afford it. Yet I admired the courage of this young woman. She was very young. She had a great deal of spirit, a tremendous determination. She simply wanted

to work and raise her child so that he could grow up and be a productive citizen.

In the Speech from the Throne there is no reference to recession. We are in a massive recession. We know that the deficit is in excess of $30 billion. It has been about that for a number of years. The debt will soon be $400 billion. That debt, which was less than $168 billion in 1984, according to a signed statement by the former Minister of Finance, is now going to be close to $400 billion. What does it do to allay the fears of Canadians with respect to that deficit and that debt?

• (1220)

Those are some of the points that the Speech from the Throne might have addressed, to reach out to Canadians and make them feel as if there was hope, as if there will be a tomorrow, as if things will fall into place, and provide them with some assurance that this great and prosperous nation will provide them with the opportunities they want and require in order to live in dignity.

What this Speech from the Throne addressed—

[*Translation*]

National Unity. Some statements are fairly interesting; unfortunately, I think they are rather vague. I understand that the Prime Minister no doubt wants to have some flexibility but on the other hand, it does not reassure Canadians very much about what is happening. They are nervous. Obviously, they are very, very nervous. There is not too much assurance that linguistic minorities will not be sacrificed, an assurance that I would have liked to see in the Speech from the Throne. You certainly know that there are all kinds of rumours going around Canada that some fairly well placed people believe that one of the things that might be done is simply to sacrifice linguistic minorities, supposedly to make the country more united.

I would have liked to have a firm statement on the protection of linguistic minorities. And I can assure you that if support for linguistic minorities is ever removed, there will be a storm of protest across Canada because these minorities have been protected, continue to be protected and want this protection to continue.

As for the bill or the initiatives that could have been taken on national unity, many people have noted that time has been wasted. They would have liked us to proceed as soon as possible, because if we continue according to the government's timetable, it is not impossible that once we reach the end of the tunnel, we will not have much time to correct the mistakes made along the way. It would be unfortunate to find ourselves in a situation where we would not have time to solve this major issue.

[*English*]

Another point made in the Speech from the Throne was participating in prosperity, *la prospérité pour tous*. The speech contained, and I understand that all political parties have a tendency to do this, exaggerated claims with respect to the Canada–U.S. agreement on trade and the benefits that another trade agreement with Mexico would bring. In the speech there is a comment with respect to the removal of interprovincial barriers. I find that extremely positive. I find though, that the exaggerations on the control of spending are really, really misleading. There have been reductions and they are around 3.7 per cent. However, let us admit that this has been achieved by cutting transfer payments to health and education. Who has picked up the difference? It is the provinces and the municipalities.

My colleague mentioned just a moment ago that people were complaining about the provincial and municipal tax bills. Of course, because the federal government has withdrawn. It turned over the cost to the provinces and municipalities which turned it over to the people.

Perhaps, the most glaring issue are the comments with respect to education, I do not mean to be unkind but they could be termed hypocritical. They are more rhetoric and the rhetoric has been excellent. It was excellent before the Prime Minister became the Prime Minister, when he was Leader of the Opposition. It was excellent before and during the 1984 and 1988 elections. However, nothing has happened except for massive cuts. There is flagrant contradiction in the whole area.

He talked increased productivity. We know that better education, training and retraining, research and development contribute to increased productivity. What do we do? Slash, slash. I have mentioned it so often. Cuts in 1986, cuts in 1989–1990, freezes for 1990 to 1995. During that period of time $10 billion, not million, fewer dollars have been targeted for education. No wonder the provinces and municipalities are suffering.

What about the reductions in research and development. What about the cuts in science and technology and investments in literacy?

The goals are laudable. I have to admit that, but there is nowhere any indication as to how the federal government is going to help the provinces or others realize those particular goals. I think that is unfortunate.

There was a lot of talk on the part of government in the Speech from the Throne regarding productivity and efficiency. That is a bit of a contradiction, some people would say a flagrant contradiction, because we have a government which says the right things but does the wrong things.

I understand very, very well that we have a serious financial problem. Are there not other ways to deal with the problem besides dramatically cutting spending on health and education?

[*Translation*]

Could other possibilities have been considered? Were there other alternatives? I think there could have been some. It is unfortunate that they claim to be controlling spending when they pass the costs on to the provinces and municipalities. We must look at it in terms of revenue, because as you know, revenue was over $70 billion in 1984, I think, and now it is over $130 billion.

So there has been an extraordinary increase in taxes from all sides.

[*English*]

The goals, yes, they are worthy of being pursued, but we need less talk. We need action. We need to ensure that something is done, because our eroding competitiveness is directly related to a number of factors and one of those factors is our investment in education. Government is fond of saying:

[*Translation*]

—that investment in education exceeds that of most OECD countries. Yes, but be careful. The comparison is valid for elementary and secondary education, but less so for post-secondary. So let us make the distinction.

I know that the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and the other ministers are aware of the distinction. Do not try to fool the Canadian people, please. We must tell them the truth.

If I have time, Mr. Speaker, I will make a final point on the efficiency of government. The government says in its Speech from the Throne that it has reduced the number of Crown corporations by 24. Yes, but does it talk about the price paid in terms of efficiency, service and number of layoffs?

The government talks about 90,000 employees who were eliminated or cut. It talks about men and women as though they were products that are cast aside once they are used. But we must ask another question: Honestly, how much money was saved by cutting these 90,000 jobs? How many contracts were awarded to replace these employees? That is not discussed.

It is somewhat like the topic of job creation; we must also look at the other side of the coin. How many jobs were taken away? It is one thing to say, "A job is a job" but I can assure you that working full time for a reasonable salary with benefits that help us support our family is much better than something part-time at a very low salary.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue, but I have the feeling that my time is almost up. I see that I still have a little time left, so I will go on.

I will give a short summary. The Speech from the Throne touches on a number of issues like national unity, the economy, the efficiency of government and of course, education. These are all important topics but we must not forget, dear friends, that we must look not only at what the Speech from the Throne says but also at the issues it does not raise.

I just mentioned the unemployed, people who are fed by food banks, the poor; I mentioned those who live on social assistance; I also mentioned the small businesses and larger firms that went bankrupt and the people who

will go bankrupt. Canadians would have liked something to be said on those issues, but there was nothing.

I also deplore the government's trying to make Canadians believe that control on spending is much sounder than it is. The government should also tell them that although it has controlled spending up to a point, at the same time it has transferred the burden to the provinces, municipalities and people like you and me. I believe that is very important. When we talk about job creation, let us look at the other side of the coin. Let us talk about the number of jobs that were eliminated, let us talk about the number of jobs that were created, but let us also talk about the quality of those jobs and what that means for our constituents.

• (1230)

Neither must we forget that eliminating the Public Service raises another very important, downright fundamental issue: How much money was saved? Or were enough contracts simply given out to exceed any so-called saving?

[*English*]

When we look at the theme national unity, we have to ask ourselves questions about the massive cutbacks to VIA Rail, the privatization of Air Canada, the massive attack on CBC, the 20 per cent reductions in employment, 27 per cent I think it is nationally, and about 20-some per cent in Manitoba, what have they done to national unity. When we talk about economy and government efficiency, let us be very honest. Let us put the facts in front of the Canadian people so that they can understand what it is that you are trying to do and what it is that we are trying to do.

With respect to education, I understand it is always very, very tempting to say the right things. This, in a sense, is a win win proposal for the government because it talks about education, which is important to all of us: elementary, secondary and post-secondary, but actions speak louder than words and the actions have simply not followed the words.

Mr. Dave Worthy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a couple of comments on the hon. member for St. Boniface's response to the Speech from the Throne.

He made some very strong innuendoes, in fact, accusations that the federal government is practising its restraint on the backs of the provinces and the municipalities.

I think the figures really speak for themselves. Over the last six years, government restraint has controlled our expenditures at 3.7 per cent per year. The provincial governments' growth in their expenditures has averaged 6 per cent and 7 per cent and in some provinces, as high as 10 per cent. There was absolutely no impact on the transfer to the provinces up until this year's budget and last year's budget.

Last year, he implied we had a massive attack and although there was an increase, it was cut back by a half of 1 per cent over what it was planned. This is far, far less than a massive attack on provinces and municipalities.

I would ask the member for St. Boniface if he feels that the provinces should continue to spend way in excess of inflation, way in excess of what the federal government spends and should they not have any sense of restraint in their own programs?

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question. I note that it is posed in good faith. Clearly, I believe that all of us should be showing restraint, whatever level of governments we represent and whatever programs we tend to advocate.

At the same time, the government talks about the 3.7 per cent control of expenditures. I am sorry, I guess I did not make my point well The provinces are in the neighbourhood of 6 to 7 per cent. He is quite right. One of the reasons that the provinces are in that range is because of the massive cutbacks.

With all due respect to my colleague, the first cutbacks started a long time ago. For example, the most significant one was in 1986; 2 per cent cut in the transfer formula for health and education. That was followed in 1989-90 by another 1 per cent which was not executed because there was a freeze that came along for two years, which has been extended to 1995.

When I talk about massive cutbacks, that is another point I want to make. Not only the provinces and the municipalities have had to shoulder that additional load because they could not downsize quickly enough to accommodate that lesser revenue.

I mean it is very difficult to downsize the universities, the colleges, the schools, the hospitals and what have you. Not only that, but the other side of the coin we have to look at it in a more global context.

There are two issues here when you look at it in the global context. It is the accumulated impact of those reductions over time. Because the base is lower if you freeze it or cut it, the percentage increase over time is less. There is the double whammy if you wish. There is the accumulated impact of the cuts over time and there is the percentage increase which has been applied to a smaller base.

The point that I am making is yes, I agree with you that we must continue to show restraint. The federal government, to a certain extent, has shown restraint but let us explain to Canadians why that figure is as low as it is. Let us be fair with provinces and municipalities, and not dump on them without recognizing that one of the reasons that their taxation rates are going up—there are others—is because there is less assistance from the federal government and from the provinces as they tend to fill in that vacuum.

That is an extremely important point. It is not being made in a partisan kind of way. If you look at what I said, you will recognize that this is true.

Mr. Cole: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, under Standing Order 43(2), I would just like to advise you that the government speakers—one from Wild Rose and the other from Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia—will be splitting their time so they will be going into 10-minute speeches with five-minute questions and answers.

Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, in the throne speech, our government proposed specific targets for Canada concerning the direction of our educational system.

As a result, our government has outlined educational goals and strategies that will lead us into the 21st century. Canada already spends more money per capita on education than almost any other industrialized country in the world.

Our review of educational performance has led us to ask why Canada as a nation does not appear to be getting a greater economic return on its substantial investments. Our government believes that educational goals reflect a changing labour market. This does not necessarily require more funding, but rather a shift in emphasis toward a more active orientation.

As more countries become self-sufficient with agriculture and flood the world market, Canadian farmers will no longer be able to rely solely on agriculture in the future.

Technological advances and increased competitiveness reflect a changing labour market which demands a highly skilled and educated labour force.

Canada has failed to rank above the middle level in several international comparisons of student achievement in mathematics and science. We have a low rate of engineers and scientists in our work force. In particular, women account for only 13 per cent of the engineering degrees and 30 per cent of math and physical science degrees.

Canadian industry spends less than half as much on training its employees as American industry does, a fifth as much as the Japanese and an eighth as much as the Germans. This is not the kind of performance that will guarantee increased prosperity for our children. It has given rise to concerns whether the next generation of Canadian men and women will be the first to have a lower standard of living than its parents had. The challenge of Canada's training system is to provide individuals with ongoing opportunity to acquire productive skills that are needed in the marketplace. The focus of our government is to link educational and economic goals—specifically the future competitiveness of Canada's work force is in a knowledge-based economy. If Canada is to reverse its economic decline we must improve math, science and technology standards.

• (1240)

Canadian men and women must have access to both the skills and the life-long learning opportunities necessary to improve their job prospects and to ensure their own prosperity. Despite the great dedication of so many talented educators and administrators, Canadians are questioning whether the country's approach to learning is adequate for the future.

Our government recognizes that Canadians are concerned about education and would like to see Canada-wide goals established for the year 2000. This will require provincial endorsement and co-operation.

Our goals include cutting illiteracy rates in half, ensuring that 90 per cent of Canadians attain high school diplomas or the equivalent by the age of 25, doubling the number of post-secondary graduates in mathematics, science and engineering, and quadrupling the training provided by employers to their employees.

Students and parents, employers and employees, educators and governments, will be asked to work together to develop a learning culture. Just as we have developed an environmental culture, we all must play respective roles in the future.

Continued prosperity depends on technological competitiveness and Canada faces a critical shortage of scientists, engineers, technicians and technologists in the coming decades. The role our government is playing to enhance our future competitiveness is to encourage studies in the natural science and engineering through the Canada Scholarship Program. This program will benefit 10,000 recipients, half of whom will be women.

We have also jointly developed a very encouraging program in several provinces to persuade young people to stay in school and complete their education. We have created Centres of Excellence programs which link Canada's best minds in universities and the private sector.

When unemployment insurance was first introduced, it was meant to be a temporary means of living while unemployed and searching for another job. There are now some Canadians who make collecting unemployment insurance benefits a lifestyle and it is at the expense of other Canadians. Many unemployment recipients feel a sense of helplessness and low self esteem when they are unable to qualify for various employment opportunities as a result of their limited educational background, which deters them from obtaining a job.

In the past, an unemployment insurance recipient was unable to upgrade the skills required to become more employable without jeopardizing the benefits. Our government realized that this unemployment cycle needed to be broken. As a result, we launched a major new initiative, the labour force development strategy, to help the unemployed acquire the skills they need to change with a changing world.

An example of such a program is the literacy training program for unemployment insurance recipients. Unemployment insurance recipients usually jeopardize their benefits if they are not ready and able to work. Under section 26 of the Unemployment Insurance Act, people can now take certain types of training without incurring this risk. The new policy incorporates literacy and numeracy training into this category. A literate Canada will benefit both workers and employers alike.

We have done much but more needs to be done. The quality of Canada's human resources, a determining factor of our competitiveness and the engine of our future prosperity, is a national issue. It is not a federal issue, it is not a provincial issue, it is not entirely a governmental issue. It is a national issue and it demands a national response.

Co-operation will be critical. Federal and provincial governments, industry, the universities and consumers all have their roles to play. If everyone can work together on these challenges to reach a common goal, all Canadians in every region will benefit, now and in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Five minutes, questions and comments period. The hon. member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): I was quite impressed with the presentation of the hon. member and I notice she focused exclusively on education. She is to be commended for that. I would like to ask her whether she is aware that the private sector in Canada, particularly the companies that are involved in research and development in high tech, does not invest in Canada as much as other companies around the world do. That is because there is no national strategy that deals with the question of education or the question of research and development. There is no leadership on the part of the government whether we are talking about provincial or federal levels of government.

Rather than focusing all the time on the negative, I would like to mention on the positive side that we do have Northern Telecom, a leading company, not only in Canada and in North America but all around the world, which invests up to 9 per cent, even 10 per cent in some cases, in the area of research and development. That is a perfect example of the great success that our industries

could have internationally, only if our government provides them with the tools necessary with the proper method.

I would suggest that rather than waiting until the year 2000 in order to deal with the problem, we have to start now in dealing with the issues of illiteracy and education. By the year 2000, there will be over one million Canadians who will be uneducated and untrained and will not be able to enter the work force in a proper fashion.

Also by the year 2000, two-thirds of all jobs created in Canada will require more than a grade 12 education. So I would suggest that this matter is of great urgency and needs immediate action.

My question to the hon. member is: in her view, what is it the government should be doing now in order to deal with the problem we are faced with?

Mrs. Feltham: I want to thank my hon. friend and colleague for asking that question.

I feel very strongly that we have, up until now, recognized that there is a concern there.

• (1250)

We do need to have more graduates. We do need our young people to complete school, especially in the provinces that have not themselves dwelt that much on education.

The government, at this stage, recognizes that it is a problem. It is a problem today and it is a problem for the future.

I spoke of the year 2000. We are all looking now at the word "2000". We are looking at the future. We say 2000, but it is not something that will wait until the year 2000 to come into effect. We must start now. People in industry, the employers, are definitely losing the advantage by not putting more money into training their staffs. Yes, we are looking at training and will encourage employers in whatever is necessary. We will stress training over the next number of years leading up to the year 2000.

After visiting Taiwan I became very aware of the need for this country and for all governments, as my colleague has said, to work together. Both provincial governments and the federal government must work together because Canada must enter the technological age and must concentrate on technology.

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to participate in this throne speech debate concerning a throne speech which set out in general terms the direction for the next session of this 34th Parliament, the third session. This 34th Parliament may in many ways prove to be one of the most significant Parliaments, if not the most significant, in the history of our country.

The first session dealt exclusively with the ratification of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. The second session was highlighted by the passage, over the objections of an unelected and unaccountable Senate, of the goods and services tax legislation, the sales tax reform which had been due in this country for some 40 years.

This third session of this Parliament deals with the very future of the country itself. The three themes of the throne speech—unity, prosperity and government responsiveness—find themselves inextricably linked and intertwined.

There is an enormously high level of frustration experienced by Canadians today. A good deal of it is, I believe, economic. However, Canadians also want to feel that their elective representatives are hearing them, are listening to them and acting accordingly. It is clear, as well, that the deficiencies and the inadequacies of a Constitution framed in the 1860s, and modified somewhat 10 years ago without the support of a province which contains some 28 per cent of the population of the country, must be addressed. It is time to shake off the post-Meech doldrums and move to make the changes necessary to our Constitution.

The message from Meech Lake was twofold. First, Canadians wanted into the process. They felt left out. The decision-making seemed too remote. Indeed, after the midway point, December 1988, and the passage of Bill 178 in Quebec, the process was not in keeping with the wishes of the majority of Canadians. Those concerns which arose half way through the ratification process made it, I believe, politically impossible for any province which had not by that time ratified the accord to ever do so.

The second message is one of fairness and equity. Whatever one province is seen to achieve through the process must also be available to others. There must not

be any particular special status for one province or another, no deal for one that is not available to the rest.

That is why the federal government must and will ensure Canadians the opportunity to participate fully in this process of constitutional renewal. This is being done and will continue to be done through a number of commissions and fora.

The citizens' forum, while obscenely expensive, can nevertheless claim that it has received input from literally hundreds of thousands of Canadians. I believe that there will be some useful input coming forward from it when the report is filed on or before July 1.

Also due on July 1 is the report of the Beaudoin–Edwards joint Commons–Senate committee, which has been charged with the responsibility of finding a way out of the impasse, to find a means to achieve constitutional change.

At present, constitutional change requires in many instances the unanimous agreement of the House of Commons, the Senate and the 10 provinces. This requirement for unanimity has caused a constitutional log jam.

It is rather difficult to go into the room to talk about constitutional change when the door is locked tight and no one can get in. To get the door open, we need a key and that is where the Beaudoin–Edwards committee comes in. It will find the key that will open the door to constitutional change.

Once these various reports are in and the government has a chance to digest them, the government will lay out proposals to focus public discussion on the goal of a more united Canada. In doing so, it is important to remember that what we have right now is not all bad. Relative to the rest of the world, Canada is in pretty good shape.

I come from an area on the prairies in Saskatchewan of some 25,000 square miles which is overly dependent on the growing and marketing of grain. My constituents tell me overwhelmingly that they want a continuing strong central government: one capable of setting and maintaining national standards; one capable of managing the eighth largest economy in the world; and one that is capable of responding to the needs of a particular sector or region when it finds itself disadvantaged, as all the regions and sectors of our country have found themselves from time to time.

In Saskatchewan, in my area particularly, we have a very cyclical economy. Sometimes we are on top of the world and are putting in through equalization, and other times—now being one of those times—we take out. That message comes to me clearly from constituents.

They want to get rid of duplication and waste, they want efficient government and they do want to see some decentralization out of Ottawa to the provinces and to the regions of the country.

The objective is not to throw everything out and start over again, but rather to modify and seek change in order to build on and improve that which we already have: a nation which, from the outside looking in, is the envy of the rest of the world. Residents of many other nations would give their eye teeth to enter this country.

The proposals generated over the summer months, after the reports of these various commissions, will be referred to a joint parliamentary committee which will be established to consult with Canadians. This referral is to take place by the end of September.

The committee will then have five months to travel within Canada from sea to sea to sea. It will meet in public session with provincial and territorial counterpart committees.

After receipt of the report in February of next year, the government will propose a plan for a renewed Canada for the consideration of all Canadians. There will be legislation to provide for greater participation by Canadians in the process, if indeed this is necessary.

I believe also that the time necessary must be taken. The unity question must be dealt with in a measured way which permits ample time for input from Canadians every step of the way. Only in this way will the end product be capable of acceptance by the great majority of Canadians.

National unity and economic prosperity go hand in hand and there can be no doubt that insofar as the future is concerned, investment decisions both in Canada and abroad are affected by uncertainty. Interest rates are affected because investors want certainty, stability and sound management.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being one o'clock p.m., I do now leave the chair until two o'clock p.m.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

REVENUE CANADA

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, this government has a policy of hiring at Revenue Canada's Data Taxation Centre in Sudbury which discriminates against non-residents of the city and district.

In the past year we have lost over 2,400 of the 4,000 mining jobs at Elliot Lake and we will lose over another 1,000 jobs next spring. This community is hurting, with homes, careers and even lives being lost in the turmoil created by the mine closures.

When one of my constituents applied for a job at the Data Taxation Centre in Sudbury, he was told that he must live in the Sudbury district to be considered for the job. This person is a Canadian citizen. He pays taxes to this very Data Taxation Centre. He needs a job.

I call on the government to stop this irrational, unreasonable and unfair discrimination against unemployed Canadians seeking a job. The government's hiring policy is simply wrong.

* * *

SYRIAN JEWRY

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, I recently met with members of the Jewish students group Nahon. These students are among many who are very concerned about the oppression of some 4,500 Syrian Jews.

There is an urgent call for action against the Syrian government. Jews are forbidden to leave Syria, they are being tortured and jailed, they are not allowed to vote and their homes fall victim to random, unwarranted searches.

The Jews of Syria are being denied basic rights that are set out in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights which Syria has signed. The Government of Canada has always supported the cause of oppressed Jewry and human rights.

Today, along with members of this House, I call on the government of Syria to comply with the UN declaration and allow those Syrian Jews, who wish to emigrate, the right to do so freely.

* * *

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, during the weekend Canadians were informed that this government is once again secretly considering closures of Canadian forces bases in five communities across the country.

Communities in the Atlantic provinces, already suffering as a result of the recession, stand to be the hardest hit. Three bases are being targeted in that region alone.

Canadians know the economic ruin that befalls a community when its major employer is suddenly removed. In these difficult times, the last thing Canadians need is for job losses and upheaval as the government makes piecemeal decisions about defence spending.

There is no doubt that defence expenditures must be reduced. These kind of secretive, *ad hoc* decisions, however, serve neither the local communities nor our national defence policy. We call on the government to undertake an immediate, thorough review of Canadian defence policy before any closures are considered and to assure Canadians that viable alternative economic opportunities will be provided to communities in the event base closures are necessary.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, families have changed drastically over the last century or so. Today they are much smaller and they tend to scatter across the country rather than stay in a single location.

Taxation has changed as well. Unfortunately, the changes in taxation have not reflected the changes in the family. We now have a situation which penalizes married couples and gives a tax advantage to singles living together.

I am sure that each one of us in this Chamber is deeply disturbed by the erosion of the family as we have known it. Do not let us contribute to that erosion through lack of legislation.

I am very much encouraged by the throne speech, in which the government promised to review our policies in relation to the family. I am very proud to be part of this initiative. I believe strongly in protecting the interests of the family, for it is the very foundation of this great country.

* * *

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, in the past year, rumours of base closures in Atlantic Canada and rumours about military cuts in general have created a climate of anxiety in my region.

Canadian Armed Forces personnel are understandably anxious and worried about where they might fit in the crunch that appears to be on its way.

Armed forces personnel are not alone. The closure of bases in the Atlantic region will be devastating for an economy already hard pressed by government policies to date.

If the reports prove to be true, the provinces of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, in particular, will be hurt by loss of personnel and a loss of spending dollars and a loss of spin–off jobs.

Air force bases, particularly in Nova Scotia, are an important part of Atlantic Canada's lifeblood. They are also part of our history, our industry and our well–being.

We ask that this government take a long look and think hard before adding more fuel to the fire that is burning up the economy of Atlantic Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

POSTAL SUBSIDIES

Mr. Guy Saint–Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the work accomplished by native people in remote localities, by native businesses, airlines, merchants, provincial and territorial officials who, through extensive consultations with the government of Canada and the task force, made it possible to stabilize the postal subsidy for the North at $15 million.

Without this subsidy, the price of perishables in most localities of Northern Quebec would far exceed the prices being paid in areas such as Central Arctic. For example, one litre of milk could cost $10 and a loaf of bread $7.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the hon. Tom Siddon, and his team, but caution will be required in standardizing postal rates.

* * *

[*English*]

PENITENTIARIES

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, recent reports in Kingston suggest that budget cuts at federal penitentiaries may negatively affect public safety.

Corrections Canada employees are, like all public servants, suffering at the hands of this government. To date, 59 positions have been eliminated in the Kingston area alone. By reducing staff there will be fewer guards on duty. Each guard will have to man more shifts. This will lead to overwork and increased stress. In a prison environment, this will in turn create greater tension between guards and inmates and lead to dangerous confrontations.

The federal government's attempts to reduce the deficit by attacking public servants is deplorable. However, by cutting prison staff, the government is not only attacking its employees it is also creating a potentially dangerous situation.

I therefore urge the government to listen to the Union of Solicitor General Employees and provide each institution with the funding it needs to adequately guard federal inmates. The safety of the public and the safety of the staff may be jeopardized if the government does not act.

* * *

THE CONSTITUTION

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, whatever one may think of the Bélanger–Campeau report, it clearly identifies Quebec's concerns with our 1982 Constitution Act.

First, the report makes clear that the principle of equality of all Canadians enshrined in the Charter of Rights does not make allowance for special constitutional recognition for Quebec society.

Next, the principle of multiculturalism enshrined in the charter implies that the French language and culture are on the same footing as other languages and culture and does not require special guarantees in our Constitution.

Finally, the principle of equality of all 10 provinces enshrined in the amending formula of the Constitution implies that any power granted to Quebec must be granted to all other provinces as well, thereby conflicting with both the concept of a unique Quebec and with the views of the proponents of a strong national government.

Essentially, Bélanger–Campeau identifies the fundamental differences that haunt our country, differences that we must resolve if we are going to continue to have a strong and united Canada.

* * *

CANADA POST

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the matter of national unity. I would like to express the concerns of thousands of Canadians who are outraged by this government's dismantling of our national postal service.

To date, over 950 federally owned and operated post offices have been closed or privatized. Many of these closures cause hardships for residents who deserve first–rate postal service and are losing postal service altogether. Many of these people are our seniors and handicapped people.

For many communities, the post office is the only visible federal presence. After gutting the CBC and VIA Rail, this government will deal another serious blow to Canadian unity by closing down hundreds of post offices.

On behalf of the residents of communities like Avonmore, Ontario; La Redemption, Quebec; Mabou, Nova Scotia; Brandon, Manitoba; and Pitt Meadows, British Columbia, I strongly urge this government to stop post office closures and to work to improve our national postal systems.

[*Translation*]

VIA RAIL

Mr. Denis Pronovost (Saint–Maurice): Mr. Speaker, the latest VIA Rail annual report proves that the government did the right thing when it forced it to slim down before it would suffer a heart attack. Here is some good news. First, customer complaints went down 60 percent last year, while praise for VIA Rail and the new service it offers increased substantially. Second, the on–time performance of VIA trains increased from 65 percent in 1989 to 80 percent in 1990.

[*English*]

In fact, the only bad news in the VIA Rail annual report was about passenger revenues during the first half of 1990 which were below the targets. The only reason for that was the negative publicity created by the Liberals and the NDP surrounding the introduction of the new service.

Shame on the opposition on that question.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TOURISM AWARDS

Mr. Gabriel Desjardins (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, Saturday evening in the Montreal Congress Centre the national Quebec tourism award ceremony was held.

I am very proud, Mr. Speaker, to report to this House today that Abitibi–Témiscamingue won top honours at that occasion, as the International Film Festival of Abitibi–Témiscamingue was awarded the most prestigious award, that is the *Prix de l'excellence touristique* (award of excellence in tourism), for contributing over the past ten years to the Quebec cultural and tourism recognition. This high distinction crowns ten years of efforts and relentless work to turn a regional festival into a national and even international event.

So, I want to congratulate, in my name and on behalf of my constituents, all the organizers of this festival for this great success. Well done!

S. O. 31

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, after studying and hearing countless witnesses last spring on Public Service 2000, the public accounts committee had very serious concerns about the so-called reform to the Public Service.

It strongly recommended that before proceeding with legislation or administrative changes, the government should establish a special committee of this House of Commons and should refer all recommendations from Public Service 2000 to that special committee.

The white paper on Public Service 2000 was tabled over five months ago and yet the President of the Treasury Board has still failed to heed the advice of the public accounts committee of this Parliament.

By stomping all over collective bargaining rights, gloating over thousands of lay-offs, spending countless taxpayers' dollars fighting court cases on equity and fairness in government, the government has proven beyond a doubt it knows better how to dismantle, destroy, and demolish than how to build a nation.

* * *

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, without question the very fibre of our society and family life is being threatened by an ever-increasing criminal element goaded on by suggestive pornographic material so readily available in video shops and on our bookshelves. Despite the efforts of many concerned people, hard core pornography still exploits children and degrades women. It is a frightening reality that child abuse and battery of women is on the increase.

We heard in the Speech from the Throne the importance of protecting our children and the stability of family life. I have heard from many constituents who believe that tough legislation to control the distribution of pornographic material is a necessary step in ensuring our children, our women, and our society have the protection they deserve. We have not yet put this legislation in place. Let us not continue to delay. A strong and healthy Canada depends on it.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, like my father before me, there are tens of thousands of individuals waiting to adopt Canada as their home. There are tens of thousands of families waiting to be reunited with their loved ones. There are tens of thousands of refugees waiting for their first hearing.

Canadians and immigration applicants certainly would like to know, in fact they demand to know, how it is that Mohammed Al-Mashat managed to jump the queue and get through the entire immigration process in just 28 days, leaving them behind.

The tens of thousands of immigration and refugee applicants want to know—actually they are now fully aware of—the motto that this government has on immigration policy: It is not who you are or how desperate your case, but who you know.

* * *

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, as a reward for their responsible and competent gulf contribution our armed services are going to be rationalized and down-sized. This is sneaky and ominous bureaucratic fuzz for saying that cuts are coming that will adversely affect Canadians from coast to coast, including my native province of Nova Scotia, where we have had a history of servicing the services that has been a long and time-honoured military tradition, and whose economy very much depends on servicing the services.

So far, all we have had are rumours and resignations and silence from the minister. Surely before any decisions are made there has to be an open and thorough debate of defence policy. Canadians must be involved and what better way than through the new parliamentary committee on national defence. The committee's first priority next week should be public hearings on this vital issue and they could do no better than to start in my home province of Nova Scotia and perhaps in its shire city of Halifax.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, each spring the Porcupine caribou herd migrates past the most northerly community in my constituency, Old Crow, as they make their way to calving grounds on the Arctic north shore. For 20,000 years the Gwitch'in people of Yukon and Alaska have depended on the Porcupine caribou herd for their livelihood, all the while practising sustainable development in its purest form.

In 1980 the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge was established to protect this way of life from exploration and development. But this could all change. President Bush wants to open up the refuge for oil and gas development and a key committee of the U.S. Senate is to vote on this matter today.

I call on the ministers for external affairs and environment to meet with their U.S. counterparts to reinforce that exploration in that refuge is simply unacceptable to Canada.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. On the weekend the Prime Minister said during an interview that Canadians were responsible for the present economic and constitutional situation. When will the government stop blaming Canadians for the present situation and act responsibly, since this government is responsible for the serious problems facing this country?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is true that we are going through some difficult times. We have a very serious slowdown in the economy and the unity of the nation is under question. Obviously it is going to require a broad-based public debate to deal with all of these issues.

The issues we face are very complex. They can only be resolved on the basis of Canadians working together in a partnership. I think we have to draw all Canadians into the process, to come forward and be a part of the solution. We must deal with the issues in a manner that is traditional and in keeping with the Canadian way of life.

I sense that the Leader of the Opposition has indicated his full co-operation in addressing the issues that confront Canadians. I welcome that and look forward to his co-operation.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say the Prime Minister is quite wrong to blame Canadians. Canadians are not suffering from a lack of affection for their country, they are suffering from a lack of affection for this government.

Today the Conference Board of Canada said that the recession will be much worse than had been predicted only three months ago. It said that seven of ten provinces would experience negative economic growth this year.

When will the minister realize that the economic policy of this government is a great failure? The government has given us a new Minister of Finance. What we need is a new set of economic policies. If the Minister of Finance wants our co-operation, he should listen to us, reduce our interest rates so they are more competitive with those in the United States, reduce the Canadian dollar to improve the competitiveness of Canadian goods and services. Then we will be on the road to recovery. But he should listen to us once in a while.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): I am sorry that the Leader of the Opposition gets political on this very important issue. However, it allows me to say that during the time when he was the Minister of Finance the Bank of Canada rate climbed from 7.5 per cent in September of 1977 to 11.25 per cent in May of 1979.

What has happened with this government is the fact that interest rates have gone down by 5 percentage points over the last year. There is clear evidence that business confidence is improving, housing starts are improving, housing sales are improving, automobiles sales are improving, the unemployment figures are going down, not up. There are some positive signals on the horizons, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to be over-optimistic

but I want to assure my hon. friend that all the indicators are leading in the right direction.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we thought we had a new Minister of Finance, but this is the same old stuff that we heard from the previous Minister of Finance. I would like to tell him that when I was Minister of Finance Canadians were working.

• (1420)

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: At that time, we had Canadian economic policies.

I would like to know from the new Minister of Finance when he will take his responsibilities seriously. If this government decided that we need a new Minister of Finance, it is because we need new economic policies. When will the Minister of Finance do his job?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as a result of the fall-out of the policies of the Leader of the Opposition when he was in the government and occupying the position of the Minister of Finance, we saw the unemployment rate at that time at 12 per cent. It was 16 per cent in the province of British Columbia. It is considerably less now. Canadians and Canadian enterprises have created 1.6 million jobs in a climate that was positive.

We have serious inflationary pressures which must be addressed. The hon. Leader of the Opposition knows that very well.

I regret very much that he does not like me being a bit old-fashioned, but I can tell him that unless you get the fundamentals right and unless you deal with the underlying causes of inflation, inflationary pressures and expectations, you will not be able to bring interest rates down. If you are not going to bring interest rates down, you will not have a turnaround in the economy.

I repeat again, we are heading in the right direction. All the indicators suggest that, and the hon. Leader of the Opposition is just going to have to be a little more patient because when we get the fundamentals right, the Canadian economy will start to grow again.

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport and it relates to the crisis faced by the Canadian trucking industry.

As the minister knows, last week the human face of the difficulties and frustrations facing Canadian truckers was brought to Ottawa and is still here for all to see.

The minister subsequently met with the workers. We debated the issue in this House. We, the Official Opposition, offered the minister and the government a package of alternative options that can work if put to use.

Therefore, I ask the minister whether the government is finally prepared today to announce some immediate relief measures that will serve to alleviate the overwhelming burden that truckers face as a result of the policies of this administration.

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that over Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of last week, I and the officials from my department met with the spouses and the truckers themselves to examine this situation.

The conclusions of these meetings according to my officials are to the effect that two sets of recommendations have been outlined by the owner-operators. The first set is what one can call the political agenda in that they are going back to the free trade agreement, the GST and deregulation of the industry.

As far as the GST is concerned, I said last week in this House that there is nothing wrong with the GST as far as the trucking industry is concerned. For one thing, the tax on fuel has been reduced by 2.5 cents per litre as a result of the implementation of the GST.

As far as deregulation is concerned, there is no intention on the part of this government to go back on the question of deregulation. From all quarters, we are hearing that deregulation has been very beneficial to the Canadian people as such.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, the minister must be talking to American truckers because they are the only people who have gained from deregulation, not Canadian truckers.

Not only has this government been hiding behind seven studies for almost a year, but we have gone through one week of protest, discussion and debate and the minister continues to abdicate responsibility and fails to show key leadership at this critical period of time.

I return to the minister. What is it going to take to wake up this government and to resolve this issue immediately rather than hiding constantly behind studies? Temporary relief measures, even at that, are not incompatible with his studies.

Can the minister tell this House when the truckers can expect some real action, some real solutions and some real sensitivity to Canadians for a change?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I mentioned before that the recommendations were of two orders during the meetings last week. The second order is related to the operational costs of the truckers. We have examined many of these issues and found at the end of the day that the recommendations today are exactly the same as those which were made by the representatives of all segments of the trucking industry last year. Those recommendations gave rise to the formation of a task force that is made up of all representatives of the trucking industry.

The owner–operators on the street at the present time refused to be part of that coalition. That coalition and all the other segments of the industry are saying today they are in agreement with the processes that have been implemented. They agreed to have these seven studies. These studies are going to be released on May 27 and the task force is going to meet on June 4 and 5 to make their recommendations.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. There is one thing that no study needs to be done to tell us, and it is that these truckers parked outside this House and many like them across this country are losing their homes. It is creating many family problems and truckers are losing their businesses. We do not need a study to tell us that.

There are two concrete things this government can do. One clear problem that the truckers have is related to the GST and the fact that they have to wait five to six months for any rebate. This costs them thousands of dollars, which they have to put up front. I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he will not ensure that those rebates can get to those truckers when they need them and second, whether he will acknowledge that the deregulation policies brought forward by the previous Liberal government and continued by his government will be reviewed and regulations brought in so that Canadians truckers can compete in the Canadian market?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I simply want to remind the leader of the New Democratic Party that the GST replaces the federal sales tax. The truckers paid federal sales tax before. They did not get any rebate. They had to swallow it. In the case of the GST, they get it refunded as an input tax credit so it really does improve their competitive position in that it does reduce the cost of doing business.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I think it is clear from the personal instances that we have seen what this government's policies have done to the independent trucking industry.

The trucking industry is one industry that has been devastated by this government's policies. The steel industry is another, particularly the policy of the U.S.–Canada trade deal. This week the United States Congress decides whether it will give the fast track to the trade talks. I want to ask the Acting Prime Minister what work the government is doing now to ensure that in two years' time we will not have another devastated industry lined up on Wellington Street because of the policies that this government is pursuing around the trade deal?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I again want to remind the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party that transportation was not a part of the free trade agreement, so it has nothing to do with the allegation that she suggests.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the transportation industry is not on a level playing field in Canada. My question to the Deputy Prime Minister was simply, what preparations is the government doing, given that the United States is going to fast track the Canada–U.S.–Mexico trade deal? But on another subject—

[*Translation*]

Carla Hills, the U.S. representative at the tripartite negotiations, has confirmed that the United States wants to put culture on the table. Ms. Hills suggested that culture could be adequately protected with cultural exhibitions. Will the minister confirm that culture will never be part of two-way or three-way free trade?

• (1430)

[*English*]

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party knows full well that the government's position on this has not changed. Culture is not on the table, never has been and never will be.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. In his absence, I will direct it to the Deputy Prime Minister.

This weekend there were press reports of a recommendation to cabinet that included closing Canadian forces bases, two in Europe and a number all across the country. In view of the fact that Canadian forces performed so admirably in the gulf, and in view of the fact that many people want to know their long-term security at those bases, will the minister confirm or deny these reports? Will he say why the government continues to operate on ad hockery and will he say why it refuses to bring forward a defence policy for this country?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that my hon. colleague recognizes the very important role that our Canadian men and women played in the gulf. It was interesting to note this weekend the accolades which our naval personnel received.

With respect to the defence policy review, yes, indeed, and I think my hon. colleague would agree that the changing international situation, the changing fiscal situation, requires us to look at the future of defence policy in this country. That work is under way. Based upon changing assessments of threats and new roles for our people, decisions will flow from that about the appropriate size of the force, the appropriate infrastructure and equipment that will be required for the future.

Until cabinet has had an opportunity to look at those proposals, it would be inappropriate to discuss any specific aspects of it. Following those discussions, of course, I am sure my colleagues will look forward to discussions about the future defence policy for this country.

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, the international situation may be changing, but it is changing in this country to getting worse. We are in the middle of a recession now and there are areas that depend economically on defence establishments.

Will the minister give an undertaking that before any changes are made in defence policy, there will be a full review which will be in consultation with all the people of Canada. Will she give that undertaking?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister responsible for Status of Women): Obviously, in looking at a defence policy for the future, there are many aspects that must be considered: the international situation, Canadian security, the numbers of people and roles they must play.

I think it is evident, though, and I am sure my hon. colleague will agree, that some changes to infrastructure will be required. In fact, we are looking at all aspects of infrastructure. In looking at that, of course we look at the social and economic effects of changes in our infrastructure, and that will be part of the considerations that will come into our cabinet deliberations.

* * *

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Over and over again, this government has told Canadians that the GST is revenue neutral. On November 12, the Prime Minister said in Calgary that the GST would not cost Albertans a nickel more than they now pay. But today the truth comes out. The Consumers' Association of Canada reports today that 72 per cent of products

monitored by them have cost more than the government promised they would.

My question to the Deputy Prime Minister is this: how can he possibly reconcile the statements made by the Prime Minister, in his home province of Alberta, with the facts as they are presented to him today.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it might interest the hon. member to know that the Consumers' Association of Canada just issued a news release which indicates that this is not an official study by the Consumers' Association of Canada.

What they do say is that the Consumers' Association of Canada believes that Canadian consumers deserve a full and comprehensive quantitative study on the impact of the GST on prices in the Canadian marketplace. We agree with that.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, I think the Deputy Prime Minister should get his quotes straight. It says:

> This has not been released as an official study of the Consumers' Association of Canada at the present time.

My question to the new Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister is this. Will he please tell us which of the only two possible scenarios could explain the startling discrepancy in facts? Either the former Minister of Finance could not count straight or his government misled the Canadian public about the disastrous effects of the goods and services tax on their own pocketbooks.

Mr. Speaker: There are ways to get around making statements and putting questions which are unparliamentary and I do not want the hon. member skating too close to the edge.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member refuses to deal with the present. He may want to take the House into his confidence and tell us whether he would rather deal with the past or the future.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of the Environment.

Canada's forests are being overcut according to the majority of professional foresters, and Japanese corporations are leading the pack with activities that would land them in jail at home.

Will the Minister of the Environment ask our Prime Minister to deliver a message while he is in Japan this week that clear-cut logging inside our largest national park, Wood Buffalo, is unacceptable and that Daishowa should stop that activity, that clear-cutting 40,000 square kilometres of Alberta without an environmental assessment is unacceptable and Daishowa should stop, and polluting the Peace River upstream of Wood Buffalo National Park and many Northwest Territories communities is unacceptable and Daishowa should stop those kinds of activities in Canada?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to say today that the member is being consistent with himself in statements that he made last week in the House of Commons. They seem to be blanket statements that do not always correspond to the facts.

I think the record will show that, as far as this government is concerned, we will have been the government to have created a full-fledged Department of Forestry to deal with issues directly related to forestry, to have brought in a green plan that brings together sustainable development, to make that happen for Canadian people, and that, in this context, we intend to deal with all forestry issues as they come along.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to hear that this minister has crawled under the same blanket and he endorses foreign nations logging inside our national parks.

I have a supplementary. Mitsubishi and Daishowa are clear-cutting 120,000 square kilometres of Alberta, an area one-third the size of Japan. They will pollute the Peace River and the Athabasca River upstream of our largest national park.

Will the minister send a message along with our Prime Minister for the 10 days that he is in Japan that Albertans and Canadians care about the environment and when a project like Mitsubishi's ALPAC is turned down by a federal environmental assessment, no means no, and this new Minister of Environment will stand behind decisions that are made by panels, not beside them like his predecessor did?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I do not think we need any lessons insofar as dealing with the environment is concerned. We need to take no lessons from the hon. member or people from his own party.

The member will also know that certain projects that he is referring to have gone through environmental assessments and they have been dealt with at both provincial and federal levels. There are assessments that are there, there are processes that are there now that are even under review, that there will be legislation and has been legislation brought before this House to deal with environmental assessments. All these projects and future projects will be dealt with with one single important consideration in mind that all members share around this House and that is with dealing with the environment and sustainable development.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment.

Last week, the Federal Court of Appeal ruled that the James Bay Agreement has force of law. As a result, the minister not only has the authority but the obligation to take his responsibilities seriously. This judgment is a clear contradiction of the agreement signed with the former minister on February 12 to split the Great Whale project study.

Mr. Speaker, my question is this: Could the minister confirm that the study will not be split, and that infrastructures will not be separated from dam construction? Could the minister confirm that he will reject his government's unsavory policy on the Great Whale project?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I can inform the hon. member that I had a meeting last Thursday with my colleague, the Quebec Environment Minister, representatives of Inuit groups and representatives of the Cree.

To my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, it was the first time all four parties were around the same table, and it was at our request.

At this meeting, Mr. Speaker, we reached the following consensus, and this includes my Quebec counterpart: everyone agreed that for environmental purposes, it made more sense to conduct the study on the Great Whale project as a whole, instead of splitting the project in two for this purpose, as had been the case.

Mr. Speaker, it was not our decision to split the project study in two. After last Thursday's meeting, I can also inform you that my Quebec counterpart intends to have a meeting with the parties—with representatives of his own government—to find out whether there is a possibility to consider the project as a whole for environmental purposes.

• (1440)

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, that is certainly not the report we had on that Thursday meeting. The Minister of the Environment of Quebec has stated unequivocally that the problem he is having with his own cabinet arises out of a lack of support from this government for the environment. That is very clear and this minister is not going to get away with that kind of insipid, weak-kneed response.

The minister either takes a stand now or he stands forever condemned, along with his predecessors.

The issue is very, very clear. The Federal Court of Appeal has spoken. It said that the 1975 James Bay Agreement has the force of law. It has the force of federal law. This government has the right to move.

The only question in this House is: Why will this minister not stand up in this House and state unequivocally that this government will stand behind its own laws?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the hon. member pretends to get his information.

I was in a meeting with my colleague, the Minister of the Environment for Quebec and with representatives of the Inuk and of the Cree, no later than last Thursday night.

As I have already said, all parties, including the provincial minister, agreed at that meeting that for environmental assessment, it was a lot better to undertake an assessment based on all of the project and its cumulative effects, rather than split the project in two. I

was very happy to hear that coming out of the mouth of my hon. colleague of the environment for Quebec.

He also undertook at that meeting to go to his own government to try to see whether it could change its approach *vis-à-vis* this project, which we were very happy to hear. We will see what the outcome of that meeting is and we will then go on to deal with the environmental assessment of the project.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Recently a member of this government admitted that the average processing time for a Canadian citizen to be reunited with a spouse married abroad was 900 working days.

Many of these Canadians were devastated to learn that Mr. Al-Mashat and his spouse were admitted in just 28 days.

I ask the minister why his government has fostered an immigration system that offers special treatment for the elite but only delay and despair for ordinary Canadians?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member thinks that she is helping Canada by trying to portray our immigration system as a system favouring the elite over poor people, then I submit with respect that she is not helping her country, Canada. We have no such system in this country.

Last year, 212,000 people immigrated to Canada and they were not all former ambassadors.

The situation of Al-Mashat is going to be looked at by a standing committee of this House and it will do its task.

The answer to the member's question as to why will be answered then. Please, do not tell the world that in Canada we favour the elite over ordinary people who immigrate to Canada according to the rules.

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): The last refuge of a scoundrel is an appeal to patriotism.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member would put her question.

Ms. Guarnieri: My supplementary is for the same minister. At the commencement of the gulf war, the then Minister of Employment and Immigration delivered a directive banning the issuance of visas to Iraqis and Palestinians applying for entry into Canada. Clearly, in the case of Mr. Al-Mashat, who was admitted before a formal cease-fire was signed, this directive was ignored. Does the minister expect Canadians to believe that his officials in Vienna would override a specific ministerial directive during a war without the knowledge of his predecessor?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note that there was some discussion in the House on this topic last week and there was an agreement forthcoming from this government that all the issues related to this matter would be discussed in committee. We are looking forward to being at that committee, both my colleague and myself, and all the relevant officials.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. When I called the minister's 1-800 line regarding the Meme implant, it was still using figures saying the risk of cancer to women with Meme implants is equivalent to smoking one and a half cigarettes in a woman's lifetime and refers to only one in a million women facing cancer from the Meme. The FDA in the U.S. is saying one in 10,000, but some scientists from the FDA are stating one in 50, or one in 100.

Will the minister tell Canadian women who to believe and what is the minister planning to initiate to clarify for Canadian women the wide-ranging disparities coming from scientists?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, first of all, in response to my first question as minister of health and welfare, I would like to say that my primary interest is the health of Canadians, particularly women in this case. I think all

our work, as minister responsible for the department, is for the health of Canadians.

In this case I believe that everything has been done to be as up-front as we could in terms of the information provided. The 1-800 line has been used over 500 times since it has been put in place a couple of weeks ago.

In the medical world, decisions are made in light of information that is available, and I believe that in terms of breast implants that is the basis on which our decision has been made. In this case all information available is referred to the department and, when necessary, we duplicate the control to be sure that the information is the best and we will continue to do that.

In light of the information that we have, a decision will be made in light of the health of all Canadians.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's answer. However, I think it important that we be aware that when there was nothing out of the FDA, this government was waiting for the FDA for stats. Now we have stats from the FDA that say one in 10,000, and some of the scientists are saying one in 50, one in 100, and we are still saying we are using the best information available.

In light of this, I would like to ask this minister if he will make an undertaking that the kinds of projects that Dr. Chan from Calgary, and other doctors who want to do research into the safety of implants, will be funded as soon as possible. Will he give women of Canada that undertaking?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the department received in March the study by Dr. Chan from Calgary and we are dealing with that project. Dr. Chan himself said that he believed that more study should be done.

The hon. member is are asking me for an undertaking on funding. I have not personally received any request from Dr. Chan to provide any help. If this should be the case, we would consider it. There are many researchers in this country who are independently doing this type of research and refer to the department all instructive information that could be provided. We will continue to do that.

• (1450)

First of all, what Canadians, particularly women, want in terms of that issue is the best information available. It is what we do and the department is open to anyone who wants to check if what we are doing is well done. There is no problem with that.

* * *

FORESTRY

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister for International Trade, whomever he or she may be today.

A long time family-owned sawmill business in the upper Ottawa Valley which under normal conditions employed about 300 people has closed down its operations, taking 12 million badly needed dollars out of several small communities.

When is the government going to wake up? When is it going to get rid of the 15 per cent export tax? When is it going to lower the high Canadian dollar and give the forest industry and the forest workers a chance to survive? Where is the government's level playing field?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that that particular company was dealing with an eroding resource, a particularly low grade of product. It could not survive based on the specie that was left.

The hon. member should also know that this 15 per cent tax which has been collected is to be used to help that particular industry. We were determined to do that, but we need help from the provincial government in order to make it work.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, this government is the eroding resource.

My supplementary is to the same minister. This government inflicted devastating measures on the forest industry and has done nothing concrete to date to change its destructive policies. This closure brings to approximately 3,000 the number jobs lost in the upper Ottawa Valley alone due to this government's policies.

When is the government going to get together with the big spenders at Queen's Park in Toronto and bring in a federal-provincial forestry agreement that will give the employers and the workers some hope for the future?

What is the government going to do for these unemployed people? Is there any mercy out there at all?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, perhaps you will allow me to answer this question. As my hon. friend knows, we have negotiated and entered into agreements with almost all provinces, now except the province of Ontario, which in itself is insisting on conducting more studies before it determines the future of the forest product sector in that province.

I would like to remind my hon. friend as well that the industry is in a normal cycle. In fact, in 1976 the Canadian dollar stood at $1.014 American and the industry survived that. There are other factors that are involved in the lack of productivity of the industry right now. One has to do with the decline in the demand of forest products in our major market, which is the United States. Current signs indicate that the recession has bottomed out and the industry will recover its vibrancy later this year.

* * *

ARMENIA

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. She will know that Soviet troops, backed by armoured vehicles and helicopters, have been storming villages along Armenia's border with Azerbaijan for the past two weeks. Earlier this month over 30 Armenians were killed and hundreds were injured when heavy fighting flared up at the border. Many Armenians suspect the Kremlin is giving support to Azerbaijan to punish Armenia for its determination to secede.

My question is: Will the minister intervene either through the United Nations or directly with the Soviets to end this anti-Armenian violence by the Soviet and Azerbaijan authorities?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, clearly we are very concerned about the reports of increasing violence in that region, in Azerbaijan and Armenia. Like all members of the House, we regret that this conflict has not yet been resolved. We have called on all sides to show restraint in this dispute and to seek negotiated solutions because it is very important that further bloodshed be averted.

I think, particularly for Canadians families of Armenian descent, there is great concern. It is up to us and we have been making representations within the Soviet Union. Our embassy has been instructed to convey our concerns directly to the Soviet Foreign Ministry and, Soviet authorities permitting, embassy officers will be making a fact-finding visit to the region so that we can report directly back to those in Canada who have an interest in this.

* * *

FINANCE

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance.

Earlier in the Question Period he said he is interested in getting the fundamentals right. Well, today the Conference Board said that its "forecast for the Canadian economy has been revised downward", and it gave as a primary reason that "export performance has been weaker than expected".

One of the fundamentals when it comes to exports is the value of the Canadian dollar. If the Minister of Finance is interested in getting the fundamentals right when it comes to exports, why is he keeping the Canadian dollar so high? Why will he not take steps to bring the value of the dollar down right now?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): The hon. member knows that the exchange rate is established in the marketplace. The difficulty that Canadian industry faces is a lack of productivity and competitiveness, and that is one of the issues that needs to be addressed. The hon. member knows that there have been built up over the last two or three years serious inflationary pressures and inflationary expectations that have to be brought down. As those are brought down, interest rates are brought down. We have seen a reduction of some five percentage points in the last year.

That is the key to economic recovery. There is nothing in the Conference Board report that was not outlined in the budget of 1991 or referenced in the budget of 1990.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, one of the main factors robbing Canadian industry of its competitiveness is the over-valued Canadian dollar, and I

wish that the minister would be more willing to recognize this.

The government claims to be concerned about cross-border shopping. Why will the minister not recognize that one of the fundamentals that is driving Canadians to shop in the United States is the value of the Canadian dollar? Why will he not do something about that right now if he is interested in preserving our retail industry and bringing about a strong economic recovery now and not next year?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is perhaps a fundamental difference in policy. Back on August 8, 1981, his leader at that time saw no reason for an emergency session of Parliament in the face of soaring interest rates and the dropping value of the Canadian dollar, which was approaching a 50-year record low, and 12.8 per cent inflation.

Our policies are not designed to achieve that kind of a Liberal result.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture and concerns the agricultural safety net program.

Earlier this year I spoke with farmers in my constituency and I asked for their input on the type of program they would like to see implemented to see farmers through until GRIP and NISA become effective. They said: "Keep the program simple and deliver it before seeding".

NISA is now designed to allow farmers to access funds immediately in order to help pay for costs associated with seeding. The minister knows that seeding is currently under way and to date there is no indication that applications for NISA are available.

Can the minister give the farmers of my constituency an explanation as to why NISA applications are not available? And can he give some assurances as to when we can reasonably expect them to be made available?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, when the farm support adjustment measures program was announced it included the Net Income Stabilization Account and the GRIP, the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan. I can tell the hon. member that the forms for NISA, the Net Income Stabilization Account, are ready, they can be put out.

One thing my colleague should understand is that there has to be legislation passed in the provincial legislature before we would be able to send those forms out. To this point, it appears that the opposition in the Saskatchewan House is putting a political priority of its own ahead of the priority of the farmers to receive the NISA funds, which they very much would like to have as soon as possible.

An hon. member: Sounds NDP to me.

* * *

• (1500)

THE LATE RAJIV GANDHI

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I regret to inform the House of the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi earlier today during election campaigning in the state of Tamil Nadu.

Mr. Gandhi was known personally to Prime Minister Mulroney and to the former Secretary of State for External Affairs. I know that they join with me in deploring this senseless violence.

I express the profound hope of the Prime Minister and of this government that this event will not be allowed to interfere with the democratic process at this very sensitive time during this very important election to India and to those of us who have an interest in democracy and the development of democracy in India.

I know I speak for this House and for all Canadians in deploring this senseless violence and in extending condolences to the bereaved family.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, we are truly sorry to learn of Rajiv Gandhi's tragic death. We wish to extend our most sincere sympathies to the people of India and to Mr. Gandhi's family.

[*English*]

In a world where violence and terror has become so commonplace, it is very hard not to overlook these shocking events. Political assassinations are the most ugly of all political crimes, especially when it happens to someone who has held such a distinguished position in the largest democracy in the world.

We certainly want to share the sympathies the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs have expressed, both to the family and to the people of that country.

We hope that this will not result in the further fragmentation and fracturing of that country as it goes through a very delicate and sensitive time.

We point out again the irony of human events. Once again, a member of that family has been struck down. It is a family that has provided such distinguished leadership over the years.

We hope and pray that this event will not result in further loss of life in India at this very important time.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, we certainly share the sadness at the tragedy which happened today, expressed by the minister responsible for external affairs.

[*Translation*]

Certainly, the violent death of the former Prime Minister of India affects us all and reminds us, as if it were necessary, that violence is everywhere and that democracy must triumph.

[*English*]

We would like to express our sadness to the family and our thoughts that democracy will triumph in India. We wish everyone in that country all the best regarding the election which is taking place. Our sincerest condolences to the family.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I also wish to join the members of this House, on behalf of my colleagues in the Bloc Quebecois, to extend our sympathies to the Gandhi family.

Several years ago, I had the opportunity to meet the mother, who suffered the same fate as her son. We are all touched by events like that in one of the world's greatest democracies and we hope that this event will not be followed by an outburst of violence.

It is regrettable that democracy is thus sidetracked by violence; we bitterly regret it. Our sympathies to the family.

* * *

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

COMMENTS OF MINISTER

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege, notice of which was initiated by my colleague, the member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, and which I confirmed as I was returning to the Chamber at about the time he was concluding his representation on my behalf. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for reserving for me that question of privilege.

Section 80, paragraph (2) of *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, fifth edition states in part:

> A question of privilege—is a question partly of fact and partly of law—the law of contempt of Parliament—and is a matter for the House to determine.

I will show that the minister for immigration made an incorrect and misleading statement, which is therefore a question partly of fact.

Section 16 of Beauchesne also says:

> Parliamentary privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively as a constituent part of the High Court of Parliament, and by Members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions—

I would like to underscore the phrase "and by Members of each House individually". Section 18 states:

> —it is clear that many acts which might offend against the law or the moral sense of the community do not involve a Member's capacity to serve the people who have chosen him as their representative nor are they contrary to the usage nor derogatory to the dignity of the House of Commons.

I feel that it is contrary to the usage and derogatory to the dignity of this place when a member knowingly makes a statement that is incorrect. When such a false statement is used to assail the reputation of another hon. member the indignity to this House becomes more serious.

Hence, when the hon. minister of immigration, in reply to my supplementary question during the proceedings of May 16, said, referring to me:

> He was not even able to give me the name, the date of birth, or address of the person we want.

This statement is on page 194 of *Hansard*. The minister, by his statement, impaired my ability to fully discharge my duties and obligations as a member of Parliament for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to submit the following as you consider my question of privilege:

First, with respect to the matter of the applicant's name, on May 9 I wrote a letter to the said hon. minister in which I indicated very clearly the name of the applicant visitor, Mrs. Surjit Kaur, for whom I have been making the representation. I am now prepared to table this letter if necessary. I should further inform the House that my office faxed a copy of this letter to the minister's office on the same date and the original was marked urgent and sent by messenger.

I should also inform the House that on May 13, in this Chamber, I personally approached the minister for follow-up and, once again, provided him with the name of the applicant. I am confident no member of Parliament would ever intercede for any person without knowledge of that person's name.

Second, with respect to the date of birth of the applicant visitor, my office was indeed unable to provide this information when first asked by the minister's staff, as we did not have it in our record at that time. However, on May 13 I furnished the minister's staff the date of birth, which is December 4, 1941.

I should add that the bereaved brother in Winnipeg approached the local immigration office on April 30, the day after the death of his brother, Mr. Sidhu Singh. One would assume all necessary information with respect to the applicant visitor, including the date of birth, should have been requested from the family at that time. I personally advised the minister's staff to kindly get in touch with the Winnipeg immigration office for further information.

Third, with respect to the address of the applicant, I must tell this House neither the minister's staff nor the minister himself had ever asked my staff or myself for this information, even though it has been in our case file since April 29. Certainly we would have provided this information had it been requested. My record, Mr. Speaker, is open for your inquiry.

Thus, the minister was correct, if he meant the information on the date of birth was not initially available from my office when first requested on May 9. However, the name of the applicant has been known to us all along and to the minister's department office in Winnipeg since April 30, and to the minister's office in Ottawa since May 9, well before he requested it. I once again provided him with the information when I approached him in person on May 13.

The address of the applicant, which has been available in my record since April 29, has never been asked of me to date.

Did the minister deliberately mislead the House with the statement in question? If he did, it would be derogatory to the dignity of this House and, thus, constitute breach of privilege. Were it the case I am prepared to make the appropriate motion and seek the remedy of this House.

I realize that ministers make mistakes when they are not informed. I also realize they can make mistakes when they are wrongly or incompletely informed.

In conclusion, therefore, I would still like to believe, in all sincerity, that the minister, in reply to my question last May 16, could have mis-spoken that statement in his reply, considering the atmosphere of the moment, and that he did not deliberately and wilfully mislead the House. If this is the case, I will be prepared to accept an explanation and an apology from him and I am sure he would apologize to this House.

• (1510)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to have the remarks I may have made interpreted so as to try to impugn or in any way reflect badly on the hon. member.

I do not think it is important to go into all the details of this. Suffice it to say that the member's office did provide to my office on May 13, 1991, the details he referred to, as he stated today.

I do not hesitate to apologize to the hon. member if my comments put his dedication or his integrity or work as a member of the House in question. The only point I was trying to make was that we deal with literally thousands of these cases. In that specific instance, I did enquire from the Visa official in New Delhi so I could understand why the decision was made. I am sure the House will

agree that no minister should overturn a decision by an official without knowing the reasons why he made that decision. That was the simple point I was trying to make.

Again, I have no hesitation in apologizing to the hon. member.

Mr. Speaker: First of all, I want to thank the hon. minister for his gracious and appropriate response.

I also want to thank the hon. member for Winnipeg North for the concise and courteous way he put his case.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Pronovost for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his Speech at the opening of the session; and amendment thereto of Mr. Chrétien (p. 24) and the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Lapierre (p. 209).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assinibois has the floor. You have two minutes left.

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, in the time left, I just want to quote very briefly from the throne speech a passage which I believe to be the most important. It refers to productivity.

> Increasing our productivity across the full range of Canadian industry—manufacturing, resources, and services—is the only way to secure and enhance our prosperity of the longer term. Productivity is the difference between prosperity and decline. The prosperity of all Canadians and our ability to maintain social programs depend on the productivity of Canadians. Increasing productivity requires the collaborative efforts of governments, business, labour and individual Canadians, in all regions.

I believe these are very important words. What can government do? Government can control spending, can try to balance the books and bring interest rates down. There is no way on God's green earth that governments can borrow their way into prosperity.

To this end the government has pledged itself to legislate limits to government spending. For the first time there will be actual legislation putting a limit on government spending in this country.

In addition, legislation establishing a debt reduction fund to which the revenues from the goods and services tax and from the proceeds of privatization can be dedicated: further trade liberalization; public service reform; and privatization, where feasible. Theses are all measures designed to make the economy more competitive and to lessen the reliance upon government.

An additional measure is the pledge to work with the provinces in certain areas of education, in the elimination of interprovincial trade barriers and the management of the economy.

It is quite clear that government must control spending and inflation so that Canadians and others can have some confidence in our future.

A sound economy is the solid foundation for a strong nation. All of the hopeful signs are there: the stock market is up; interest rates are coming down; housing starts are up; business confidence is increasing; and employment opportunities are up. The path laid out in the throne speech is the best way to ensure the future: guarantee our Canadian way of life by strengthening and improving the Canadian federation constitutionally and economically.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I listened with some interest to the member and he made the point that national unity was an important theme in the throne speech and that competitiveness was a factor. I realize he has only been here since 1984 I believe, but I would like to know if he has ever known a time in Canadian history since perhaps before the Second World War or the conscription crisis of 1941 when Canada has been more divided, when Canadians in all parts of Canada have been more frustrated, as I think the Spicer committee has discovered.

I would make the point to this member that when his colleague, the Prime Minister, went especially around Quebec last year and said in effect to Quebecers that if Meech Lake did not pass they should consider themselves to be rejected by English speaking Canadians, it

was a calumny, it was untrue, and it was probably the most irresponsible thing that anyone who purports to call him or herself Prime Minister could do in this country.

I would ask the member, as a westerner—I have been to speak to his riding association and I know the community he comes from—how he can sit with a government that has done more to disunite Canadians from north, south, east and west than any other government in Canadian history?

Mr. Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat surprised at the tone displayed by the hon. member, given the fact that he was I believe elected four or five times as a Progressive Conservative opposing the policies that he now apparently espouses and holds so dear. Perhaps after all he was in favour of the national energy policy, perhaps after all he favours the kind of wanton spending and irresponsible borrowing that characterized the policies of the party that he now sits with, having betrayed the people who voted for him. Perhaps he thinks that his party is God's gift to agriculture and that it would have come forward, as this government has, in response to the needs of western grain farmers.

It seems to me that embedded in the question and in the emotion displayed in it, there was a good deal of personal animosity toward the Prime Minister. I do not know what it relates to, perhaps the fact that the hon. member having been elected four or five times was consistently by-passed. I can only suggest that it is the apparent reason for the sort of venom and animosity displayed.

I believe and I hope that all members in this House are concerned about national unity. This throne speech lays out a consistent and steady pattern, leading toward the resolving of differences among Canadians and hopefully will lead to a rebuilt Constitution, one which will enable us to progress into the 21st century.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, further to the Speech from the Throne, the Prime Minister said that he wanted to take an interest in education, when we know very well that the Bélanger-Campeau Commission asked that Quebec alone have authority over education; when we know that the Quebec Liberal Party, the Government of Quebec says that it absolutely wants sole control over education and job training; when we also know that the Quebec Chamber of Commerce has asked the Government of Quebec alone to be responsible for education and adult training. This means that all Quebecers want education to be controlled by Quebec. So what an insult for the federal government to try to control education in Quebec! This will lead to inconsistency and confrontation and clearly hurt education in Quebec instead of helping it.

I would like to ask the hon. member whether he agrees with his government interfering in education in the provinces, even if the intention is noble.

• (1520)

[*English*]

Mr. Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the hon. member for Longueuil is easily insulted and always humiliated, in a position of perpetual humiliation.

The fact is that the throne speech clearly recognizes education as a provincial jurisdiction. In fact I have the document in front of me. It says: "My government recognizes that education is a provincial responsibility under the Constitution and respects that fact".

However, I do not think that means that it is not the concern of every Canadian. Whether they happen to be sitting at the federal level, provincial level or municipal level, they want to get the most they can for the spending on education that we have in Canada.

The throne speech quite clearly points out the fact that we have to improve our educational levels, our technological skills, if we are to compete in the coming knowledge age. It is part of being productive and competitive. That is the sense to choose from the throne speech, and I think it is something that all members in this House should be in a position to support.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, today this debate brings us a sense of unease and frustration about the validity of the Speech from the Throne process.

In addition, I would like to focus in my intervention on what the Government of Canada says in the Speech from the Throne on the important issue of sustainable development.

Let me deal first with the Speech from the Throne as a political instrument. I would submit that at this stage the credibility, the validity and the significance of the Speech from the Throne have been lost enormously over time. I am not saying that in a partisan sense, because one can remember also speeches from the throne when my party was in power which were not fully implemented. In other words, it is a statement of dreams, a statement of intent. However, it is a statement that because of its lack of accountability at the present time has to be questioned.

We know that Canadians at large at this particular time in history have raised questions about the credibility of the political system. Therefore, I submit that it is necessary and incumbent upon us to raise a question of this kind with you, Mr. Speaker, because it is valid, it is timely and it is necessary.

I will illustrate this point with a few examples to move from the abstract, so to speak, into the practical.

Why am I saying that the Speech from the Throne reduces even further the credibility of politicians? I would ask you to compare the Speech from the Throne of April 1989, in which you will find under the heading "Environmental Imperative" a number of specific proposals. I will start with the one which reads: "The government has also altered its operational practices and enlarged the responsibilities of the Minister of the Environment to ensure that environmental issues are fully considered in the course of its decision making".

That was a very bold, a very promising and a very welcome statement two years ago. If we look at what happened, without reciting a number of events that have proven the contrary, I would only ask you to think back to last week when the courts made a decision on Kemano II and urged that the government apply its own environmental impact assessment process.

This was a decision, is a decision and will be a decision of enormous importance. In other words, the court told the federal government that it was breaking its own environmental impact assessment rules. This was last week, and by comparing that event with what was in the Speech from the Throne two years ago, one cannot help but conclude that something here has gone seriously wrong.

I would submit that the gap between the rhetoric in the pages and lines of a Speech from the Throne and the action is widening in a dangerous manner.

If you look at the 1989 Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, you will find a statement to the effect that in the new environmental agenda the government will limit the environmental impact of toxic chemicals through the development of regulations for the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

As of today, under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act no new chemicals have been added since the birth of this legislation. Before this legislation came into effect nine chemicals were included, precisely nine out of thousands and thousands of chemicals that were in use out there, and today we still have nine. Therefore, the inevitable question is: What has happened to this important commitment?

Let me move to another example. In April 1989, the government committed itself to improving the quality of our water through new legislation. Nothing has happened since. We had the Pierce report on the federal water inquiry in 1985. We had the publication of a federal water policy in 1987. We had a commitment from the government in April 1989, and we are still waiting for the legislation.

If you want another example, there was a very important policy commitment in April 1989 to protect the environmental integrity of our Arctic regions. What do we find here? We find that a few days before the last session died an Arctic strategy was released. It is another piece of paper; it is not an implementation of an Arctic protection strategy.

I must bring the strategy itself to your attention, Mr. Speaker, because you come from a province which is undertaking or proposing a major hydroelectric plant that could affect the salinity in Hudson Bay. I come from a province where eventually over the decades similar projects will be proposed, with an impact on James Bay, which is part of Hudson Bay. Manitoba is also in the long term likely to produce some hydroelectric plans of that nature.

In the Arctic strategy there is no reference to the importance of the ecological role of Hudson Bay, its salinity, or how it could be affected by these megaprojects as they are being proposed to come on stream.

What we have instead of protection are nice words, beautiful sentences and lots of paper.

In the April 1989 Speech from the Throne, there is a reference which reads: "My government will proceed with the initiatives to clean up the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River and, together with the provinces, to further the process of cleaning up dangerous land sites".

• (1530)

The remedial action plan for 17 Canadian sites in the Great Lakes and in the St. Lawrence River lacks federal support. We have not seen the action that was proposed in the Speech from the Throne two years ago.

The Speech from the Throne of two years ago proposed the encouragement, the development and the adoption of clean and efficient production processes.

We have a situation where, unfortunately, we cannot say that this has happened. In our tax system, the only write-offs refer to pollution control equipment, a narrow range of devices related to equipment. Clean production processes that aim as close as possible to zero discharge do not qualify yet for tax breaks.

In other words, the government, despite the intent that it expressed two years ago, has not yet been able to come to grips with the use of fiscal and taxation levers and instruments that would allow it to implement what it promised to do two years ago.

We have the commitment by the government, also two years ago, to legislation that would ensure an appropriate environmental assessment review process.

On that, the government attempted to act. In June 1990, it introduced Bill C-78, which did not make any progress during the summer of last year. Between January and April, it was no longer the object of discussions in committee.

In addition to that, it was quite interesting to notice that witnesses who came before the committee on that environmental impact assessment bill were of the opinion that they would prefer to live under the present guidelines than under the weaker and vague clauses that are embodied in the now defunct Bill C-78.

Might I add that the guidelines are the result of an Order in Council decision by the then Liberal government in the spring of 1984.

We have a situation where we are still living in a legislative vacuum, but instead of legislation we have a stronger regime thanks to guidelines that are in place by way of a decision of the courts.

In the Speech from the Throne of two years ago, and before I move on to sustainable development, there was also a commitment by the government to a national child care program.

Inevitably, one has to ask, if one were an average Canadian looking at the Speech from the Throne of two years ago, what happened to that commitment. Unfortunately, we cannot find any initiatives, not even the shadow of a bill in the legislative system, that would indicate that the commitment has somehow been developed and given the necessary political will to move ahead into the legislative system.

Actually, it is not only on the child care program front that we find the Speech from the Throne wanting. It is not only wanting because of what was not implemented since 1989 in the previous Speech from the Throne.

We find an absence of understanding of the social agenda of Canadians at large, the situation being faced by one-parent families, the situation being faced by people who depend on food banks, the situation of people who are waiting to be admitted to social housing, the situation of those who are unemployed and are waiting to be recalled to their job or perhaps are not going to be recalled at all because their previous job has simply disappeared.

The absence of social awareness and conscience in this particular Speech from the Throne is particularly striking and particularly shocking.

I indicated a few minutes ago that the second reason for making this intervention relates to the issue of sustainable development. I must refer you to the present Speech from the Throne. I was astounded to read the following statement under the heading "Participating in Prosperity":

> My government will, over the coming months, consult with provincial governments, industry and environmental leaders to explore means of complementing current regulatory approaches with innovative instruments that would achieve positive environmental results—

And here are the key words, Mr. Speaker, before you fall asleep:

> —without prejudicing economic prosperity.

That really struck me like a thunderbolt. By saying "without prejudicing economic prosperity" the Government of Canada rejects all the commitments it has made so far to sustainable development and the commitments made so far, including the Speech from the Throne of 1989, to the Brundtland report and our common future.

The government is saying that the environment will only count if the economy does not come into the picture, which is diametrically opposed to the principles and recommendations contained in the Brundtland report. This is contrary to what sustainable development is all about because sustainable development means development that can be sustained over a long period of time without prejudicing the choices and opportunities of generations to come.

You can invent another dozen definitions if you like, if you have enough imagination.

The point I am trying to make is that this government, either out of bad faith when it was popular decided to embrace sustainable development hoping that it could ride the popularity of that concept and maintain public support and possibly increase it, or embraced it without knowing what it was embracing, without realizing what sustainable development meant.

This is a government that either attempted to deceive the public or was stupid enough to embrace a concept whose meaning it did not understand. The proof of that was a few weeks ago during Question Period in this House when the then Secretary of State for External Affairs, now minister in charge of federal-provincial relations, in reply to a question from the member for Skeena, insisted that the trade negotiations and the environmental negotiations presently taking place between the United States and Mexico, and eventually involving Canada, would have to proceed on separate tracks. At that point we knew that conceptually this government was unable to understand the significance of what sustainable development is all about.

Therefore, and it was almost prophetic in a sense, the reply given by the secretary of state, that revelation, has found its way into the text of the Speech from the Throne. When the government says it will introduce innovative instruments to achieve positive environmental results without prejudicing economic prosperity, it is saying that it has chosen a policy that will take care of the short term, that it will endanger our natural resources and that it will perpetrate the mistakes that have been made in the environment and in environmental policies over several decades, particularly in recent years.

• (1540)

In other words, it is saying that political expediency will come before long-term benefits. It is saying that it endorses particularly in international bodies, in the United Nations and at conferences on climate change, certain principles and concepts in the world community but it does not want to practise them at home. It is saying it has decided that the integration of economic and environmental goals is not a knock on the table. It is attempting to turn the clock back 20 years. What a shame, what a disgrace for the Canadian people.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, through you to the member, there was an article in the *New York Times* yesterday by an American environmentalist who argued—the member probably saw it—that because President Bush had agreed to factor the environment into the talks that somehow the environment in effect was likely to be safe.

If the member saw the article, I wonder if he would wish to comment on that principle.

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I have not seen that article but I am aware of the theology being adopted by the administration in Washington which has unfortunately been swallowed hook, line and sinker by the administration here in Ottawa, as demonstrated by the endorsement given almost overnight by the Minister for International Trade of the approach that the hon. member just attributed to President Bush.

There is a lot of environment in trade policies because there are very few other human activities that impinge so heavily on environment and our national resources as trade activities in any jurisdiction. To pretend out of the blue that trade policies have to be considered on one track and then on another track you should consider

environmental policies is an unreal conceptual organization.

If I remember correctly, the administration in Washington went so far as to say that the two would be considered on parallel tracks: trade on one track and the environment on the other. Anyone who knows geometry knows that parallel lines never meet. That fact alone reveals the weakness of this particular approach. A separation of the two will not allow an examination of trade activities with the environment in mind with a concern for the long term. It will not allow a concern for the capacity of natural resources to rejuvenate themselves while anticipating and preventing pollution activities resulting from trade. In other words, one cannot have a meaningful trade negotiation process at the table without having people knowledgeable on the environment as part of that particular trade delegation.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr Speaker, first of all, the start of a new session in the life of this Thirty-Fourth Parliament is a proper occasion to thoughtfully and carefully reflect on our collective achievements, as a Parliament and people. It is also a time to provide both leadership and vision for the long-term future of our nation.

No issue is more important, as stated in the Speech from the Throne, than the unity of Canada. We must learn to overcome obstacles, erase doubts, and strengthen Canada's position to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century which is waiting for us just around the corner.

All hon. members are united in this purpose, as far as I know, and the government's commitment to Canada and to our vision for the future is strong and clear in this Speach from the Throne. If, in our minds, the picture of the future is dim and clouded, and if we remain preoccupied only with the whims and pressures of today, we put at risk our very future.

Daily, we face such constant pressures and exhortations. However, to deal only with today and let the future take care of itself, spend a few billion here and there, invent a new program overnight to demonstrate concern and action, not worry about the national debt, not question the value of existing programs, and not even wonder if a new costly effort is certain to be cost effective and bring the desired results, is a dangerous and costly attitude.

Keeping our eye firmly on the long-term and staying the course is difficult for some hon. members. Satisfying every want and wish today comes just too naturally. It may play well to the cameras.

However it does not meet our duty and responsibility as Parliamentarians. As members of this House, we must resist the temptation of pressing for instant gratification and magic solutions for every real or imagined need. Magic wands such as popular but ineffective policies are hoaxes. They don't work.

What does work is implementing today carefully-designed measures directed to achieving long-term goals. As I said earlier, the year 2000 is not far off and our focus on the future must not prevent immediate action. This action must be in line with goals for the future. This is the view, and the vision, that is put forward to this House and the people of Canada in the speech from the Throne.

This has been the guiding principle of this Government since 1984. The foundation has been the Strategy for Economic Renewal: We have firmly put the break on the mindless expansion of government programs and expenditures; deficit reduction has been and remains a primary goal; tax reform is yielding economic returns; and free trade and productivity growth open the doors to prosperity and the world for all Canadians.

There is no other route for making it in the tough competitive world we face. Let us not deceive Canadians into believing otherwise. Wise leadership and effective management is our mandate. That demands that we confront directly the complex challenges and problems facing Canadians.

Moreover, that means developing coherent and consistent long-term plans to meet goals and targets and stick to them.

• (1550)

It also means taking the time and devoting the energy to build a concensus among Canadians. Broad agreement among Canadians does not simply arise on command to suit the agenda or meet the demands of those who call for instant solutions. Such a consensus must be encouraged and nurtured in a deliberate and planned way. Leaders must make the commitment and set the course. Knowledge and power has to be shared. New

forums and meeting places need to be fashioned. Energy and time must be invested.

To pretend that we have all the answers and reject the need for public consultations—and those critical requirements to make consultation work—is to mislead Canadians.

[*English*]

It is not government but people who have the real power in our society to set the course and make the rules which govern their lives. Certain people in this Chamber question or even ridicule the government's decision to consult seriously and widely with the Canadian people.

The people who are questioning or ridiculing a commitment like this one by the government are, in reality, questioning and ridiculing a commitment to empower people and make democracy work.

As the Speech from the Throne clearly states, increasing prosperity is first and foremost an issue of people. Canada is much more than an abundance of forests, minerals and water. Our greatest strength is our people. Our knowledge, skills and brains are our greatest national asset. They are our ticket to prosperity and they are our ticket to growth, more so than they have ever been in the past.

This is a tough and competitive world that values knowledge more than any other asset. Canadian jobs are being threatened by a new kind of competition. It is not primarily low wage competition that threatens us, increasingly it is high wage competition. Canada is losing ground to industrial competitors who are simply better than we are at inventing, designing, managing, manufacturing and marketing. We must, and we can, outsmart our international competitors.

In this, the information society, the knowledge age, how well we live will depend on how well we learn. Learning, from infancy, in school, on the job, and throughout life.

Governments in Canada spend more than $50 billion a year on education and training, with federal expenditures amounting to over $11 billion. This is a greater expenditure than almost any other developed country in the world, but the results, not government spending more money, is the question that should be of most concern to every Canadian.

The importance of learning as our ticket to prosperity is not a new concern for us. The Prime Minister has strongly asserted, over the years, the national interest in calling for all Canadians, all levels of government and all groups in society to recognize and then confront the fact that our performance lags behind other developed nations.

Our government, under the Prime Minister's strong direction, has established a record of important accomplishments to further learning, amounting to billions of dollars in expenditures. This represents an innovative and creative record. Each initiative is targeted to deal with the specific issue. Together they represent an integrated approach.

These new measures, many in my own Department of Employment and Immigration, include the new Labour Force Development Strategy, the National Stay-in-School Initiative, Canada scholarships from Industry, Science and Technology, major literacy initiatives, networks of Centres of Excellence, Canada Student Loans Policy Review, education for Canada's First Nations, the Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy and the Aboriginal Employment and Training Strategy.

In November 1989 at the First Ministers' Conference, the Prime Minister defined the challenge and provided the leadership. There was wide recognition and understanding then, as there must be today, that learning throughout life, good jobs and our success as a nation are closely linked.

Who in Canada wants low paying and low skill jobs? No one wishes such a future for themselves or their children. The ticket to good jobs and a good life throughout one's life is learning. The ultimate goal which can be shared by all Canadians and all levels of government is to build an innovative, competitive economy, based on high skill, high wage jobs, a society where all Canadians value learning and fully enjoy the benefits of their learning and labour.

Learning reform is rooted in international competitiveness and is a function of national economic policy. The European commission and the sovereign member nations are forging ahead in developing European-wide targets and standards.

The Americans, the Japanese and other developed nations are confronting this challenge more successfully than Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Compared to many of these other countries, Mr. Speaker, our human resources are underdeveloped and underutilized. The fundamental problem with learning in Canada is that, compared with other nations, there isn't enough of it, and we don't take it seriously enough. Our prosperity depends on major improvements in the general level of skills held by all, as well as having many more people with advanced and specialized skills. No one party has a monopoly on life-long learning. The provinces have undisputed primacy for schools, a pat recognized in the speech from the Throne. We fully respect the Provinces' jurisdiction. The federal government has long played a major role in adult training. Life-long learning requires that we all work in partnership to confront our competitors.

Future constitutional restructuring in this area is not ruled out. In fact it could be informed by wide consultation. What is proposed in the speech from the Throne is a call for a national consensus on performance, goals, partnerships, and priorities for learning.

To build this consensus, we will now launch a process of consultation throughout Canada. This will represent another major step to further learning. It will focus the attention of all on the benefits of developing a learning culture in Canada.

[*English*]

A commitment has been made to publish a discussion paper on learning. This paper, now in draft form, has been prepared under the close direction of the Prime Minister. It fully reflects his long-standing commitment to learning, to further Canada's competitiveness, and to provide greater prosperity and personal fulfilment for each individual Canadian. This paper will be the federal government's contribution to a national dialogue on how Canadians acquire their skills and knowledge and how our approach to learning can be improved to ensure that Canadians can continue to enjoy the benefits of a globally competitive economy in the 21st century.

The primary aim of the paper is to initiate a national consensus-building discussion on targets and priorities for learning in Canada. While we have some understanding of the extent of the problem and the challenge we face as a nation, change will not happen unless public attitudes change.

• (1600)

This is the core of what we seek to accomplish, creating a climate or a culture among individuals, employers and all others to both learn throughout life and increase wide demand for better, if not outstanding, performance.

Change will only occur when large numbers of Canadians of all ages choose to make learning a personal priority and an individual responsibility throughout life. Learning is not something done to us by external institutions. Learning is what we can choose to do or not. The enormous personal, spiritual and economic benefits that learning can produce for each individual can be defined and readily understood. They can be a major source of new wealth for every Canadian.

These benefits must be made widely known. This revelation alone could be the spark that ignites an interest in more Canadians to pursue a life of learning and personal growth, and to create demand and support further reform.

[*Translation*]

Four Canada-wide goals for the year 2000 are suggested in the Speech from the Throne. With Provincial endorsement and cooperation, these could be considered by Canadians: cutting illiteracy rates in half; ensuring that 90 per cent of Canadians graduate from high school or the equivalent; doubling the number of post-secondary graduates in mathematics, the sciences, and engineering; and quadrupling the training provided by employers to their empoyees.

Mr. Speaker, there are many other goals that Canadians can consider in defining a learning system for life that is among the best, if not the best, in the world. Today, I might suggest two more goals that Canadians could discuss, namely to double the number of Canadian youth who participate in a structured learning programs leading to entry-level jobs and to achieve full representation of women in the fields of mathematics, science and technology.

These, and many other goals, will be suggested and examined in the discussion paper. As the Minister responsible, I can inform Members to day that the discussion paper will be tabled in the House within

several weeks. I will be a substantial and important contribution to our knowledge.

The release of this paper will be a first step in a process of consultation and consensus building with Canadians throughout the nation.

[*English*]

The release of this paper will be the first step in the process of consultation and consensus building with Canadians throughout the nation.

In the several weeks following the release of the paper I will be meeting with many across Canada to decide on the approach to the process of consultation. Public consultations should start within the coming several months and throughout we want to examine learning as a life-long activity and the reforms required.

I will keep hon. members of this House fully informed and seek their views and support at every stage. Members from all sides of this House have indicated on many occasions support and commitment to the goal of improving our performance and furthering learning for all Canadians. We share the recognition that this is one of the most important challenges facing Canada. We have as a nation one of the strongest, best staffed and amply funded education systems. If together we deliberately build on our intellectual strengths we can take on the world. We will become competitive with the best learning systems in the world and create prosperity for ourselves as we enrich our own personal lives.

[*Translation*]

Our increased prosperity will help to build the unity of Canada. Not for today alone, but for the long term.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for Rosemont, after which I will recognize the hon. member for Scarborough West.

The hon. member for Rosemont.

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, there is incredible federal arrogance behind the rather engaging expression on the Minister of Employment and Immigration's face.

The minister told us: There are problems in the field of education. We spend a lot, but the performance we get is insufficient to face up to world competition. Granted, the education system in every country has to be reviewed constantly. But there are also plenty of other problems, Mr. Speaker, that are very important and completely under federal jurisdiction but nevertheless a long way from being solved.

The minister called for a consensus and stressed the importance of economic policy. We know what this government thinks of economic policy. We also know that the Economic Council of Canada says: The most significant obstacle to productivity in Canada is the lack of consensus. That is why we are saddled with a very harsh monetary policy, a real horse remedy—because we are in a country where there is no consensus. That is what the latest report by the Economic Council of Canada tells us. And if anyone expected a new consensus after the Budget speech—well, after Ontario brought down its budget, which represents 40 per cent of the Canadian economy, and after it adopted a policy that is diametrically opposed to that of the federal government, it is pretty obvious this government is far from obtaining a consensus.

We won't mention the constitutional question where, as we know, there is no consensus in sight. And now this government, which has trouble handling its own affairs, decides to intervene to a substantial degree in a field that is entirely under provincial jurisdiction, when it says: Well, there are a few problems, and we intend to help you deal with them.

Mr. Speaker, I am trying to understand on what basis—What qualifications does the federal government have for making a contribution of any kind in this area? In fact, what we need here is a consistent approach. In Quebec, there is a consensus among employers, unions, educational institutions and the government for patriating the entire area of occupational training. They are unanimous on this score, Mr. Speaker.

Could you imagine, a minister with that engaging expression? You would almost forget the federal arrogance behind it, but we must not forget it. Ms. Lise Bissonnette said as much this morning in an editorial which I recommend to the minister. Incredibly, when the federal government can't deal with its own problems, it goes and interferes with education. My point is that education must be brought closer to business and to the

community. And that is exactly what the various parties want to do in Quebec, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect for the hon. member, I would like to say first of all that education is not what we traditionally think of as education, including the little red school house and all that. That is thè traditional picture we have of education, as I am sure he will agree. However, that is only part of the learning process. What we are talking about is developing a learning culture, and I am sure he will agree that people learn at home, they learn at school and they learn at work. Knowledge is not a monopoly of one particular jurisdiction. Knowledge is everybody's business at every stage in our lives. We are not talking about encroaching on the jurisdictions of the provinces, but about setting national objectives in this country and getting the tools to turn people across this country into the best qualified labour force in the world. To achieve these objectives the hon. member mentioned certain efforts in this area in Quebec, involving management and labour, and I totally agree that is the way we should go. The federal government is already spending $11 billion. It may well be that once we reach a national consensus, we will agree on a different way of spending those $11 billion.

• (1610)

As I said in an interview last week, we are not "jurisdiction-hungry". We want to develop a learning climate for Canadians across this country, so that even if you come from New Brunswick, when you graduate, it won't matter that you don't come from British Columbia.

The same thing applies to the young man from Newfoundland or the adult student from Vancouver or Trois-Rivières. We want to create this culture and give our people the best possible skills, because there is a direct link between skills and standard of living. That's the way it is, and we must have this national consensus so that we can start the next century with the most effective tool we have a skilled and highly professional labour force that will be able to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century that is just around the corner.

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the hon. minister's comments, particularly as they relate to education. I want to tell him, as I begin my brief remarks, that in this Speech from the Throne there is certainly one thing that we can agree on, and that is the national tragedy relating to illiteracy and education.

It is almost inconceivable that in this country, one of the most developed countries of the world, 25 per cent of the adult population of this country is functionally illiterate. It is difficult to imagine how we got ourselves into this dilemma with respect to simple, basic, everyday functioning in society.

I want to wish the minister, the government and our country well in doing everything we possibly can to alleviate that problem.

I want to turn my attention, just for a few moments, to something else which is mentioned in the throne speech. I would ask the hon. minister to address the concept of the family. The hon. minister will know, if he has been listening to the members of his own caucus when they have been speaking in Question Period and even the odd question to ministers, that the subject of the family is of great concern.

There is one sentence in the throne speech about the family and I would like to quote it:

> In addition, my government will review its policies in relation to the family, the most fundamental building block of Canadian society.

There was a time when I would not have to ask the minister the following question, but I am going to ask it in any event. What is this government's definition of family? Is it what we have traditionally known to be the family or is it something else? Is this what the government is going to be looking at or reviewing in its review of its policies in relation to the family? That is the first question I would like to ask the minister.

The second question is if this government is in fact committed to the family, the minister, being the Minister of Immigration, knows of the tragedy of family reunification and of the long delays that thousands of people are suffering in this country by being unable to be reunited with their spouses. Will he take a fresh look at this problem and undertake on behalf of his government to speed the family reunification process?

Mr. Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, concerning the first question, I will not attempt to enter into a debate today as to how a family should be defined. When this government states that we value family and its contribution to the national life of Canada, I can best describe the type of family that this government is talking about by just looking at Canadians where they live in family situations. These are the families that we are talking about.

I cannot tell my neighbour who might live in a family that is different from the one that his parents have taught him, that it is not a family because it is not nuclear, because it is not what families used to be.

As Canadian citizens, they do contribute to their communities. The government is committed because it values families for what they produce for communities, provinces and this country.

We only have to look at our own personal background. Where do these values come from? It is not that I want return to discussing the learning culture, but maybe families, for too long, have entrusted many family matters to the school system. Possibly we have been asking our teachers to act as parents, and this is not right. This is the proper role of the real family which my learned friend is talking about.

In the next few months, we will have the chance to discuss in Parliament and with Canadians the role of the family. We will see the programs that the government will bring forward to try to enhance family values in Canada.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I apologize for interrupting you, but unless there is unanimous consent, I must inform you that I have shown tolerance and that the questions and comments period has already been exceeded by one minute.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Windsor—Lake St. Clair.

[*English*]

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, first of all let me point out that I am sharing time with my colleague, so I will be speaking for only 10 minutes.

I must say that the Minister of Employment and Immigration has managed a heroic mobilization of platitudes about education without responding in any significant degree to the problem at hand. He offers us another of these study papers, a consultation paper with respect to which he is going to consult with the people of Canada to find out on what basis they should consult on education.

It sounds to me as though we are going to have a Spicer commission on education, with equal productivity.

We should recall that the government offered us any number of discussion papers, fora, workshops and committees designed to improve Canada's situation with respect to research and development. This reminds me of the throne speech, which is the topic of the debate.

One of the notable omissions from that throne speech which cannot be missed by anyone is a complete omission of any reference to research and development, to any targets for research and development. That is a true test of this government's commitment to competitiveness and increased productivity, as I understand it.

In documents that the government has provided with respect to the report of the parliamentary committee on industry, science and technology, we see not only an abandonment of the target that was established for research and development and promised by the Prime Minister in 1983, but we see the absurd rationalization for the desertion of that goal and the response of government bureaucrats speaking in the name of the minister, which has to be read to be believed.

It says that a target of 2.5 per cent of GERD for Canada is a highly questionable proposition. It says that other nations that have achieved the target of 2.5 per cent of expenditures in proportion to the Gross Domestic Product are nations that spend a great deal on defence—ignoring Sweden, West Germany, now Germany, and Japan, none of which had the abundant investment in research and development of other competitors.

Nevertheless, they have achieved 2.5 per cent or more of Gross Domestic Product in expenditures on research and development.

We find that, in spite of a consensus among ministers of science and technology that there should be a goal of 2.5 per cent, it is the federal government that is resisting it. However, I would have to say in all seriousness and in all honesty that I am deeply concerned about the failure of Ontario to specifically marry itself to a goal with respect to involvement, and to achieve that goal which the federal New Democratic Party caucus certainly agrees this nation should achieve. The goal of 2.5 per cent, or any other goal, dictates that there must be a mechanism for achieving that goal. It dictates that there must be policies and action to achieve those goals. In all probability the rejection of the 2.5 per cent GERD by the federal government probably implies that this government has found itself incapable of achieving any goal

that implies a mechanism, a policy, an action for its achievement.

• (1620)

When we look at the throne speech, which, like all throne speeches, is as full of platitudes as can be, we have to recognize that the goals set out there for education and training are at least a statement which could give this country profit if it is understood by this government that those goals, too, dictate that there must be a mechanism for their achievement.

We must doubt that those goals mean anything at all. The goals, as I said, are salutary; they would seek to ensure that every Canadian of 25 years of age, or 90 per cent of all Canadians reaching 25 years of age, will have achieved a high school education. It calls for the cutting in half of illiteracy in this country. It calls for quadrupling training in this country and for doubling the number of mathematicians, scientists and engineers in this country.

If one looks at the record of this government, how can any Canadian fail to receive these promises, these goals, with anything except doubt?

With respect to illiteracy, it has become well known that 25 per cent of our population is functionally illiterate, and the government's response to this has been a very cautious, tenuous, private, non-profit oriented volunteer approach to doing something about illiteracy, which has failed abjectly.

It talks about increasing the number of trainees, quadrupling them, in an attempt to catch up to the Americans, who have a rate double that of ours in industrial training, or Japan, which has four times the number of trainees in industry, or Germany, which has eight times. It would suggest to us that now we are going to have a target to at least come up to the level of Japan.

How are we to believe such goals? Only in the last budget $100 million was cut from the training programs that this government is supposed to be providing under the Canadian Jobs Strategy.

The most galling example of hypocrisy is when this government says that it would double the number of mathematicians, engineers and scientists, which implies that our universities must graduate more. And yet this is a government which, along with the Liberal government before it, has consistently cut back on transfer payments intended to support post-secondary education. Three and a half billion dollars cut from the Established Programs Financing as a result of this past budget. A total of $12 billion over the last decade has been cut from post-secondary education. Now we hear that we are going to double the number of graduates from the most expensive faculties in our universities.

How can anybody believe this government? How can anybody believe this government is serious when at the same time and in the same speech it rejects any mention of research and development? It is a shameful example of the typical hypocrisy that plagues this government.

I want to make note of the last interchange that occurred between the member for Scarborough and the Minister of Employment and Immigration. It had to do with family. The member for Scarborough rightfully expressed some concern about any omission of the question of family in any serious context within the throne speech.

In response to that, we had a good deal of moralizing on the part of the Minister of Employment and Immigration that provided no answer.

It is fundamental to understand that the nature of the family has changed in such a way that increasing numbers of our pre-school kids have not developed through the normal processes the skills of learning that are needed for success in elementary school and subsequently high school, university, and so on.

Life-long learning is going to have to admittedly extend through the lifetime of an individual, but it means it is also going to have to extend to an earlier period during the development of Canadians. Day care must be a part of the equation, and that was not mentioned in the throne speech at all. I do not mean day care as a place to put kids while parents work. I am talking about day care that will be a form of education that will provide those skills to kids who are about to enter school, a day care that will create for them a level playing field.

These are the kinds of policy initiatives that we need, not more discussion. Our party understands the jurisdictional aspects of education, but our party has also suggested that there should be created at the national level a council on education that will provide the resources, that can underscore the policy initiatives and curriculum changes and other techniques that are going to underlie any future marrying of education with economic goals.

That should be beyond the jurisdictional disputes and the dissension within this country, because our future is at stake, and this government seems to have failed to understand that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his excellent speech, particularly on education. We know that he is a great doctor and a responsible person. We sat together on the Committee for Industry, Science and Technology.

I rise again today because the federal government wants to get involved into something that is beyond his jurisdiction. We all know, and we cannot overemphasize the fact that Quebecers will never accept any involvement on the part of the federal government in the field of education in Quebec. Education has been a strictly provincial matter since Confederation and Canadians have always wanted it that way. Canada has not helped Quebecers: Quebecers themselves have paid for their education and their training, and they want to continue to work and get appropriate training in order to be successful. This is very important, so important in fact that the commissions that were established recently in Quebec have again insisted on that issue.

The Bélanger–Campeau Commission proposed that Quebec maintain exclusive jurisdiction in the field of education in order to properly ensure its future. The Chamber of Commerce of Quebec City has asked the provincial government to assume exclusive responsibility in matters of education and manpower training. In recent months, the Government of Quebec has asked the federal government to take charge of the training of its manpower. This is total chaos! The federal government spends hundred of millions of dollars in Quebec for the training of workers, when it is well known that, in the majority of cases, this training is useless. It is useless because every week people come to my office and complain that they cannot get adequate training since it is already a provincial matter.

So, I would like to ask a short question to the hon. member that just finished his speech: Since the federal government is going to be even more involved in training, does he not think that this will exacerbate the existing conflict, especially between Quebec and Ottawa?

• (1630)

[*English*]

Mr. McCurdy: Mr. Speaker, I do not view education as another platform for national dispute. I am not here to argue about whether Quebec should have more influence, or Ontario should have more influence, or the federal government should have more influence in particular areas of education. This is not an area in which to carry out the constitutional fight. Our kids are not benefiting from it.

I do not dispute that education is and belongs within the jurisdiction of the provinces, just as in the United States education lies within the jurisdiction of the states. But we should have some national consensus, some national direction, and some national understanding that as a nation, not as provinces, we have to exist in this new economic world.

The jurisdictional separation of responsibility in the United States did not prevent a presidential commission on education, Carnegie Foundation's studies on education or any number of long-term initiatives on education to benefit the whole country without stepping on jurisdictional jealousies. I think Canada ought to be able to do the same thing, look to what we should accomplish as a nation in terms of national goals rather than see every issue as an issue on which to express our differences.

I am tired of it, and I think our kids are going to be tired of it when they grow up and find that their skills, their education, and their training were compromised

because we were so busy talking about whose responsibility it was rather than finding what common responsibilities had to be met.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, there are many things in this throne speech which make the people of Canada question this government's commitment to the improvement of the quality of life for Canadians.

A considerable amount of time has been spent in the last few days considering the pros and cons of the plan of action as it was presented in the Speech from the Throne and on the main issues raised in this plan of action, important issues such as competition, unity, prosperity, education, and parliamentary reform.

However, I want to look at some of the things that were not mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. The quality of a civilization is judged by its treatment of the elderly, the children, and those in need, the so-called underprivileged. We cannot in this modern world ignore the lame, the weak, and the hungry in other parts of the world while we take care of ourselves here at home.

In the Speech from the Throne the government has ignored its responsibility for the needs of the so-called Third World. In fact there is no mention of the hungry world. There is no mention of the need for development. There is no mention of our responsibility in these areas.

The speech came close to this issue once. It said:

> Last September, at the Children's Summit in New York, the attention of people everywhere was focused on children at risk. Seventy-one leaders pledged that that moment would last a decade.

Our Prime Minister promised a decade of assistance to children in need. That implied assistance to the world's children. However, the next line of this particular quotation from the Speech from the Throne indicated that the government was somewhat introverted in this particular area because it went on to say:

> My government will bring forward a plan to implement the commitments it made that day: the objectives to see Canadian girls and boys better educated, better protected and better nurtured so that they can make their own contributions to Canada's future.

In other words, even as we made a commitment to the world in this Speech from the Throne, we turned it back on ourselves. There was no suggestion that the Prime Minister would continue the leadership he indicated in that conference, that his promises at that time would be honoured.

In this speech there is no mention of how we will do our share in taking care of the world's destitute.

Along with the slashing of foreign aid spending in the February 25 budget by more than $5 billion over the next five years, this lack of mention in the Speech from the Throne indicates, or at least leaves the perception, that Canada is withdrawing from its involvement in humanitarian aid to those countries needing it most.

Right now is the time for Canada to be aggressive in our leadership in humanitarian aid, aggressive in our involvement with development of Third World countries.

Right now around the world, one billion people live in absolute poverty. One billion adults can neither read nor write. One hundred eighty million children suffer from malnutrition, that is Canada's population multiplied by about six. Three million children die each year from diseases against which they can be immunized. These are the year to year statistics.

Right now we have a special outstanding requirement in places like the Horn of Africa. In the Sudan, it is expected that 300,000 people will die of starvation in the next few weeks, even if immediate food aid is sent into that area. If that aid is delayed, the number of people who will die will increase proportionately to the days and weeks it is delayed.

In Ethiopia, the war situation has brought the food movement to a halt, temporarily we hope. Up to 7 million people are in danger.

In Somalia, there is a mass movement of millions because of food shortages. They are moving from one food shortage area to another. So little organization is available in that particular country that no one knows what can be done or what needs to be done.

I do not expect that Canada can jump in and solve all these situations, nor does the world expect Canada to do it. However, we should not ignore it or even seem to ignore it, which is what the Speech from the Throne does.

Granted there are many problems in the Third World, problems which seem to suggest that we are just wasting good money by giving aid. There is excessive spending in the military. There is wasteful public spending of other types. There are unnecessary projects which are taking a considerable amount of money. There is corruption.

There is abusive lending on the part of organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF, which are part of the donor structure. There is trade that undermines the production of the people and, in many cases, the health of the people.

The UN, in a report that was released just a few days ago, suggests that Africa, which has become the continent most in need of aid, receives more than $6 billion in so-called technical assistance. However, too much is spent on foreign experts and too little on building up local institutions and national consultants.

• (1640)

This aid does not reduce the need for humanitarian aid, nor does it mean that Canada should wait for these improvements. The starvation and death statistics will not go away without action. That action is expected of Canada and Canada has to take leadership and give continued aid. We cannot just ignore the problem.

The Speech from the Throne suggests massive increases in spending on education, and that is commendable. If it happens, it should be a continued policy of our government. The government's record of cutting assistance to education does not give us too much hope in that particular area.

However, it ignores the world's need for literacy training. In the Niger only 15 per cent of its adult population is literate, in the Sudan only 23 per cent of its population is literate. So, even as we hope for better education for Canadians, we cannot forget the rest of the world.

Why do I dwell on the Third World when the Speech from the Throne talks about what is happening in Canada? I talk about the Third World because, as we are told daily by this government, we are a global society. Our prosperity, a throne speech theme by the way, is dependent on our ability to be competitive in the world.

Sometimes it appears that this competitiveness must always be at the expense of some other country. I do not believe for a minute that we in Canada can be continuously prosperous while two-thirds of the world is having an increasingly difficult time feeding itself or is being forced into further destitution.

Canada must keep its humanitarian responsibilities before us at all times. We are falling further behind our commitment to spend .7 per cent of Canadian GNP and we need to make sure that world aid does have an impact on people. At present, 8.3 per cent of the total world aid is earmarked for people, the rest goes to trade development for the donor, projects which the donor thinks are worth while, and other areas of concern.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in the very moving comments of my colleague. I certainly know that most of us share his concern that Canada has an international responsibility and that the situation of people, particularly in Africa, is just absolutely desperate.

This was brought home to me in the last two or three days when I met with a constituent visiting here who is quite desperate. He is a refugee from Somalia and is trying to get his family who are in Nairobi into Canada. The family consists of five children he and his wife, four children of a brother and sister-in-law who were murdered and two children of another sister who was murdered. That is 11 children he is trying to bring to Canada.

We have to work at both ends. We have to help people in their own situation first and foremost. Would he also agree that Canada needs to do much more in the area of practical help with respect to the UN Convention on Rights of the Child? We have to do a lot more to help children in particular.

Mr. Hovdebo: Mr. Speaker, I guess the point I am trying to make is exactly the point that my colleague is making. We in Canada can become very prosperous. We can, as the UNDP has indicated, be number one as far as human development is concerned. We must take our responsibility within the world, particularly the Third World, for human development. That means child development, health care and literacy. The time will come when we cannot continue to be prosperous if a larger proportion of the Third World, with a population growing considerably faster than our own, is not taken care of in its own way and allowed to develop.

At present, for instance, we work through organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF. They put in place structural adjustment which does more harm than good. We as Canadians can have a considerable amount

of impact on how these organizations work in the Third World. We have not taken that opportunity.

Canada has not taken the opportunity to become an effective leader in the Third World aid structure. We do well. We assist a great many people, but we have not taken the leadership that needs to be taken.

Mr. Cole: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to inform the House that the rest of the government members will be speaking for 10 minutes, with 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. John Reimer (Kitchener): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this debate in response to the Speech from the Throne and would like to divide my comments into two parts: the first dealing with the economic side of the Throne Speech and the second with constitutional renewal and the national unity question.

Canada has one of the highest standards of living in the world and a quality of life that is the envy of almost every nation. However there is no guarantee this prosperity will continue. Simply relying on things that have helped us succeed in the past will not be enough to improve our material welfare and quality of life in the future.

Therefore, I am pleased that the Speech from the Throne addressed the very important topic of restoring economic competitiveness to Canadian industry.

During the past four-week break from Parliament I spoke with some 60 company presidents and many of their employees in my riding. The message they all gave me was unanimous: Canadians must work more effectively together in a partnership of management and labour to meet Canada's competitive challenges over the next several years. We absolutely must become more productive and competitive.

Mr. Speaker, you will notice that I purposely left the government out of that bilateral partnership between management and labour, because the role of government is to set up a free and open economic environment, set ground rules for that competition and working environment, lay down the tax structure and rules for investment and then step aside and allow both labour and management to create economic wealth and prosperity.

Our budget of February 26 of this year reinforced our commitment to restore the economic health of this country. We have made considerable progress to date even though our efforts have been roundly opposed, ridiculed and condemned. Canadians have not taken kindly to suddenly being deprived of the many gifts and handouts of the irresponsible federal government of the Trudeau Liberal era from 1968 to 1984, during which time we saw the damaging fiscal policies that created a near bankrupt position.

Now, unfortunately, these same policies are about to be repeated by Ontario's NDP government. While Ontario will double its debt load in the next four years to a deficit which took 124 years to accumulate, we at the federal level are legislating a mandatory program of 3 per cent spending limits.

• (1650)

Second, we are establishing a debt servicing and reduction fund solely dedicated to offsetting the costs of the public debt. By law, net revenues from the GST and from privatization will flow into this fund.

With regard to enhanced competitiveness and productivity, we are making some progress since, for the first time in 16 years, we have been attracting more direct investment into Canada than has been going abroad.

In 1984, direct investment outflows were over $11 billion. Progressively and incrementally since 1984, investment outflows have grown smaller and smaller. Now we have turned it around.

Currently we are experiencing a positive direct investment inflow of approximately $500 million. Contrary to popular perceptions, according to Statistics Canada, exports from most industries to the United States since the implementation of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement have risen.

For example, after two years of the 10-year phase-in period of the agreement, sectors such as food and beverages, rubber and plastics, textiles, clothing, furniture, transportation and electrical products have experienced increases in exports ranging from the low 20 per cent to as high as 67 per cent.

Now we are entering into discussions with the United States and Mexico regarding a North American free

trade agreement. We did not ask for this. Mexico did, but there is no way that we could stand idly by while two other nations, our neighbours, negotiate such an agreement. We must participate in the talks if for no other reason than to protect our interests and the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

Furthermore, this opportunity can be used for Canada's long-term gain in the larger North American free trade zone. I am convinced that this possibility will be beneficial to Canada in the long run, especially in the light of changing global trading realities.

As a representative of a manufacturing constituency in southwestern Ontario, the federal riding of Kitchener, I agree with the Simon Fraser University economist, Dr. Richard Lipsey, who has often appeared before the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade on trade related matters, that we might consider a 20-year rather than a 10-year phase-in of the agreement for certain industrial and other sectors due to a variety of reasons and differences between Canada and Mexico that are not the case between Canada and the United States.

Before commenting on the second issue of national unity, I would like to add that I am pleased with the sentence in the throne speech which reads: "My government will review its policies in relation to the family, the most fundamental building block of Canadian society."

I hope that this will result in more favourable taxation treatment for the traditional family. I also hope that we will bring in provisions that will make it easier for younger families to acquire a home that they can actually enjoy.

I know that lower interest rates will help tremendously in this direction, but I think we also have to look creatively at other means which would assist that.

Further, I would like to see a tough pornography bill that would protect our children and women from degrading and disgusting violent forms of pornography, which are far too easily accessible in Canada today and which treat our children and women as things and not as human beings.

The second theme of the Speech from the Throne was Canadian unity.

Much has been attempted to ensure the unity and strengthening of our Confederation. Recently, the Meech Lake round almost succeeded where the constitutional amendments of the early 1980s had failed, that is including the province of Quebec as a signatory to these changes.

Presently, two commissions have tabled their studies in the province of Quebec. Additionally, the Beaudoin–Edwards study of Canada's amending formula and the Spicer Commission on Canadian values, attitudes and aspirations are to report by July 1.

Other provinces will soon be receiving their own constitutional studies. The Speech from the Throne announced the creation of another special joint parliamentary committee to bring together the recommendations of these many studies. It will also be given the mandate to meet with provincial legislators and aboriginal groups and to report back by February 1992.

As a result of these many studies and consultations, the federal government will propose its plan for a renewed Canada. Some have said "oh, no, not another committee." However, given the severity of the issue and the attitude of so many Canadians that Meech Lake was developed in secrecy, it is far better to err on the side of yet another open consultation than risk the loss of making real progress, thereby creating the misunderstanding and mistrust of earlier attempts.

It is my hope that when we discuss the issue of national unity, we do so in the spirit of tolerance, compromise and non-partisan debate.

We now need to state what a former president of the United States once said: "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." John Kennedy took those words from the French philosopher, Rousseau, who wrote: "As soon as any man says of the affairs of state, 'What does it matter to me?' that state may be given up as lost."

All Canadians must stop thinking pessimistically about Canada today and I would recommend that all would cease all talk of separation and all debate of "let them go" or "good riddance to them" because to me, a Canada without Quebec is no Canada at all.

Let us each dedicate ourselves as Canadians, and each of us as members of the only democratically elected, accountable and true constituent assembly of Canada, the House of Commons, to now work together in healing our great land to preserve its unity and strength for ourselves and our children.

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, I listened with some interest to the member's observations about the fiscal policy being pursued by the Conservative government. He had some criticism directed toward the previous Liberal government which is consistent with what we hear from members of his party. It has now been almost seven years since the Conservative government took office and rather than standing up and accepting responsibility for the affairs of state, it is still talking about what happened eight, nine years ago, and is still blaming its predecessor for the ills of the country.

I find it really astonishing that members of that party would not stand up and accept the responsibility. I would like to draw to the hon. member's attention the fact that the former Minister of Finance in his first budget six years ago said that he would get the deficit down to $18 billion by the end of the decade. That is, presumably, by December 31, 1990.

In his last budget several months ago, the former Minister of Finance predicted a deficit of $30.5 billion for the fiscal year—I believe it is—ending March 31. He missed the mark by the small sum of some $12.5 billion and yet we have members like the one who just spoke, who have the nerve to stand up in this House and give us lectures about fiscal discipline.

I would ask the member to be a bit more humble when it comes to talking about the accomplishments of his government.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, the member is saying that this government has now been in office approaching its seventh year and is asking when is it going to take responsibility for some of what it is doing.

• (1700)

We are pleased to take responsibility for our actions. We have turned around a generation of going in the wrong direction, and you cannot do that overnight. We have brought in some very significant changes.

The members in the Liberal Party like to suggest that we have doubled the national debt. What they forget to say is that in our first three years of operation, we took the national accounts of all the revenues received that go out for programs spending, and we took a deficit of $16 billion and we moved it to $8 billion, then to $2 billion, and for the last four years we have been operating on a surplus. Were it not for interest and compound interest on the national debt left to us by the party of the member who asked the question, we would now have a surplus, we would have balanced budgets.

What the hon. member is ignoring is that for the last four years of the seven, this government has not added one single penny to the national debt; all that has been happening is compound interest on the national debt.

The hon. member made his point and said he would like a little humility from us. It is taking longer than we had hoped, that is true, but the severity of the problem that was left to us in the compound interest factor is huge and immense and we are working at that.

Look at the legacy of spending in the previous 16 years that created this question compared to the legacy of spending now for the past seven years. Look at the average spending of over 10 per cent in the previous 10 years, compared to the now 3.7. We are now bringing in a legislated ceiling of 3 per cent on spending. We are coming to grips with the issue. We are making some success, and if we can continue in the direction we are heading we can see the end of the problem. Should they ever come back, we would see a bankrupt nation.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): It gives me great pleasure to take part in this debate. This Speech from the Throne touches on several of the priorities that the government has identified for the upcoming session. I believe that this Speech from the Throne identifies many of the priorities on the agenda of Canadians.

What are these issues that Canadians have identified? Canadians are interested in the future of Canada; they are interested in the future that they are going to build for themselves and for their children. They want to know about jobs; they want to know that the government has a

definite plan to address the economic problems that block the paths to prosperity.

Canadians know that this government has this plan. For too long they have seen spendthrift governments borrow from our children's future to pay for questionable excesses. That changed in 1984. Although the ability of this government to serve Canadians has been limited by the burden of debt left to us by the previous government, the last budget has shown us that there is light at the end of the debt tunnel.

Canadians signalled their desire for change in 1984 and they reaffirmed that desire in 1988. The reason for this is simple: Canada was in a mess that would only get worse unless a measure of reason could be restored to the way the government operated.

We have gone far to restore that reason, and this Speech from the Throne indicates that we are willing and able to go the distance in providing Canadians with the kind of government that they need and want.

The over-all message that comes from this Speech from the Throne is that it is time for us, for all Canadians, to re-examine our attitudes. Before we can see ourselves reflected in the Constitution, we must know who we are; we need to know more about our history. It is time to search our souls and it is time for us to learn about ourselves and to rediscover the real priorities in life.

I am encouraged by the government's reaffirmation that the family is the most fundamental building block of Canadian society.

This is a very significant approach to the troubles facing Canada today. A strong sense of family leads to a strong sense of self. This strong sense of self brings with it the confidence and initiative that results in a productive and prosperous society, a society free from insecurity.

For too long Canada has suffered from insecurity. We have been without the focus and the sense of purpose that comes from a sound knowledge of self. I believe that if we can strengthen the family, we will strengthen society.

In reviewing its policies toward the family, I believe that it is necessary to restore fairness to the taxation system so that Canadians who choose to be a traditional family are not disadvantaged.

The Department of Finance will have to look closely at the existing system and find ways to provide fairness for all Canadians, including traditional families.

The government has indicated that it will be bringing forward initiatives to ensure the protection of children within our society. One of the many ways that the government can do this is by strengthening the family unit.

Before I continue, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces. We have just seen the Canadian Armed Forces participate in a world effort to settle the crisis in the Persian Gulf. This participation is cause for great pride. Canada's role in the crisis has drawn Canadians together. It has been a unifying force. Canada has been, and continues to be, well served by the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces.

In my riding of Fraser Valley East we have Canadian Forces Base Chilliwack. This is the only Canadian Forces Base on mainland British Columbia. It is the proud home of the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment. A major portion of the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment is now on duty in Kuwait doing demolition work, clearing mine fields. These some 300 Canadians are proving with their actions that the training that occurs at the engineering school at CFB Chilliwack is invaluable.

CFB Chilliwack is more than just the home of the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment. There is the school of military engineering and there is also the officer's candidate training school. CFB Chilliwack is also the logistic centre for the militia in mainland British Columbia. It is the only base in Canada where the heavy equipment training can go on year round. It is minutes from secluded and isolated training areas and minutes from urban areas.

British Columbia is a unique part of Canada and CFB Chilliwack is a unique Canadian institution. Without CFB Chilliwack, B.C. would be without a Canadian Armed Forces presence on the mainland. An Armed forces presence is essential. It is essential to note that there are a number of federal correctional institutions within a 30-minute radius of CFB Chilliwack.

During the Matsqui Institute riots in 1970, the forces were called upon to provide assistance and restore order. The significance of this resource should not escape us.

Disaster preparedness is also a consideration, especially considering the geography of B.C.

We, in B.C. and in the Fraser Valley, are well aware of the important role that CFB Chilliwack plays. The base is a unifying element. Rumours that the base may be closed have caused us great concern. After the remarkable role the Canadian forces played and continue to play in the Persian Gulf, and bearing in mind the pride that Canadians felt because of that participation, a very unifying pride I might add, I say let us keep our priorities straight.

CFB Chilliwack is an integral part of the Canadian Armed Forces and an integral part of the community. It is the forces' presence on the mainland in British Columbia and is not a base that can be considered eligible for closing. In 1992 Canada celebrates its 125th birthday; Montreal celebrates its 400th; Matsqui, its 100th birthday. CFB Chilliwack will celebrate its 50th anniversary. I hope that we will be able to mark the four celebrations together.

The Speech from the Throne mentions that we must proceed with caution as we enter into a new stage of constitutional building. What we must do is change our attitude as a society. In addition to strengthening the family unit, we must look at our relationship to the institutions of government. We hear a great deal about rights, but we do not hear a lot about responsibilities.

• (1710)

In congratulating new Canadians upon receiving citizenship, I often take a moment to remind them that with the rights and privileges of Canadian citizenship come many responsibilities. I tell them that Canada has become the great country that it is because people have recognized that as citizens they have a responsibility to take part and become involved in our society. As citizens, we define what Canadian society is.

A country like Canada is always changing. It is like a person who is growing up and going through a maturing process. All Canadian citizens, whether they are born here or choose to come here, help Canada to mature and grow. For Canada to be the best that it can possibly be, everyone must take part and contribute. This is the responsibility. This is the flip side to the rights and privileges.

We must remember our heritage, but we cannot be limited by that heritage. When we share our personal heritage and culture with each other, we create a better society. When we build barriers, we miss out on the benefits of sharing. Instead, we see ignorance and hostility. It is this ignorance and hostility that leads to disunity and talk of separation. This causes me great concern.

My parents were born in Shawville, Quebec. They homesteaded in southern Saskatchewan and farmed there for some 60-odd years. I grew up on the prairies and having moved to British Columbia, chose to raise my family there. I am proud to be a Canadian and have my roots throughout the country. I am proud to share my heritage with other Canadians who come from other parts of the country and who have come from other parts of the world.

The energy and resources that we expend trying to convince ourselves that we have a country worth having is astounding. I look around me and see what we have in Canada and can only shake my head in wonder. We are the envy of the world.

Yet, the problem of disunity in this country is very serious. If we can once get beyond this issue, we can raise the level of debate in this country and can raise the standard of living. We can re-channel the enormous resources now spent on trying to solve our problems toward creating a better standard of living for our children. Now is the time to act, and we must. We cannot listen to the voices that represent only parts of our country, the voices that would have this country torn apart, the voices that would build barriers to understanding. Instead of encouraging Canadians from all parts of Canada to get to know one another, these parties would have us turn our backs and create new solitudes.

I am encouraged by the Speech from the Throne. The government is committed to unifying the country. By strengthening the family, the fundamental building block of society, the government will ensure that Canada will enter the 21st century in sound shape. These are important times in the life of our nation. It gives me great peace of mind to know that the government in power is choosing a wise path.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, when the premier of British Columbia met recently with the Prime Minister, she accused the Prime Minister and his government of treating B.C. unfairly.

The Prime Minister responded by promising a list which, to the best of my knowledge, has not yet materialized.

If CFB Chilliwack is closed, has the member given any thought to what the cost of this one more blow by the federal government to British Columbia would be? Does the federal government have any plans to try to even things up a bit for British Columbia?

Mr. Belsher: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member from British Columbia for that very pertinent question which is on a great many minds in British Columbia.

I might say to the hon. member that a letter has gone forth to the premier. I have just seen it. It is quite an extensive list. I will do my best to get a copy of the letter for the hon. member opposite so that he can see the information that has been sent to the province.

He mentioned CFB Chilliwack. My greatest concern is that the logistics centre for the militia in British Columbia is centred at CFB Chilliwack. When we have our cadet training in the summertime at Vernon, it all emanates from Chilliwack. When we have training that takes place in the Cariboo, which took place last weekend, it emanates out of Chilliwack. When we need a quick response to any disorder requiring the assistance of our law enforcement agencies, it is CFB Chilliwack that is called upon. Yet if that facility were not there, I shudder to think what might happen had we the same problem that broke out in Matsqui a few years back. The hon. member opposite will remember that time. It was a very serious incident. We were concerned about the lives that could have been lost if it had continued. The forces were there. They were able to come to the area. There was no danger to the communities surrounding the institution at the time when the inmates were running rampant.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Resuming debate. There are two minutes left. The hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead.

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member how he could possibly expect the Prime Minister's latest brainstorm, and I am referring to interference by the Canadian government in a matter of provincial jurisdiction—education and manpower training—could help reunite two countries whose respective visions of themselves are so different, and I am referring to Quebec and Canada?

[*English*]

Mr. Belsher: I think I heard the hon. member talk about two countries. The last time I checked in my Atlas there was only one country, and the hon. member comes from one of the 10 provinces that is part of the Confederation. I really take great exception to his calling the province that he comes from another country.

The problem is that we have people who are trying to tear our country apart but are not willing to turn around and talk about keeping our country together.

What we have said in the Speech from the Throne is that we have too high a dropout rate before the young people graduate from high school. We are endeavouring in co-operation with the provinces to see if we can cut in half the dropout rate in the provincial school system.

Yes, the provinces under the auspices of Confederation are responsible for the school system, and so they should be. We are not trying to change that. We are working with them, putting our heads together, and making sure that we do not have this tremendous dropout rate which results in Canada being the loser. This is what we are endeavouring to accomplish, and what we are talking about in the Speech from the Throne.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Resuming debate. The hon. member for Longueuil.

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the Speech from the Throne, and we in the Bloc Quebecois, especially, realized that the emphasis was on the fact that Canadian unity was the only way

to strengthen the Canadian economy or save Canada. They say that without Canadian unity, we won't be able to save this country, we will not make any progress, we will not develop, and they even go so far as to include education.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that Canada has been united for at least 20 or 30 years and things are not bad. However, in the process we have managed to go into debt to the tune of $20 to $30 billion annually. That is the only way this country has been united.

So far, as everybody is aware, and especially members of this House, Canada is facing a deficit of $400 billion. To those who may not realize what this means, $400 billion means $400,000 million dollars. Every year, nearly 30 per cent of our income tax and other taxes are used to pay off the interest on the debt alone. A few years from now, this figure will be 50 per cent. As for me, I do not think that the Canadian unity has been well served until now.

• (1720)

An hon. member: You are right.

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): The big problem that we are dealing with exists primarily because the union that was seeked, namely the union between Lower and Upper Canada, has become a centralized federalism. At the same time, the provinces and the central government were given powers, thereby setting the stage for regular confrontations. Every day, there is confrontation between the provinces.

At the federal level, members want more and more powers in order to be able to spend more and give theats to the population. This is not necessarily logical; it is not necessarily adequate, but they are only interested in being able to give to the population, in order to win votes. That happens at the federal level.

It is the same with the provinces. In Quebec, for instance they want to regain certain powers in order to be able to give out more money, and to show the population that they have something to offer. That is what brings on confrontation. That is why having 11 jurisdictions in this country is leading us towards catastrophe and bankruptcy. It is essential to decentralize and, we think, go all the way to sovereignty, because in the Meech Lake Accord, Quebec wanted a little more power to function smoothly, just a little bit more power to build a successful society. But no, these minimal requests were rejected. So, Mr. Speaker, what then could do the members of Parliament that were here to defend Quebec's interests in Ottawa? We had no choice but to resign and form the Bloc Quebecois, as we have done, in order to defend the interests of Quebecers with dignity.

This cannot be done if one belongs to a so-called national party, because when you belong to a so-called national Canadian party, it is impossible to protect the interests of Quebec, since you always have to take into account whether you are likely to win or lose votes in Ontario or in the East.

On the other hand, when we ask questions in the name of Quebec, when we defend the interests of Quebec, those interests are strictly the interests of that province. We are not the least concerned about whether we are going to lose votes in East or in the West.

That is why we can look after the interests of Quebec with dignity. That is also why I ask the Prime Minister of Canada to resign—

An hon. member: Right now.

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): —to call an election as soon as possible so that Quebecers can at long last elect members of Parliament who are worthy of them. That is what Quebecers need now.

It is absolutely unacceptable to see our members not using their powers the way they should to defend Quebec's interests.

What I am trying to say is that the Canadian economy cannot function in the present situation. It is now essentiel to decentralize government and even to proclaim Quebec's sovereignty.

Mr. Speaker, I will use the minutes that I have left to say a few words on education. I think it is absolutely scandalous for the federal government to interfere with education in Quebec. I just cannot understand such arrogance. And this after several studies were made in Quebec, including the Bélanger-Campeau Report, the Allaire Report from the Quebec Liberal Party, and the Quebec government has claimed exclusive jurisdiction in matters of education. The Quebec Chamber of commerce also asks for exclusive jurisdiction in matters of education. Even federalists like the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel have asked and stated that the Quebec governement should have exclusive jurisdiction over education matters.

Thus I cannot understand that conservative members from Quebec who hold the power—I was told that they will vote against the amendment to the amendment and I hope I am mistaken—may vote tonight against our proposition to the effect that the federal government withdraw completely from the area of education. We are told that the conservative members who are in power

and must represent the interests of Quebec citizens will vote against our amendment to the amendment.

An hon. member: Shame!

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): That is utterly unaceptable. I cannot understand what goes through their heads. That is why I repeat again that if they deem themselves worthy of representing Quebecers they will stand and vote against this government.

I hope that you will do it. It is very nice to look after one's personal interests to get a litte reward from the Prime Minister, whether it is the job of minister, or parliamentary secretary or committee chairman, but instead of looking after their own personal interests, they should rise, this evening, and vote in favour of our sub-amendment.

It is totally unacceptable and it is really beyond me, as a Quebecer, that a member who claims to look after the interests of Quebec in Ottawa would vote against that proposal.

An hon. member: They have no guts.

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): This does not make sense! I cannot find the words and perhaps I would get carried away—

Mr. Rocheleau: It is a shame!

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Yes, it is a shame.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have a few minutes left to tell you once again that the government is trying to fool us by saying that the economy or the national unity will help us proper. By getting involved in the field of education, the federal government will primarily favour confrontation, inefficiency, and total chaos in the field of education and manpower training and development. It is a well-known fact that Quebecers are number one in Canada as regards education; moreover, the Government of Quebec has asked to develop his own professional training programs and, lastly, our school boards and the Government of Quebec, who are responsible for training, should also assume total responsibility for professional training and development. Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Questions and comments period. The hon. member for Abitibi.

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a question and make a comment.

I would like to start with my comment. The question will be very easy, will it not? Mr. Speaker, I want to say—and I do not have to quote any newspaper like the hon. member on the other side says—that when the hon. member for Longueuil stated that we were only starting to look after the interests of Quebecers in Ottawa, I was reminded of the fact that before he joined the ranks of the Bloc Quebecois, the hon. member was travelling a lot all over the world. He was not often here in Ottawa—He may have often tried to speak, but he would not do it for long—

Mr. Speaker, I am not at all uncomfortable when I hear the members from the other side; it is just a game for them and I am quite willing to compare his achievements—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please.

It being 5.30 p.m., it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 50(5), to interrupt the proceedings and forthwith put every question necessary to dispose of the sub-amendment and the amendment.

[*English*]

The question is on the amendment to the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment to the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): All those in favour of the amendment to the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Call in the members.

The House divided on the amendment to the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 2)

YEAS

Members

Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Gérin
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Rocheleau
Duceppe
Lapierre
Plamondon
Tremblay (Rosemont)—8

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Anderson
Atkinson
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Beatty
Belsher
Berger
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bourgault
Brewin
Caccia
Callbeck
Cardiff
Catterall
Charest
Chrétien
Clark (Yellowhead)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil
Couture
Crosbie (St. John's West)
de Cotret
Della Noce
Dick
Dobbie
Dorin
Duplessis
Epp
Feltham
Ferland
Fontaine
Foster
Friesen
Gaffney
Gauthier
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene
Guarnieri
Gustafson
Harb
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes
Hogue
Hopkins
Hovdebo
Hughes
Jacques
Joncas
Kempling
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Koury
Anawak
Andre
Attewell
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bellemare
Benjamin
Bernier
Bevilacqua
Blais
Bouchard (Roberval)
Boyer
Browes
Cadieux
Campbell (South West Nova)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand
Clancy
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Comuzzi
Cooper
Côté
Crawford
Danis
de Jong
Desjardins
Dingwall
Domm
Duhamel
Edwards
Fee
Ferguson
Finestone
Fontana
Fretz
Fulton
Gagliano
Gibeau
Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Beaver River)
Guilbault
Halliday
Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hockin
Holtmann
Horner
Hudon
Hunter
James
Karpoff
Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Landry
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Larrivée
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Littlechild
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
MacLaren
Marin
Martin (Lincoln)
McCurdy
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McKnight
McLean
Mifflin
Mitchell
Moore
Nault
Nystrom
Pagtakhan
Peterson
Plourde
Pronovost
Redway
Reimer
Rideout
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Simmons
Speller
Stewart
Tardif
Thompson
Tobin
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vanclief
Vien
Volpe
Walker
Weiner
Whittaker
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Wood
Langlois
Layton
Lewis
Lopez
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacKay
Manley
Marleau
Mazankowski
McDermid
McGuire
McLaughlin
Merrithew
Milliken
Monteith
Murphy
Nicholson
Oberle
Parker
Phinney
Porter
Proud
Reid
Richardson
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Soetens
Stevenson
Stupich
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Valcourt
Vézina
Vincent
Waddell
Wappel
White
Winegard
Worthy—194

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Hicks
McCreath
Jordan
Rompkey

• (1800)

Mr. Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment lost.

The next question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 3)

YEAS

Members

Allmand	Anawak
Assad	Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Bellemare
Benjamin	Berger
Bevilacqua	Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Brewin	Caccia
Callbeck	Campbell (South West Nova)
Catterall	Chrétien
Clancy	Comuzzi
Crawford	de Jong
Dingwall	Duceppe
Duhamel	Ferguson
Finestone	Fontana
Foster	Fulton
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gauthier	Gérin
Gray (Windsor West)	Grey (Beaver River)
Guarnieri	Harb
Harvard	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hopkins	Hovdebo
Hunter	Karpoff
Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Kindy
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)	Lapierre
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)	Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	MacLaren
MacLellan	Maheu
Manley	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	McCurdy
McGuire	McLaughlin
Mifflin	Milliken
Mitchell	Murphy
Nault	Nystrom
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Parker	Peterson
Phinney	Plamondon
Proud	Prud'homme
Rideout	Rocheleau
Simmons	Speller
Stewart	Stupich
Tobin	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Vanclief	Volpe
Waddell	Walker
Wappel	Whittaker
Wood—89	

NAYS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Beatty	Belsher
Bernier	Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blais
Blenkarn	Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault	Boyer
Browes	Cadieux
Cardiff	Casey
Champagne (Champlain)	Charest
Chartrand	Clark (Yellowhead)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Cole
Cook	Cooper
Corbeil	Côté
Couture	Crosbie (St. John's West)
Danis	de Cotret
Della Noce	Desjardins
Dick	Dobbie
Domm	Dorin
Duplessis	Edwards
Epp	Fee
Feltham	Ferland
Fontaine	Fretz
Friesen	Gibeau
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Greene
Guilbault	Gustafson
Halliday	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes	Hockin
Hogue	Holtmann
Horner	Hudon
Hughes	Jacques
James	Joncas
Kempling	Koury
Landry	Langlois
Larrivée	Layton
Lewis	Littlechild
Lopez	MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacDougall (Timiskaming)	MacKay
Marin	Martin (Lincoln)
Mazankowski	McDermid
McDougall (St. Paul's)	McKnight
McLean	Merrithew
Monteith	Moore
Nicholson	Oberle
Plourde	Porter
Pronovost	Redway
Reid	Reimer
Richardson	Robitaille
Roy-Arcelin	Saint-Julien
Schneider	Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)	Shields
Soetens	Stevenson
Tardif	Thacker
Thompson	Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Turner (Halton—Peel)
Valcourt	Vézina
Vien	Vincent
Weiner	White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)	
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)	Winegard
Worthy—120	

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Hicks	Jordan
McCreath	Rompkey

Mr. Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

It being 6.15 p.m. this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at two o'clock p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 22, 1991

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

PEACEKEEPING

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, on May 21 and 22, 25 MPs and experts from 15 countries sponsored by Parliamentarians for Global Action met in Ottawa to develop a new approach to peacekeeping.

During the recent Iraq-Kuwait war there was much talk about a new world order. That war also taught us that the existing approach to peacekeeping was no longer adequate. It is mostly *ad hoc*, reactive, slow and underfinanced. In the case of the Iraq war, the force was overwhelmingly American and not under UN command.

What is needed is an early warning process that will provide for preventive peacekeeping. Under such a process there would be standing UN peacekeeping forces stationed in the different regions of the world which would be sent to trouble spots to deter and repel aggression such as that of Iraq against Kuwait.

It is easier and less costly to prevent the occupation of a country than to evict an aggressor once an occupation has taken place.

I ask the government and this House to take these proposals seriously and make the slogan "a new world order" a meaningful reality.

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I hope that Canadians who say they want to separate and other Canadians who say "let them go" realize that a divided Canada will mean a lower standard of living for all of us.

Each portion of a fractured Canada would of course assume its own share of our national debt. But each portion would also have a much more narrow economic base. That would reduce our attractiveness to the lenders who finance our debt and result in higher borrowing costs, higher taxes and less government services for all of us.

In addition, Ontario and Quebec with economies that are so closely linked by massive two-way trade would be especially hard hit if the free movement of goods and services was in any way restricted.

Perhaps some Canadians think that a lower standard of living would be worth it, but I am not one of them.

* * *

PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, the public works minister has turned the environmental review of the fixed link bridge across the Northumberland Strait into a farce.

Even though in 1990 the Environmental Assessment and Review Process said no, the minister's announcement that his department has invited three companies to submit proposals for the project means that the government is serious about going ahead.

As Minister of Public Works the minister had the responsibility to carry out an objective environmental review. But also as minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency he publicly lobbied for the project, thereby flying in the face of EARP.

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's annual report classed the proposed fixed link crossing between New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island as one of the new opportunities expected to benefit Atlantic Canadians and stated: "A favourable decision on construction of the fixed link is expected to enhance economic growth in the future".

The facts reveal that 700 jobs will be lost, major destruction of the fishery and environment, and in fact this megaproject will only benefit Conservative cronies.

The minister has made a sham of this Environmental Assessment and Review Process.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative and Liberal members from Quebec, especially the francophones, have every reason to be embarassed today. Indeed, the headline in the papers read: "Five Liberal MPs are hiding behind the curtains."

An hon. member: Shame!

Mr. Rocheleau: It is nothing but the truth. Instead of protecting Quebec best interests in the fields of education and job training which are threatened, they are hiding behind the curtains. Some give as an excuse that they were late. Others denied the fact arguing that they agreed with the Bloc Quebecois motion to ask the federal government not to interfere in Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction in these fields.

If they were committed to supporting Quebec, they would not be hiding behind curtains nor would they arrive late for such an important vote. Quebec Conservative and Liberal members will certainly be severely criticized for this lack of respect, to say the least, toward Quebec. As I told them yesterday, Mr. Speaker: "They should be ashamed."

* * *

EDUCATION

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, the conservative government knows that education is a provincial jurisdiction by virtue of the Constitution and respects that.

This government spends directly or indirectly some $11 billion a year on education and training.

I would not want to be in the shoes of the Bloc Quebecois member who would try to take away the Canada Scholarships the students have earned this year in Abitibi. I would not want to be in the shoes of the Bloc Quebecois member who would come and try to abolish the job training programs, the Challenge program and the dropout programs in Abitibi.

Mr. Speaker, rest assured that Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa and the Minister of Education Michel Pagé will see to it that the province's jurisdiction as regards education is fully respected.

[*English*]

EDUCATION

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, this government's attempt to make up for its lack of commitment to education by talking about national objectives and standards in last week's throne speech is nothing less than a charade.

Due to the government's cutbacks and the federal commitment to the provinces for education, the University of Prince Edward Island announced last week that tuition fees would need to increase by 15 per cent. This could cost students $280 more a year.

Here we have a federal government that has not increased the maximum student loan allowed since it came to office in 1984; a government that has imposed a tax on books, learning materials, further burdening students with more costs; a government that has implemented a 3 per cent administration fee on student loans, which is nothing less than a tax on the most needy students in our country.

Actions speak louder than words. We have had seven years of words. So when are we going to see some action on the part of the federal government to improve the accessibility and quality of our nation's education system?

* * *

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, the Port of Halifax is facing the possibility of losing a considerable part of its container traffic because rail costs from Halifax to central Canada are prohibitive.

This loss will result in substantially reduced rail traffic from Atlantic Canada to central Canada and could in fact jeopardize the viability of the entire rail link to Atlantic Canada. The final result could be a devastating blow to an economy already lagging behind the rest of the country.

Under section 3 (1) (d) of the National Transportation Act, the act states:

> Transportation is recognized as a key to regional economic development and commercial viability of transportation links.

Under this act it appears the National Transportation Authority can instruct CN to provide competitive and quality transportation to the Atlantic region.

I urge the Minister of Transport to bring the NTA into this urgent situation and act quickly to resolve this important issue.

* * *

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, the ongoing difficulties the Canadian public and economy are having with the GST illustrates how out of step the government is with this country.

Last year the Prime Minister promised: "They're not going to pay a nickel more, not a nickel more" with the GST.

Yesterday *The Financial Post* announced: "Ottawa goofed on GST prices". *The Toronto Star* blamed the tax load for cross-border drain. And a survey conducted by the Consumers' Association of Canada found that close to 75 per cent of consumer items experienced a rise in cost thanks to the GST.

Moreover, revenue officials are reported to be stating that "the amount being collected by the GST far exceeds expectations". According to *The Toronto Star* "the GST collects billions of dollars more this year than the $24 billion expected".

Remember, the GST was supposed to replace only the MST revenue of $18.5 billion. But a 7 per cent GST on national goods and services valued at $410 billion annually will produce $28.7 billion, a full $10 billion more than the government claims.

Can the public be blamed for dismissing the Prime Minister's claims as nothing more than political puffery, totally divorced from reality?

S. O. 31

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, many allegations have been made that former Greek resistance fighters have used fraudulent documents to support their claims for the war veterans allowance.

I would like to acknowledge that action has been taken by our government in the following manner. As soon as the Minister of Veterans Affairs was informed that fraudulent documents might have been used by former Greek resistance fighters, the minister immediately asked the RCMP to conduct an investigation which is still under way.

• (1410)

In July 1990, when the RCMP provided proof that certain documentation was fraudulent, a new process was put in place to ensure that all new applications be verified by the Government of Greece. The department has also initiated a review of existing cases in pay.

To date, the Government of Greece has found a small number of applications to be fraudulent. In cases where these people have received money, the department has ceased payment and is acting to recover past payments.

* * *

WOMEN AND THE LAW

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the study by the Manitoba Association of Women and the Law on gender equality in the courts of criminal law is disturbing.

The report addresses the areas of wife abuse, sexual assault, incest and child sexual assault from the victim's perspective.

It shows that stereotypical assumptions about women including the myth of non-violent sexual assault and the concept that "no" from a woman may mean "yes" or "maybe" still play an important role in judicial decision making. We remember the recent decision of Judge Hood from British Columbia.

There is evidence that many women choose not to report sexual assault and wife and child abuse because they feel the system will not treat them fairly. This is terrible.

There is a conference coming up in Vancouver on Women and the Law that will be useful. But, more than conferences, I call upon the government and the Minister of Justice to implement some of this report's recommendations, including the establishment of a national task force on gender equality, improved training of judges and lawyers, and the appointment of more women judges to the bench.

* * *

[*Translation*]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to speak on behalf of my constituents in Beauséjour.

In these times of economic uncertainty, the people of Beauséjour face all kinds of problems, but unemployment is the problem I want to discuss more particularly here in the House today. No steps have been taken yet to remedy the situation facing the unemployed in Westmorland. The rural residents of Westmorland have to live with an artificially low unemployment rate.

[*English*]

Under the present circumstances, the rate of unemployment for rural Westmorland and the city of Moncton is 10 per cent. But realistically the rate of unemployment of Westmorland should be comparable to that of Kent county, which is 16.4 per cent.

The people of Westmorland have the same lifestyle and work conditions as those in Kent, but they must work for a longer period of time to qualify for unemployment insurance benefits.

It is time for this government to stop this injustice and to change the unemployment insurance regions in my constituency of Beauséjour so that all the unemployed people of rural southeast New Brunswick are treated in exactly the same way.

[*Translation*]

INCOME TAX

Mrs. Gabrielle Bertrand (Brome—Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, considering the government's undertaking in the last Speech from the Throne that it would review its policies in relation to the family, I would like to remind my government that improvements are urgently needed to correct the present situation. In fact, there are a number of major flaws in our taxation system.

Mr. Speaker, is it normal for a married couple with two children, where each spouse earns $17,500—a total family income of $35,000—to pay $852 more in income tax than a couple living common law, whose income and family situation are otherwise identical?

Is it normal to allow a married couple a deduction of $399 for a dependent child, when a couple that has decided to live common law can claim $5,141 for that child?

Is it normal for a man who is separated to be able to deduct from his income, as alimony paid to his ex-spouse, the total amount of living expenses of his dependent children, while the woman has to declare this as additional income on her income tax form?

Briefly, although the taxation system has evolved in terms of the changes that have taken place in the family structure over the years, the rules governing tax allowances have become inconsistent. The result is a system that is unwieldy, inefficient and unfair, and it should be reviewed and amended as soon as possible.

* * *

[*English*]

THE LATE RAJIV GANDHI

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, the senseless and brutal slaying of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi emphasizes once again the benefits of living in our country.

We are going through a period of protracted discussion and negotiation about the constitutional concerns of Canadians.

Feelings are running high. As a group politicians are being condemned, but our greatest concern is that we might be harshly criticized in the media.

Our hearts and prayers go out to the people of India, and especially the family of Mr. Gandhi. At the same time we should offer a prayer of thanks for the privilege of living in Canada and serving in a tolerant, open, caring society where violence is not acceptable as a means to achieve political ends.

* * *

NOVA SCOTIA

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, the sun is shining in Ottawa as we begin Fitweek across Canada.

The warm weather also indicates that summer is coming and Canadians are beginning to think about vacations.

I would like to let all members in on a little secret. Indeed I will share it with all Canadians. The best place to spend part of your summer is on the beautiful south coast of Nova Scotia. Nowhere is there a more beautiful coast line or more beautiful beaches. Nowhere is the hospitality warmer or more friendly.

If you want the tranquillity of lakes and forests, a touch of Canada's history, hospitable accommodation or the best seafood in Canada, not to mention blue, sunny skies, come to Nova Scotia this summer.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

TRADE

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for International Trade. Today, the U.S. Congress is expected to give its approval for facilitating free trade negotiations between the United States, Canada and Mexico. President Bush already advised members of Congress of his objectives several weeks ago, clearly explaining what would and would not be included in the negotiations. I therefore want to ask the minister: When is he going to do what President Bush did? When will he advise the members of this House and the Canadian people of his government's clear and specific objectives for these very important negotiations?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the negotiations we hope will be commencing shortly on the North American free trade agreement which will involve, we expect and hope, an opening up of the Mexican market to Canadian exporters.

We expect also that there will be an element of the free trade agreement which will involve an opening up of investment possibilities between Canada and Mexico.

I have made it very clear that the question of cultural industries is not one that we are prepared to negotiate. We believe the position we took in the free trade agreement with the United States is one that we should continue in these negotiations.

Some hon. members: Wrong.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Colleagues opposite say: "Wrong". I would suggest that they check with their leader before they comment in that regard.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, before President Bush can even begin fast track negotiations with Mexico, he has to get the approval not only of the committees of the Congress, but of Congress itself.

That process gave the American people a chance to express their concerns. When will the government give the Canadian people the same opportunity and agree to public hearings on these very important negotiations?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I have made a speech in this regard and I am prepared to appear before a committee.

I have had some preliminary discussions with the chairman of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade. We are also going to be following the same process of very open and ongoing consultations with people in the private sector, both business and labour.

We are also going to be having extensive consultations with the provinces so that they will be totally aware of the positions that we take in the free trade agreement negotiations, as well as be able to give us their advice, their guidance and their judgment as to positions we should be taking in relation to their own interests as provinces.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in order to win support in Congress for these negotiations with Mexico, President Bush promised to bring in adjustment programs for American workers who will lose their jobs because of the trilateral trade agreement.

I ask the minister: What about Canadian workers? When will we see a commitment by this government, the government of the Canadian people, for a program of adjustment for the Canadian workers who will lose their jobs because of these negotiations?

• (1420)

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, my friend opposite jumps to the conclusion that free trade results in lost jobs. I question that because in the last 45 years, as tariff barriers and non-tariff barriers have been falling, we have seen a continuation of growth in jobs from trade. Trade has grown from about 15 per cent of our economy to 30 per cent of our economy and has provided jobs for over three million Canadians. The automatic knee-jerk response of my colleague opposite simply is not borne out by the facts.

He asks what our position has been on adjustment for workers who lose their jobs. We have far better adjustment programs than the United States has.

Some hon. members: Where?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I do not know where this party has been if they do not know what we have in place. We have brought in the Canadian Jobs Strategy and other training programs. Since 1984, when the federal government had practically no training programs under the administration of the previous government, today with changes to the Canadian Jobs Strategy, the unemployment insurance program, we have $2.2 million worth of moneys going into training programs. That I believe is far greater on a per capita basis—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Etobicoke North.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade. One crucial aspect of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, a clear definition of subsidies, is still outstanding. The government knows that the free trade agreement will necessarily be reopened in the negotiations with Mexico.

What does the government intend to do with regard to Canadian subsidies, whether to agriculture or to manufacturing, when the United States will demand that all subsidies, whether Mexican or Canadian, be on the table?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend forgets about the subsidies that the United States has. These are subject to scrutiny as well.

My friend also is aware of the extensive discussions that have been going on in the multilateral trade negotiations. Our approach as a government has been to participate actively and aggressively in those discussions to ensure that we can have a broad agreement on what constitutes a subsidy and on what basis countervailing duties might be appropriate. Those multilateral discussions are still under way. Once those are completed then I expect we will be able to tie down the agreement with the United States in a way that is consistent with the multilateral negotiations.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows full well that the chances of the Uruguay round being completed prior to the beginning of the negotiation of the Mexico agreement is non-existent. The negotiations of subsidies will be in the Mexican agreement. The minister knows that.

Also the minister knows that Mexico has said that its constitution does not permit it to negotiate on energy or transport. On the other hand, Canada agreed to the inclusion of energy and transport in the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

Will the minister now tell the Canadian people how such sectors can be excluded in the discussions with Mexico and included in the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, transportation was not a part of the discussions with the United States at the request of the United States. Energy was included in those discussions because we wanted to have access to the United States market—

Mr. Chrétien: We had access.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): He is saying we had access. The whole point, Mr. Speaker, is that the access was being interrupted by non-tariff barriers which we wanted to avoid through the free trade agreement with the United States. That is precisely the reason why we included energy in the free trade agreement with the United States. It is on that basis that we would continue to have discussions as far as Mexico is concerned.

* * *

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The Consumers' Association of Manitoba has just released a six province check of prices after the GST. Frankly, their conclusion is brutal. Of the 50 items surveyed, 36 cost more than the government had estimated. Only 14 items cost less.

Will the minister admit that this government has hoodwinked Canadians on the GST. Will he admit that in fact the economic damage to this economy is much greater from the GST than its estimates suggested?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the statement made by the Consumers Association of Canada, which said:

> The CAC believes Canadian consumers deserve a full and comprehensive quantitative study on the impacts of GST on prices in the Canadian marketplace.

I agree with that statement.

What we have here is an incomplete, erroneous study. It is very difficult to do a study with any degree of accuracy with a tax system that has not been maturely put in place. It is going to take some time before all the benefits of the GST flow through ultimately to the consumer. That has not been taken into consideration.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, the details in this report are quite clear. Things like a wallet, which most Canadians can understand, includes a percentage change of 17 per cent increase, compared to the government's estimate of .8 per cent increase. I could go through detail after detail to demonstrate that, in fact, according to something which comes from a neutral party, the Consumers' Association of Manitoba, has found that across this country in case after case, the government's estimates were simply incorrect.

Despite that, what we also find is that business people are starting to talk publicly, saying that government officials have told them that GST revenues far exceed what was expected so far.

In view of this, will the minister give back this extra tax grab? Will he give tax cuts to the lower and middle-income Canadians who have paid for this tax bonanza which these figures demonstrate?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, in the news release that was issued yesterday by the Consumers Association of Canada, they have dissociated themselves from this particular report. I quote:

> This has not been released as an official study of the Consumers' Association of Canada at the present time.

We have not made any projections with respect to specific price increases or decreases. What the government said, and we stand by this, was the fact that we anticipated a one-time rise in the consumer price index of roughly 1.25 percentage points and we stand by that.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Essex—Windsor, a short supplemental.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, I simply make the point that the document is here. It has been released by the Saskatchewan and Manitoba consumers associations.

[*Translation*]

Once again, Statistics Canada tells us that our ecoomic problems are continuing: retail sales dropped in March. The recession goes on, and what is the government going to do about it? How is the government going to respond to the needs of unemployed Canadians across this country?

• (1430)

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, while it is true there was a reduction in consumer demand in the month of March by some 1.3 percentage points, it is considerably less than the reduction in demand in the months of February which was 2.1 per cent and January which was 4.1 per cent. It is less on a month-to-month basis.

Instead of the gloom and doom the hon. member is advocating, we have in the month of April some positive indicators such as the improvement in business confidence, the improvement in housing starts, the improvement in housing resales, the employment improvements and the 5 percentage point reduction in interest rates. The prime rate in Canada today is 9.75 per cent and in the United States it is 8.5 per cent; that is a 1.25 per cent spread so we are making progress.

* * *

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week U.S. trade negotiator Hills repeated that the United States will demand that the Canadian government drop all protection for Canadian cultural industries in the forthcoming free trade negotiations with Mexico.

We have heard the Minister for International Trade say that this is not so, yet the Americans have cited, in particular, the federal postal rates that benefit Canadian publications and the limits on foreign ownership for broadcasting and publishing.

My question is for the Minister of Communications. When will the government tell the Americans that these policies will not be changed, that they are not unfair restrictive trade practices, but rather essential investment tools for our Canadian cultural development and our identity? Obviously the government is not listening and the Americans are not listening to our international trade minister. What about you, sir, are you going to tell them?

Mr. Speaker: I would ask hon. members to put their questions through the Chair.

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, yes, indeed, I am going to tell them, just as my colleague, the Minister for International Trade, told them and just as yesterday one of my other colleagues told them.

Canadian cultural products are for sale to the world. Canadian culture is not for sale.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, this side of the House and Canadians will be very pleased to hear this. I wish they could believe it. They have to use it or they are going to lose all their credibility.

This government knows that Canadian films only make up 3 per cent of our cinema screen and for the last four years this government has been promising a new law on film distribution. When will that law be tabled? When is the government going to act to increase that share? Are Canadians in control of their cultural destiny or has George Bush, in the context of the Canada–U.S.–Mexico free trade agreement, said: "No way, José"! What are you doing about it?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, the fact that Mrs. Hills is asking to have it re-opened simply demonstrates the excellent job that was done by the government in the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement to ensure that Canadian culture was protected.

We intend to follow exactly the same policy here. We will be taking a number of measures to enhance Canadian arts and culture. For example, as early as tomorrow, we will be introducing the new status of the artist bill. I will be looking for co-operation from all sides of the House to see this through the House of Commons by the summer recess.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRADE

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for International Trade.

President Bush announced measures to protect some U.S. environmental interests in the free trade agreement with Mexico. Unfortunately, the Minister said that as far as Canada was concerned, it could simply imitate or copy the Americans. Mr. Speaker, that is unacceptable. We have our own environmental requirements, even if the Minister does not want to admit it.

My question for him is: When does the Minister intend to table here in the House an independent policy that will protect Canada's environmental interests in these negotiations?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, Canada's environmental concerns in these negotiations will be dealt with on three levels. The subjects negotiated in the agreement itself will have an environmental aspect involving Canada. As for subjects outside the agreement, Canada hopes that they will be covered in parallel negotiations.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we already had the opportunity to say in this House that once the agreement is concluded, it will be subject to an environmental review, like all other government policies, when it is submitted to Cabinet. The government will then have to draw some conclusions and make them public, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, the failure of the minister to answer demonstrates very clearly that he does not understand the integration of the environment and the economy. The promise was not to make the environmental impact study available after, it was at the time the initiative was made, and you have broken your promise already.

Will the minister, or will any minister on the other side who is prepared to make a commitment, commit to meaningful, timely and public participation in developing the Canadian environmental position? Will the minister agree that there will be no signing of a free trade agreement until at the same time the parallel environmental agreement is signed? Finally, will the minister undertake that no trade measures, no trade procedures will be agreed to in the negotiations that would in any way, shape, or form inhibit Canada's right to protect its own environment?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, it is quite a change in tone for the member for LaSalle–Émard today in the Houses of Commons. He found his way today from hiding behind the curtains yesterday on a vote here in this House.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure the hon. minister would want to get on with answering the question.

Mr. Charest: It may be of some interest to the member that it is the Minister of the Environment who is answering this question. I am working in very close co-operation with my colleague from trade, with all my colleagues in fact, in approaching these negotiations to assure ourselves that in so far as trade related matters are concerned within this agreement, they will be dealt with. Environmental matters that concern those trade related items will be dealt with in the negotiations. We want non-trade related items to be dealt with at parallel negotiations.

Finally, there is one thing that seems to me very central in all of this. Once an agreement has been concluded and before the policy is dealt with before cabinet and within our own system of government there will be an environmental evaluation. That in itself is a fundamental change for this government to do business and, in fact, for any government around the world to do business so far as the environment is concerned.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. Yesterday the minister announced contracts worth more than $1 billion for a radio communications system that apparently will be used primarily by our troops in Europe. Yet the Associate Minister of National Defence said yesterday that the government was reconsidering our commitment to keep our forces in Europe.

What is going on? Who is in charge at the Department of National Defence? How does this minister justify spending over $1 billion on a radio communications system for the army when the government is cutting back the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, cutbacks for which this minister was responsible?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I believe that the hon. member asked a question:

[*English*]

I think what is going wrong is that the member is badly informed because there is no relationship at all with Europe and the communication system.

[*Translation*]

The contract announced yesterday in Calgary will enable the Canadian Army to be very efficient and modern in signaling and in the transmission of everything the Army needs to operate. That has nothing to do with the issue of Europe. It is for all the forces—in Canada, in Europe and serving with the United Nations.

[*English*]

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, the Institute for International Peace and Security says differently so I will have to sort that one out over the next few days.

Let me follow up with a question about the government's review of its defence policy. Yesterday the associate minister also said that she expects that the review will be made public in June. I would like to ask why the government is making a series of very important long-term decisions before any review has even been completed. How come it is doing this without any public input whatever?

• (1440)

Will the government make a commitment here today in this House that the public will be consulted before this government makes irrevocable restructuring of the Canadian forces?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, first, there was never any question of the foundations and basic policies covering the Canadian Forces' responsibilities being at issue.

Nevertheless, the hon. member, like all Canadians, has certainly realized that in the past few years, very important changes have taken place, particularly in Europe, and that all countries, both inside and outside NATO, must take account of this reality.

Obviously, the Government of Canada, like its allies, must also consider what has happened and the effects of this situation on the Canadian Forces, taking into account Canada's finances, especially the announcements made in the 1989-90 Budget where the Department of Defence was asked for more than $3 billion as part of Canada's deficit-fighting effort.

Therefore, in view of these two situations, the Government of Canada is reviewing its policy, Mr. Speaker, as Germany, England and the United States are also reviewing theirs.

* * *

[*English*]

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

Yesterday in response to the truckers parked in front of Parliament Hill, who have become a very powerful symbol for many Canadians across the country, the minister said, and I quote:

> It is impossible to really discuss with a group of people who have no authorized representatives.

Rather than pitting one group against the other and playing the politics and the game of "divide and conquer", when will the minister recognize that ultimately the federal government is the authorized and elected representative of these people who happen to be Canadians and who are legitimately demanding action, solution and leadership from this national government?

What is so wrong with that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): The hon. member from the other side may try to distort what I said to the people yesterday, but he certainly will not succeed in making the Canadian population believe that we have not met with the people involved. We have met with all the stakeholders in the trucking industry. I just came out of a meeting with the representatives of the Canadian Trucking Association.

So, we have met with all people and we have listened to them. On Friday we told the people assembled on the street that their concerns have been expressed by the Coalition of Independent Owner-Operators in the task force that we have created. This task force has asked for studies. These studies are coming forward and they will be wrapped up by the task force. Then we will address the problems based on facts and not on misconceptions.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): The fact of the matter is that these truckers speak for more Canadians than this government's 14 per cent standing in the polls right now. That is the problem.

I ask the minister this: He said that he has met and talked with many people. He has had a nine-option plan proposed by this Liberal opposition party. He has had solutions from the truckers and their wives. He has had specific representations for over a year. I ask the minister, why is this government so reluctant to even usher in temporary relief measures?

Which will it be? Crossing every *t* and dotting every *i* of every study ever commissioned, or listening and responding to average Canadians and their plights?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am happy that the member has given me the occasion to respond and make known to the general public the Liberal way of meeting crises: Spend more money.

I have here a brochure put out this week by an hon. member. I want to quote one of his suggestions, and I would like everybody to listen to this: "7. Federal-provincial trade-off: Financial co-operation to ease the provincial tax portion on diesel fuel can be attained by the federal government agreeing to roll back its share of revenues supporting the road infrastructure".

Then there is an explanation, because that needs an explanation. He says: "The federal government presently contributes approximately 5 per cent of total highway expenditures in Canada. In the U.S., the federal government contributes 20 to 25 per cent. Our federal government"—listen to this—"should increase its share of contributions of total highway expenditures to 20 per cent". Quick-fix spending by the Liberals.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

A year after the report of the task force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service, the same old attitudes keep women below the glass ceilings.

Today, the Public Service Commission reported that women working for the federal government resign at twice the rate of men. They fill most of the short-term positions, with no benefits, no security, no rights and they make only 55 cents for every $1 a man earns.

What does the minister have to say to the women of Canada about this abysmal treatment of women working for the Government of Canada?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member will realize that this has been a problem in Canada for many years.

Our government, fortunately, has done much more than the Liberals did during decades of government. We have set very precise targets in each area to improve equity.

I fully agree that we need to continue to do more. We are doing that in every area. I remember, not so long ago, the Prime Minister giving numbers of achievements that we can be very proud of.

I can say that this government will continue to press with its effort. We have precise targets, and we are achieving them.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

Targets require steps. Women make up nearly half the Public Service, but they got less than 25 per cent of management promotions last year, less than one quarter of the appointments to the management from outside the Public Service and just 20 per cent of the appointments within the management category.

One year ago, the former President of the Treasury Board said: "I can tell my colleague that the report is being acted on today. We are not going to hold up action on this report." When will the government give women more than empty promises?

When and how will this minister give women a chance at equality?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, since the hon. member has asked me for some figures, I am very pleased to give her some to explain just what progress has been made. Of course, I do not deny that much remains to be done. We live in a society that unfortunately has not always given equity its proper place. However, if you take for example the management categories when the Liberal Party, to which she belongs, was in power, there were 308 women in the management categories—that is, 7.3 per cent. We took power and today we have 730 women in management, or 15.3 per cent. We have more than doubled the number of women in the management categories and we will continue to move forward.

[*English*]

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance in his role as Deputy Prime Minister said yesterday that free trade was not involved in transport.

He knows that free trade has meant more U.S. imports hauled by U.S. truckers and Canadian exports hauled by U.S. truckers.

He talks about competitiveness when his own laws prevent Canadian truckers and railroads from being competitive.

Will the Minister of Finance act immediately to amend our tax law and regulations to ensure that depreciation allowances, which he knows something about, for trucks, tractors, trailers and railway rolling stock do not exceed those applied by U.S. laws?

• (1450)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that our capital cost allowance and depreciation compares very favourably with the United States, particularly when you take into consideration that the United States has a 12 per cent heavy duty sales tax which applies to tractors and trailers. This drives up the price and nullifies any acceleration of the depreciation which the United States tax system has.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, I direct my supplementary question to the Minister of Transport. Since the truckers and the Canadian Trucking Association are complaining about the lack of enforcement of Canadian laws and regulations, whether by provinces or the national government on trans-border traffic, will the Minister of Transport ensure that his department, and other departments that have responsibility for enforcement, will increase their personnel, enforce regulations and on the spot collection of fines in the role as a regulator of cross-border traffic.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, that is something that would have to be pursued at the federal-provincial level.

As a long time expert in transportation matters, he also knows very well that extra-provincial trucking is largely a provincial matter. What he and others have been trying to do for many years is to establish some degree of uniformity across the country so that truckers can operate with fewer barriers and obstacles than they now have. That is part and parcel of the problem.

If the hon. member wants to do anything for the truckers, he may get on the telephone this afternoon and call his friends at Queen's Park and ask them to do something about ratcheting down the sales tax or excise tax which they have on fuel, which will reach 14.3 cents a litre when the NDP government puts into effect the increases it brought down in the last budget.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance.

Yesterday, the Conference Board of Canada released its provincial economic forecasts. The report says that the economic situation in Quebec will continue to deteriorate and that during the coming year, the unemployment rate is not expected to drop below its current level of 12.5 per cent.

My question to the minister is this: When will he realize that the economic policies applied by his government are doing nothing to help the economy in Quebec, and when will he table new measures to give the economy a boost, not just in Quebec but across Canada?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the slowdown was, in fact, anticipated in the budget of 1990 and reconfirmed in February when the budget was brought down. Clearly, because of the inflationary pressures and inflationary expectations which developed between 1988 and 1990, that issue had to be addressed or we would have ended up being in the same position that we were in 1981 and 1982 under the Liberals, where we had inflation rates of 13 per cent and 14 per cent and interest rates in excess of 20 per cent. We wanted to avoid that.

What has been indicated is that we have developed and put in place policies that will see us ease out of the recession in the second half. We expected the first half to be slow, but the economic indicators that we now see with respect to renewed business confidence, increased housing starts, increased housing sales and the decline in interest rates, we believe auger very well for recovery in the second half.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, the minister referred to a recession that was not only anticipated by this government but in fact created by this government's policies.

My question is quite straightforward and is directed to the same minister. When will he reduce the spread between U.S. and Canadian interest rates so that Canadian businesses can compete and create jobs for the unemployed in Montreal, Quebec City and Trois-Rivières? When are you going to do something?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in an earlier answer, the prime rate in the United States is 8.5 per cent. The prime rate in Canada is 9.75 per cent. That is a 1.25 per cent spread. That is the lowest it has been for a long time.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MISSING RESEARCH

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The town of Val-d'Or now has a new CANMET laboratory for mining research, at a cost of $15 million over the next five years. This laboratory reflects the Conservative Government's commitment to improving the competitive position of Quebec's primary industry, both in terms of technology and cost-effectiveness. Mr. Speaker, my question is as follows: Could the minister tell us today whether the technology to be developed in this new mining laboratory in Quebec can be used anywhere in Canada?

[*English*]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, we all know that we have to bring our research and development into a traditional industry such as mining. The Val d'Or research laboratory has been designed to do just that. In particular, we will have underground research in rock breakage and fragmentation. It will serve the entire mining community for all of Canada. It has had very good co-operation from the Canadian mining industry and particularly from my colleague who has asked the question. I thank him for his support and for his encouragement.

* * *

EXTRADITION

Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, the case of Charles Ng points to the ineffectiveness of our current system of extradition. The Minister of Justice must be aware that Canadians will lose confidence in our system of justice if our extradition system is not made more effective.

Can the minister indicate what she is doing to ensure that Mr. Ng's case is dealt with as expeditiously as possible and what she is doing to ensure that Canada does not become a haven for fugitives?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. friend that the decision which I made when I was Attorney General has been heard in the Supreme Court of Canada. The Minister of Justice fast tracked it through the procedures that were available to her so that it would be heard as soon as possible. That is the Ng case.

The actual issue of a review of the extradition laws is currently under way and I understand the minister hopes to be able to bring forward something in the fall.

* * *

[*Translation*]

REFERENDUM DEBATE IN QUEBEC

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, the press reports that Quebec Minister Marc-Yvon Côté is concerned that abuse of federal funds may upset the political balance when a referendum is held in Quebec. Mr. Côté said he intended to meet his federal counterpart as soon as possible to ensure that democratic standards of balance and equity are observed when a referendum debate takes place in Quebec. I want to ask the Secretary of State who, I believe, administers these funds whether he intends to respect the wishes of the Quebec minister?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs is not in the House today. I will take that question as notice and report back to the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): As far as taking notice is concerned, Mr. Speaker, I would like to see everything transmitted to the responsible minister. Our other concern was expressed in an article published in *Le Soleil* and signed by Mr. Vastel, which mentioned a fund of $100 million to be used to oil a propaganda machine that would be started up very shortly—

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but this is not a question but a statement.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Windsor West, a single question.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance relating to the matter of retail sales. As he may know, retail sales fell 3.1 per cent in the first three months of 1991 compared to a decline of only 1.1 per cent in the last three months of 1990, last year.

I ask the minister: How can he describe this startling fall in retail sales as an easing out of recession? Does the minister not realize that the dead hand of the GST and the other faulty economic policies of this government are preventing a recovery of retailing in this country, and why does he not do something about it?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, my answer was based on the fact that in the month of April there were a number of positive signals that would lead us to believe that we are nearing the bottom of the recession and expecting that recovery will emerge in the second half, as was predicted by the Minister of Finance when he presented his budget in February.

• (1500)

What I did say, and I will repeat it again for the hon. member, is that there are indicators that business confidence is up. Housing sales and housing starts are up. The interest rates have declined by 5 percentage points and the spread between the United States and Canadian interest rates at the prime rate level is 1.25 per cent. Consumer confidence is improving. Automobile sales are improving. There is some reason to be optimistic. However, we do not underestimate the depth of the downturn. With sound, positive economic policies as were enunciated in the budget, we have every reason to believe that we will be on the road to solid recovery in the second half.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver East, a single question.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question was for the President of the Treasury Board. In his early absence, I will direct it to the Deputy Prime Minister.

This government has not dealt fairly with complaints of racial discrimination within the Public Service. As a result of complaining Dr. Chander Grover was dismissed by the National Research Council one month short of 10 years of service.

The contract of Frank Boahene, a CIDA manager, was cancelled despite minority advisory committee reports that this should not have happened.

Recently, the government disbanded the three Public Service Employment Equity Advisory Committees.

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister when this government will take employment equity seriously. Will the minister reinstate the Employment Equity Advisory Committees to monitor employment equity? What steps will he take to enforce mandatory employment equity with job protection for public employees who complain of racial harassment and discrimination?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, again I do apologize to the hon. member. I was asked by the Table to comment on something and I was away for the first part of the hon. member's question.

I understand she referred to employment equity. I will reiterate the commitment of this government and our very great determination to reach our targets. I can tell the hon. member that in each of the categories we are reaching them.

As far as equity for women I would like to give the hon. member some numbers that I did not have a while back. In the judiciary system, in 1984 when we came to power there were 37 women now there are 81. We had two ambassadors, now we have 13. We had seven deputy ministers, now we have 22. We had two women members of commissions, now we have 31. Equity is a commitment of the government.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, in response to a question which was put by my colleague, the member for Lasalle—Émard, the Minister of the Environment, I believe, breached the provisions of Standing Order 18. I wonder if the hon. member would do the appropriate thing and withdraw the statement in which there was reference made to how a member voted with regard to a particular matter before this House.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has risen on a point of order and his point of order is, of course, well taken. The House will remember that when this happened I rose and asked the minister to get on with the answer to the question, which he did.

I will hear the minister.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, so that there will be no ambiguity about this question, I wish to withdraw my comments and I do so without any hesitation.

RECOGNITION OF MEMBERS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to express my disappointment at the lack of opportunity to ask a question in the House today.

Point of Order

We have more private members on this side of the House than any other party, but out of 25 to 30 questions, we only get two. I had an issue that was very important to my part of Canada, and I really wished to bring it up. I hope we will get more questions in the future.

Mr. Speaker: I want to respond to the hon. member and to all other hon. members. The private members on the government side got two questions today.

It does not take very much arithmetic to realize, as I have had to say before, that with the way this present House is structured it is extremely difficult to satisfy everybody who wants to ask questions.

Now there is an answer to this. The answer is that hon. members on both sides of the House get together and negotiate some new approach, if that is what is wished by the majority of the members. That is the response which is necessary if the customs are going to change.

I would ask hon. members to please listen carefully to what I am saying. There are only so many minutes in Question Period. There was discussion before that maybe Question Period should be made longer. I am inviting hon. members, as there have been exchanges across this House on the question of Question Period, to engage in discussion, all of you. If hon. members wish to change the structure of Question Period then of course, as your Speaker, I shall be bound by your suggestions and your recommendations.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, on that point of order, we have heard, on a couple of occasions, members of the government side making objections with regard to their inability to raise questions on the floor of the House of Commons. I think it indicates a number of points, and I will be very brief.

One point is that members opposite are not having an opportunity to express their views in their respective caucuses. This is obvious with government members—

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment. I would ask the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond to leave the matter as it is and not to get into a discussion on the floor of the House as to what takes place or what does not take place in any other caucus.

Point of Order

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to follow your direction. However, I want the record to clearly show and clearly state, in case there is any false impression, that those members of the opposition of my particular party have said, for quite some time, that we were concerned with regard to the length of answers which were given by members. In point of fact, we have tried very hard in our questions to make sure that they are succinct and to the point. We have made that point repeatedly. However, in no way do we accept the argument that members should pool their resources together and somehow change the format of Question Period. This is the last bastion of democracy for members of—

Mr. Speaker: I am only reminding hon. members that ultimately the Speaker's role is to do what the majority of members in this House wish to have done.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, if you follow the logic of your argument to the fullest, I am sure that there are many members on the government side of the House, who are in the majority, who would like to see Question Period done away with.

Surely there has been a tradition, not just followed for 124 years in this Parliament, but also previously in the mother Parliament, to ensure that the opposition had a small period out of every day to put the questions of the nation.

I am seeking guidance, Mr. Speaker. However, if I understand your suggestion to be that somehow we are supposed to get together with the government members and divvy up the time of Question Period. Clearly this is the only time of the day that the opposition has the chance to put the questions for 24 million people. If the hon. member wants to ask a question of his minister then I suggest that he utilize his access to the minister as a government member and do so in the appropriate fashion. This is the Parliament for the people of Canada, it is not the Parliament for a backbencher who feels stifled by his own caucus.

Mr. Speaker: I want to assure the hon. member for Hamilton East that the Speaker is not unilaterally changing the customs in this Chamber. All I am saying is that if there are complaints, then members had better conduct some conversations among themselves and then discuss the matter with the Speaker. I think that the matter has been aired sufficiently. The hon. minister.

• (1510)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Youth), Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I agree with you in principle that the matter has been aired sufficiently. However, I think that some facts need to be rectified.

When the hon. member for Hamilton says that the opposition has questions to put for 24 million people, I would humbly submit to her, Mr. Speaker, that every member of this House can put questions on behalf of all 26 million Canadians.

As regards the rules of the mother of Parliaments, Mr. Speaker, maybe it is a subject that we should look into and about which government members also have questions.

Now, on the question of concision and precision, I would suggest to my colleague the leader of the Opposition to look at a few of the questions asked today and determine whether or not they were concise and precise.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: If it is the same point of order, I think there has been sufficient discussion about it. I would like, with the consent of the House, to move on to tabling of documents.

* * *

AERONAUTICS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Shirley Martin (for the Minister of Transport) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-5, an act to amend the Aeronautics Act and to amend an act to amend the Aeronautics Act.

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

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-205, an act to amend the Financial Administration Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move to introduce this bill again this session. The purpose of the amendment to the Financial Administration Act is to prevent the kind of abuse that this House suffered under the government in 1989 when special Governor General's warrants were used and the regular supply proceedings in this House avoided.

The purpose of this act is to stop that kind of abuse. It will ensure that Governor General's special warrants may not be used between sessions of Parliament, but only after dissolution of Parliament and before the recall of the new Parliament.

I believe the bill meets with approval from most hon. members and I think it is unfortunate the government was unable to include this particular amendment in its recent set of amendments to this very important act.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today, now that we are back here, to once again present some petitions signed by volunteer firemen and by those individuals whose interests they look after in the Oxford area of Nova Scotia.

The petitioners are very concerned about the government's decision last year to raise radio licence fees primarily for municipalities and volunteer fire departments.

These petitioners ask the government to reconsider its measures to hike fees by up to 1,000 per cent because these are volunteer organizations which look after the welfare of the community.

FISHERIES

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit, pursuant to

Standing Order 36, a petition on behalf of several hundred fishermen in the Gulf of St. Lawrence region of my constituency who are protesting the government's introduction of dockside monitoring fees.

The petitioners are calling upon the government to withdraw these fees, which are not only harmful and injurious to the fishermen, but as I mentioned earlier today are without legal standing.

The petitioners call upon Parliament, and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans specifically, to withdraw these fees and to reimburse those fishermen who have unlawfully been charged.

NATIONAL GALLERY

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present today a petition signed mostly by college students in my riding.

The petitioners object to the displaying of deteriorating beef shank in the name of art at the National Gallery.

By signing this petition, the students are telling the Canadian people something. They are joining with thousands of other Canadians expressing their disbelief in this ridiculous display in a publicly owned building.

THE CANADIAN FLAG

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition signed by numerous residents of Kingston and the Islands.

The petitioners are concerned that the destruction and desecration of the Canadian flag is an offence and insulting to all Canadians.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to pass a bill making it an offence to destroy or desecrate the Canadian flag.

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present a petition on behalf of the entire Polish community in Thunder Bay.

The petitioners feel Marie Sklodowska Curie, a servant of mankind and a scientist whom fame could not corrupt and who has been honoured by many different countries throughout the world, should be honoured by Canada.

Point of Order

The leaders of the Polish community—Walter Kwasniewski, Stan Tedinka and the Malicki family—pray and call upon Parliament to honour Marie Sklodowska Curie by issuing a commemorative stamp on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of her birth on November 7, 1992.

I am sure that all people in Canada would like to honour Madam Curie with this commemorative stamp.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join my colleague from Thunder Bay in presenting a petition on the same subject.

I received a petition from Canadians in Toronto, including my riding of Rexdale. The petitioners suggest, as did my colleague from Thunder Bay, that Marie Sklodowska Curie be honoured as a woman of great achievement and distinction by commemorating her achievements and contributions.

The petitioners suggest the issuing of a stamp in her honour on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of her birth.

These petitioners feel that it would be an inexpensive yet very large symbolic gesture on behalf of the Government of Canada. These are the types of deeds that I believe ought to be of concern to this government.

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, I have here that a petition a colleague sent me from Barneys River, Nova Scotia.

[*English*]

As you know, the federal Department of Communications has imposed huge increases in licence fees for radio telecommunications, including all emergency service radio equipment. I know the rules, so I will not say all the "whereases", but these honourable Canadians humbly pray and call upon Parliament to exempt fire departments from these excessive radio licence fees because many fire departments are operated by dedicated volunteers who simply cannot afford these fee hikes.

I very humbly on their behalf present this petition to the House of Commons, hoping that the Minister of Communications will read the petition and act accordingly.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Youth), Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Shall the questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will listen to a point of order from the hon. member for Shefford.

* * *

[*Translation*]

POINT OF ORDER

ROLE OF SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I find most unfortunate that I was not allowed to raise this point of order in due course.

You left us cooling our heels for a while. But I wanted to follow up on what I heard the Speaker say and I hope that I heard him wrong. I heard him say that he is here to do what the majority of members want to be done.

Mr. Speaker, I really hope I heard wrong because, if indeed the Speaker of the House claims his role is to serve the majority, this means that, tomorrow morning, the majority could decide that there will be no question period and no speeches by opposition members, and the Speaker of the House would go along with that.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a misconception of the role of the Speaker and all that time, as a minority member, I thought the Chair was here to protect me. I would like, Mr. Speaker, and I probably will, to reserve the right to raise a question of privilege because, if the Speaker has now decided to serve the majority, this institution is in grave danger. It is facing the threat of becoming undemocratic.

Mr. Speaker, I want the senior Speaker to realize that this is a statement that has to be clarified as soon as possible because I refuse to believe that the Speaker is only here to serve the majority.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from Tuesday, May 21 consideration of the motion of Mr. Pronovost for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his Speech at the opening of the session.

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, almost 125 years ago the first government of this nation was seized by a bold and a compelling dream.

The goal was to resist the unrelenting pull of the American states by stitching together a disparate group of northern colonies into the fabric of a nation. The government's vision was to bind the country together with ribbons of steel, providing the conduit for an entire nation's dreams, hopes and aspirations. And they did it.

New industry began to flow from one region to another, and ideas and dreams, packaged in letters, sped across thousands of miles. The railroad became the principal method for Canadians to share their goods, their culture and their need to communicate with one another.

Like most technologies, in time it was added to by faster, more efficient and cheaper methods. Railways were joined by aeroplanes, and rail cars by container trucks. The east-west bonds once again became susceptible to the tug of north-south industry and culture.

It was not just transportation that underwent this revolution; it was also communications.

In 1874, Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in Brantford, Ontario. A former native of my own home town of Fergus, Reginald Aubrey Fessenden made the world's first radio broadcast of voice and music on Christmas Eve in 1906.

By 1990, the Canadian telephone industry was employing almost 100,000 workers and managing more than 35 billion phone calls each year, or nearly 1,400 calls for each and every Canadian. Telecommunications rapidly became the electronic railroad of today. Telephones and fax machines, robots and computers, electronic mail and desk top publishing are the methods Canadians use today to share their ideas, their dreams and their aspirations.

In that sense, telecommunications and cultural identity are absolutely dependent upon each other. Without communication, Canadians cannot develop shared values. Without the shared values which form the basis of our culture, we cannot define our Canadian identity.

I made these links because culture and communications are key to the three themes developed in the Speech from the Throne of unity, prosperity and a responsive government.

Under the theme of unity, the Speech from the Throne states that:

> The ability of Canadians to live together in harmony and the ability of Canada to make a major contribution to world affairs depend upon our understanding of who we are as a people.

A changing world is challenging our values and severely testing our sense of self as a nation. Many of the old images which used to define how we see ourselves no longer hold the same relevance for Canadians today.

For example, how many of us sang *The Maple Leaf Forever* with its refrain of "thistle, shamrock, rose entwined"—which are the emblems of England, Ireland and Scotland—in school with the same reverence normally accorded the National Anthem? Yet today, more than 15 million Canadians claim a heritage which does not include either England, Ireland or Scotland. The thistle, shamrock and rose entwined is not, and some would argue never was, an image that fully represents Canada.

[*Translation*]

The challenge which confronts us, as the Speech from the Throne points out, is to "create a climate in which Canadians can deepen their understanding of their history and traditions and their appreciation of their country's rich diversity."

We deepen our understanding of history by visiting our museums. We learn more about our traditions by rediscovering our heritage. And we come to appreciate our diversity by being exposed to the cultural expression which thrives across this country.

In that sense, art and culture must be the key to this government's priority of building a unified and prosperous Canada. Discussions pertaining to our constitution are essential, as it is one element of what makes us Canadian. But it is also essential that we talk about the soul and spirit of the country.

In society, there are two broad ways in which we communicate. One is as a collective voice, be it through the speeches of our own elected officials, or the editorials of leading newspapers, or the way in which our media reflect our activities back to us.

But the other, and the more powerful, is the individual voice which speaks without censorship, without editing, without rewriting, without a committee dictating what can and cannot be said, and simply shouts out whatever can, and must, be heard from a personal point of view.

[*English*]

When our artists speak, whether on paper, on canvas or in clay, through the movement of their bodies or the flickering light on the cinema screen, they express our deepest thoughts. They see into the hearts of Canadians and focus bright light on what is real and what is true. Those countries in the world which have flourishing artistic communities inevitably also have a strong sense of identity. Regrettably, the men and women who dedicate their lives to their talent are not supported as generously in Canada as their talent deserves.

• (1530)

As the arts community knows so well, it has always been difficult for artists to earn enough to support their families. The average artist in Canada hopes to earn from $13,000 to $19,000 a year. These are particularly unimpressive figures when we consider that the average artist also has a university degree and at least 17 years of experience. Many are forced to take second jobs, thereby limiting the time they can devote to honing their skills. They live with recurring unemployment and fluctuating and sporadic incomes.

They do not fit the standard business relationship because their work is a labour of love. More than half of the Canadian artists surveyed recently by Statistics Canada said that they considered their art a vocation rather than a business or a profession.

Because they fall through the cracks, qualifying over the course of their years neither as employees nor as employers, they have no professional status in our society and have limited recourse to the social safety net that the rest of us enjoy.

I had the good fortune almost seven years ago, when I was minister of revenue to work with the leaders of the arts community in Canada on the government's response to the report of the subcommittee on the taxation of visual and performing artists and writers. Together, we sat down and wrote new rules which recognized that artists play a unique role in Canada and that they deserve special consideration in tax administration. It was a good first step, but the time has come to take that principle further.

Our artists in Canada need a framework in law which acknowledges their special and distinctive contribution to our country and which allows them improved access to certain rights and benefits that other Canadians are privileged to enjoy.

This is not a new idea. The government and the arts community of Canada have recently completed years of intense collaboration, which has resulted in a bill on the status of the artist in Canada. It has been prepared in collaboration with the Canadian Conference of the Arts, with the performing artists' associations including ACTRA, *L'Union des artistes* and Actors Equity, with creative artists and producers' associations, and with the Canadian Advisory Committee on the Status of the Artist.

This issue has been thoroughly reviewed by the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture and the bill has been welcomed by our Prime Minister.

It provides recognition, unprecedented in federal law, of the professional status of our country's artists as well as their contribution to the development of our culture and our society.

It gives me great pleasure to confirm to the House that I intend to introduce this legislation on the status of the artist tomorrow. I am confident that all parties will recognize the value and the urgent need for this bill and agree to pass it as quickly as possible.

Improving the recognition received by Canada's artists is not a partisan issue. I will be seeking the support of my colleagues opposite in the hope that the bill can be sent to the Senate before we rise for our summer recess.

Each year the arts sector contributes billions of dollars to the economy and provides hundreds of thousands of jobs to Canadians, but the true value of the arts goes well beyond the economic. Their real value lies in their ability to civilize, to break down boundaries, to open up new horizons and to act as a mirror to our society.

The arts is an avenue beckoning us to discover who we really are as a people. And in helping us to understand who we are, the contribution of the arts to Canadian unity is both profound and enduring.

Just as art, culture and unity are intertwined, so are communications and prosperity, the second theme found in the Speech from the Throne.

[*Translation*]

Telecommunications is an essential building block to national prosperity, just as the railroad was a century ago.

Its chief value lies in its ability to act as an "enabler" to Canadians companies. Global telecommunications networks have made the flow of capital virtually instantaneous—transferring hundreds of billions of dollars daily among the world's major financial centres.

The markets of the world are now available to us with the bending of an elbow over the telephone, telex or fax machine.

But the telecommunications industry is also valuable in itself. Telecommunications is the premier high-tech industry in Canada today, one of only a few in which Canada is a world leader. It contributes 3.5 per cent of our GDP, or $21 billion a year—as much as agriculture, fisheries and forestery combined.

The opportunities for growth are substantial. The current world market for telecommunications equipment is estimated at beween $100 and $150 billion, of which Canada's share is but 4 per cent or $4 to $6 billion.

Our competitors are investing billions of dollars, which we cannot hope to match dollar for dollar. But we can strive to be more effective, to marshal our resources and target them to the areas where they can do the most good.

However, as the Prime Minister stated in Vancouver last year, there is a third value to telecommunications. To borrow his words: "It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of the communications industry to Canada. It is a powerful instrument of economic and social development".

Telecommunications and its related technologies have the power to do tremendous social good by reducing the inequities we find between people. For example, the Department of Communications has been very active in improving the lives of disabled Canadians. We have developed a National Broadcast Reading Service for those who cannot read. We have closed captioning on TV for those who cannot hear. We have also developed special computerized telephones for those who have problems with speech.

Telecommunications also has the power to reduce inequities found in the regions. For example, in Newfoundland, we are using satellites to link the health care centres of 140 small, rural communities to help with emergency diagnosis and to provide training and upgrading.

In Manitoba, teachers felt their children were not getting enough attention in the maths and sciences. In response, working with the provincial government, we set up a Homework Hotline, which allows children to phone in questions to teachers in a television studio. The teachers answer the questions and their images are beamed by satellite into the cable systems so that students can watch them on television.

And, up north, we are helping to implement a native cultural and educational broadcasting network which will give northerners greater access to information and cultural programs.

[*English*]

Our technology makes it possible for us to meet our social responsibilities and to open up whole new worlds of information and learning to Canadians who might have no other access. It gives us the ability to respond to the needs of all Canadians—the third theme found in the Speech from the Throne.

Government responsiveness must play a large role in the future of telecommunications and culture in Canada. But our role must be fine-tuned to respond to the needs of today and tomorrow.

The days when governments could meet the needs of industry by simply handing over money are over. Our deficit is much too large and the competition much too sophisticated for that sort of an answer to work. If government is really to make a difference, it must concentrate on structural changes which will allow individuals and businesses to compete in new markets. The status of the artist legislation is a good example of a structural measure which governments can take to help Canadians help themselves.

A second example can be found in telecommunications. The industry is currently regulated by the Railway Act, 1904. It was a very good bill for the 19th century railroads, but it will not meet the needs of the 21st century telecommunications system. If we are to be competitive and effective, we will need a national, unified market. New legislation would help break down the barriers to trade between provinces, and I intend to discuss this issue with my colleagues both in government and in industry to see what can be done.

A third example can be found in the marketing and distribution of cultural products. In our enthusiasm to produce excellent products, we have sometimes forgotten to make sure that we have gained maximum access to the markets.

• (1540)

Larger audiences would go a long way toward ensuring growth in our cultural industries.

A few weeks ago, the Citizens' Forum on National Unity sent out a request to 2,000 visual artists living across Canada, asking them to send in works which expressed their feelings about this country. Last week, their entries were on display at the regional headquarters of the Ottawa-Carleton region. Some of the pieces were angry or critical, and that is fine. We were not looking for propaganda. We were looking for thoughtful expression. We were looking for people who were willing and able and talented enough to express what was deep inside.

There were two entries in particular which caught my attention. One, from Toronto, was a Canadian flag with a fleur-de-lis and a maple leaf and a caption which read: "Keep building bridges", *continuent à tisser des liens*. The other, from Sydney, Nova Scotia, showed a Canadian flag with the maple leaf divided into 10 sections, one for each province, about to fall off to the side. Its caption was: "Unite or fall".

I was heartened by these entries because they expressed a sincere hope that Canada could resolve its problems and remain united. I think that is the way the vast majority of Canadians feel today.

As members of Parliament the demands on our time are many. We have no shortage of duties to fulfil. We have duties both in government and in opposition. We have duties to our constituencies, to our caucuses, to our parties, to our consciences. Whether we call ourselves Conservatives, Liberals or New Democrats, I believe that we agree our paramount duty is to the country that we love and cherish, the country which has allowed us to live in freedom, peace and prosperity.

Today that duty should speak to all of us. It tells us that we must discover the way to resolve the problems facing Canada, to rediscover who we are as a people, and to renew our appreciation of our history, our tradition and our rich diversity.

Most important, we must reject the claim by some that we can let our country slip away from us without enormous cost to every Canadian. We owe it to those who built this great country. We owe it to ourselves. And we owe it to our children.

May the Speech from the Throne, and this debate that follows, remind us of this most compelling of all duties.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the Chair that on the government side, we have decided to shorten speeches on the motion concerning an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne from 20 to 10 minutes, so that more members will have a chance to speak to the motion.

[*English*]

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to hear the minister in his first speech in the House on the Speech from the Throne and very pleased to hear his commitment to the well-being of artists and the general population with respect to culture.

If there is anything that defines a country internationally or globally it certainly is the culture that is left behind—what is written, what is painted, its stories, et cetera.

I think it is unfortunate—and I hope this minister will not be too unhappy in his task—that the previous three ministers were not as successful as I sincerely hope this minister will be.

The minister spoke about telecommunications, the size of that industry, the fact that it was an economic lever. We have all known that for quite some time, the fact that it is 3.5 per cent of our GNP or $21 billion. Yet since 1985 this government has been promising us a new and updated Telecommunications Act.

I wish this minister good luck, good health and long life. I hope he is able to introduce this bill. I would very much like to know what this minister is planning to do, as he spoke of the fact that it is through communications and cultural products that we have access to the world of art, the world of literature, and the world of people out there.

I would like to remind the minister that next week is access week for the disabled.

Is the minister aware of the fact that Braille books are produced by the CNIB and that we do nothing to enable the production of books in Braille? Is he aware of the fact that we have a tax on reading and a tax on literacy and that this is absolutely against any kind of principle found almost anywhere in the world? Does he realize that his predecessors brought in an incomplete copyright bill and that there should be copyright exemptions for books with large print to enable the poor-sighted to learn effectively and efficiently? In every other way they are normal but they have a problem with their sight.

Children and young adults in high school and college have their learning circumscribed because of the fact that this government has not been clear in its copyright legislation. It has not exempted the printing of such material from the laws of this land.

In terms of access I heard the minister talk about native programs. I suggest he go back and find out how much the past Secretary of State cut from those programs. He is now the Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship. Let him tell you what he did to native programming in the north. Let the former minister tell you what was done about the satellite that was supposed to be provided so that there could be a proper distribution system up north.

We have a minister of good will and I would very much like to see him be successful in his task as it is in the best interest of national unity and the development of this country. He started off very well in his first speech to the constituency and everyone was very pleased to hear from him.

Last but not least I would like to know, before he tables his status of the artist legislation, which is very key to the well-being of the artist, if he recognizes the low income level of most artists in Canada. I believe it is around $12,000 a year, which is a nice starvation figure. If he does not address within that bill the kinds of tax measures that will make living viable so that artists can be productive, he is in effect window dressing and not looking at the real issues.

I ask the minister to do two things. First, tell the Americans that you are master of your own destiny as minister and bring in the film distribution bill in Canada. Second, for the artist and the creators, address the tax measures so that they are entitled to income averaging. If you know anything about the field of art and artists, you know that they have lean years and fat years, and they must be allowed to have income at—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. minister.

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, may I first of all thank my hon. colleague for her kind words and say how much I am looking forward to my new responsibilities in this portfolio. I will do my best to respond to the various points that she raised.

I am certainly pleased to indicate to her, as I said in my remarks earlier, that I am very much aware of the financial problems faced by so many artists across Canada today. As she knows, taxation matters are the responsibility of the Minister of Finance and I cannot introduce legislation here which deals with changes to the Income Tax Act in this way.

We are, however, as a government very conscious of this particular problem and will be seeking ways to provide assistance to Canadian artists in addition to what is done within the status of the artist legislation.

The member will see tomorrow, when I introduce the bill in Parliament, that the legislation goes a long way toward addressing some of the major concerns of artists. When it is complemented by other economic measures which are designed to improve the status of artists in Canada, I think it will begin to give to Canadian artists some recognition of the tremendous contribution they make to our national life. She should not see it in isolation; she should see it in the context of other initiatives that will be taking place as well.

She asked that we serve notice on the Americans and on others of the fact that we in Canada want to have the ability to have our own unique culture. That was in essence the—

Mrs. Finestone: No film distribution.

Mr. Beatty: She mentions film distribution in particular, but in general the problem is one of ensuring that we have a unique voice in Canada and that it has the opportunity to be heard. Whether it is in films, book publishing, newspapers, radio, television, or a whole range of other areas, my goal is to ensure that Canadian voices are heard. My goal is not to prevent contact between Canada and the rest of the world. I think we are enriched by that contact. I do not believe that Canadian culture is frail and fragile and that it does not have something to offer the rest of the world.

• (1550)

Our voice to the rest of the world is strengthened and made more worth while to the extent that it is uniquely a Canadian voice. I have no hesitation in bringing in measures which help to protect the ability of Canadians to have their voices heard in Canada in a whole range of areas.

I look forward to working with my colleague opposite and with others on ways in which we can do that.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister if he would take a special interest—and I have written to him on this subject—in the whole question of media sensitivity and stereotyping, particularly as it applies to racial and ethnic minorities.

In particular, the Vancouver community is very, very concerned about a recent CBC series called *The Dim Sum Diaries*. There is not time to describe it, but I have written him about this. This is about the third time there have been programs—in this case on CBC, formerly on CTV and so on—that really stereotype a minority group.

I would like to ask the minister what he can do within his jurisdiction to try and encourage greater sensitivity in the media. Will the minister review CRTC policy and guidelines? Will the minister also take a look at how the Employment Equity Act and the multicultural bill itself is being applied within his jurisdiction?

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to look into all the areas raised by my hon. friend. She raises in particular the issue of stereotyping and problems with a particular program on the CBC. I did notice in the newspapers that she had raised that issue on the west coast.

I know my hon. friend is as sensitive as I am to ensuring that governments do not reach into the CBC to instruct it as to what it can and cannot run in terms of specific programs. The principle of ensuring fair treatment, or the principle of ensuring that stereotyping does not take place, is a matter that is of concern to all members of Parliament. It is entirely legitimate for Canadians concerned about the content of any broadcast to raise those concerns with the broadcaster, with the minister who will convey those concerns to the broadcaster, and with the CRTC, where the regulator will try to ensure that licensees operate in an effective and fair way.

I could indicate also to my hon. friend an area that I bring with me from my old responsibilities of particular concern is that of image portrayed in the media particularly of women and children and the effect it might have on issues related to family violence.

When I was Minister of National Health and Welfare, I asked that more be done to try to sensitize Canadians, particularly people within the media, to concerns about dehumanization of women and children, and portrayals of roles which could foster or could encourage violence in our society. This is certainly one of my concerns.

The issues she raised are all legitimate areas to be looked at.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I rise on this important occasion for the purpose of participating in the debate on the last week's Speech from the Throne. That speech was really a declaration of despair. It should have set new goals for our country and put in place a concrete plan of action to help Canadians climb out of the economic recession in which they now find themselves, an economic recession that this government brought on itself.

The Speech from the Throne offered no new hope and no new progress. This government has failed, and has failed Canadians once again. What unites my colleagues and me and gives urgency to our task is the need to define Canada's destiny and shape the society we all want. While the hopes of the Fathers of Confederation have become our record of Canadian accomplishment, it is the Liberal Party of Canada that has embodied the story of Canada's development for many decades.

For over 100 years, Liberals have sought to fulfil the aspirations of those Canadians seeking a better life and a better land. Traditional Liberal principles have given us purpose and direction, but we have also been innovative. We have responded to new concerns and new realities: from Alexander Mackenzie's political and electoral reforms in the 1870s to Pierre Trudeau's Charter of Rights and Freedoms a century later; from Wilfred Laurier's efforts toward self-government and foreign affairs to Mike Pearson's new Canadian flag and the Canada Pension Plan. This commitment to national progress has been a tenet of Canadian Liberalism when Liberalism was at its best. It developed railways, built the Trans-Canada Highway, the St. Lawrence seaway and the pipelines. The same commitment created a national airline, a major energy company and one of the world's best health care systems.

Our purpose and our progress was shaped by a faith and a power of hope over adversity. That purpose still lives. The Liberals did it and the leader of my party can and will do it again.

Progress has been our heritage; not that of the Conservatives or the NDP, and certainly not that of the Reform Party. The policies of the Mulroney government are policies that punish provinces and working people, deny education, destroy jobs and diminish opportunities. It is a government that presides over people who live on the edge of economic fear or who are experiencing the full and painful realization of those fears. Whether it is the savaging of rail passenger service, budget cuts at CBC or the tightening of purse strings for health care and higher education, the results are the same.

National institutions are being dismantled and destroyed. The destruction of Atlantic Canada is particularly frustrating and sad to many of those Canadians who live in that region. Trains are gone, the planes are gone, our health care system is being threatened and the education of our young people could be limited. It is disheartening to see small towns filled with character, close families and unique identities slowly but consistently crumbling.

Rarely has a government in Canada been given such an historic opportunity to demonstrate vision and rarely has a government failed so badly.

Last week's Speech from the Throne and the budget that was brought down earlier this year completely failed to address the many problems and concerns all Canadians have and the hurt and the hardship that many Canadians must endure. The government had to prepare a budget and a throne speech in an economic situation produced by the cumulative effect of its own policies.

The size of the annual budget deficit since 1986-87 has not been reduced and the national debt has been about doubled in size. Unacceptably high interest rates and exchange rates have been maintained, producing a made-in-Canada recession. Canada's competitiveness has further declined, bankruptcies have reached a record level, unemployment is rising and so is the tax burden and inflation.

The balance of payments in Canada's foreign indebtedness has seriously deteriorated and government revenues are falling.

This is the record of this government: a major recession, public finances out of control and the country itself in serious difficulties.

As recently as last September the former Minister of Finance declared before the Canadian Chamber of Commerce: "Our policy is working."

The minister was referring specifically to his monetary policy, which has caused the recession that all Canadians are now suffering through. One of the most remarkable features of the former Minister of Finance, in his tenure in office, is that over the years, in each and every budget speech, he maintained that his policies were working. His forecast of budget deficits, interest rates, growth rates and inflation rates have been consistently and repeatedly wrong time after time after time.

Another hallmark of the hon. member's career as Minister of Finance must surely be his aptitude at crafting a mythology instead of facing up to reality.

There are so many examples, but none more disturbing than the concluding words of the minister at second reading on the GST on January 29, 1990, when he said:

> I believe that in the months following January 1, 1991, when the cut and thrust of partisan debate on this issue has calmed down, when the controversy has subsided, when Canadians can see our economy even more vibrant and growing, they will conclude, as I have, that this is the right policy for the right reasons at the right time.

• (1600)

We are now in the months following January 1, 1991, and if our economy is now "even more vibrant and growing", it is only I suggest in the minister's mind. It is because the former Minister of Finance was more interested in crafting the myth than dealing with reality that he and his government must bear the full responsibility for Canada's current financial and economic situation.

Perhaps we should talk to the truckers, those many men and women who are losing their jobs and their homes. They see no solution to their tragedy but to come to the front steps of the House of Commons and plead for help from the Minister of Transport.

Perhaps this Minister of Finance should speak with senior citizens, perhaps he ought to speak to students and single parents across this country, those Canadians who are among the least able to pay more in tax and those Canadians who are suffering so unfairly. These are the Canadians on whom the burden of the Mulroney government's new taxes have fallen and will fall again.

This government must stop attacking the middle class and the working poor, those many Canadians in every province and territory who get by each day on nothing more than pennies and yes, prayers. This government has raised the taxes on working Canadians 31 times since 1984. In fact, income tax revenues collected by this government have increased by 70 per cent since the Conservative government was elected in 1984 with most of the increases being taken from middle-class families.

This government has doubled the national debt and has in fact piled up more debt than all of Canada's Prime Ministers since Sir John A. Macdonald. In this government, tax reforms have had the result of raising personal income taxes by replacing deductions with tax credits, by deindexing tax brackets and by introducing the so-called clawbacks of social welfare legislation such as family allowance and old age pensions.

Our goal must be a simpler and fairer tax system. The Conservative government has tried and has failed. As well, the incomes of middle-class families have not kept ahead of inflation since this government was elected and these families are finding themselves increasingly in debt as they struggle to attain the goals of a middle-class life; a home, a college education for their children and a comfortable retirement.

These are hard times for these honest people. The tax policies that favour the few and punish the middle class are unacceptable to my party and I believe they are unacceptable to Canadians across this country.

There are many ways to raise money or to save money than to increase an already unfair tax burden. We do not accept the belief that savings in federal spending can be achieved only by eliminating or devastating programs that help the poor, the elderly, the ill, the young and the disadvantaged.

Even the minister's seventh and last budget was an economic failure. In point of fact, this budget has been characterized by one of Canada's leading financial institutions, none other than the Toronto-Dominion Bank and I quote: "It is probably the most economically inept and destructive budget since 1930s". These are strong words, but words that are warranted when the record is examined.

The 1991 budget papers' treatment of the recent economic performance is particularly damning. It confirms that the retrenchment in interest, sensitive consumer demand, cuts in business investment and manufacturing decline, all signs of an impending recession were evident at the time of the 1990 budget. A year ago, there was an unmistakable set of warnings about the trouble the Canadian economy was heading for. The then Minister of Finance had an opportunity to change course and stop pursuing policies which were driving the country into a recession. But, no, he stuck to that policy.

Even more surprising, in 1990 the minister continued to daydream in spite of the harsh reality depicted in his own budget papers. Once again he expressed confidence that after a short economic slowdown in the first half of 1990, the imbalances would be corrected, mostly by natural forces in the economy and sound non-inflationary growth would be resumed in 1991.

Last year the minister's predictions were regarded by most economic observers as totally unrealistic. The reality is that the macroeconomic policies pursued by the Minister of Finance did not work and they have produced this recession. The government has also failed to deal responsibly with big budget deficits.

Those with long memories will recall how the Minister of Finance described his strategy for controlling the national debt in his first budget of May 1985. He called it the: "clear and realistic medium-term plan". Those were the buzzwords.

Last year, that is five years after the plan was launched, the minister was still referring to it in his budget, in spite of the consistent failure of his plan to reduce the deficit. The record speaks for itself.

The cost, however, paid by all Canadians for these and the minister's other mistakes have been a dramatic increase in the tax burden, particularly upon individuals. Sadly, Canada has joined the ranks of the most internationally indebted countries and our future ability to manage monetary policy will be even more restrained in the future.

For all these reasons the former Minister of Finance and this government will be judged severely, not only for their poor or indifferent economic management, but for the gross lack of vision when we faced the greatest current challenge to Canada's existence as a dynamic and a united country.

The clear and realistic plan of budget deficit reduction has failed. The economic renewal plan has failed and the five-year plan for further deficit reduction is in the course of failing.

Nowhere is the Tory record of failure more evident that in my own province of Nova Scotia. The Atlantic Provinces Economic Council predicts that real growth in my province will be limited, with almost no growth at all in the economy. In Cape Breton, unemployment is running at about 20 per cent or double the national average where statistics can be found. Many stores and restaurants in the Sydney and Glace Bay area have closed their doors. Jobs are disappearing and hope of finding another one does not exist any more.

Hotels and restaurant operators in Cape Breton say that the number of bus tours fell by as much as 14 per cent last year, with American tourists complaining about high prices and high taxes. American tourists, like so many Canadians, do not like the Prime Minister picking their pockets every time they go to a local shopping mall, see a movie, go out to dinner with their family or visit the corner store.

Times continue to be tough in fishing towns such as Lockeport and Digby, where the fish processing plants closed and put a town out of work. And now in my own small town of Louisbourg, signs are evident that real danger is on the horizon.

Halifax, the capital of our province has its problems too. The Metro Food Bank is feeding more than 7,000 people a month, 40 per cent more people than it did in 1989.

There are many things one could refer to with regard to the throne speech. But let it be said that this is a very, very difficult time for this country both economically and politically.

• (1610)

I believe that young Canadians want their leaders to exercise prudent judgment on their behalf, not only for the short term but certainly for the long term as well.

The essential question facing our country has always been the reconciliation of Quebec nationalism with Canadian nationalism. While we can point with pride to our past, Confederation's agenda remains unfinished. Quebec and its people must become a full partner in our national life. Greater efforts must be taken to ensure that that occurs. Whatever the differences between English Canadians and French Canadians, it is vital that French Canadians be assured of the future of their language and culture.

Beyond these concerns, we must work to strengthen the common ties that bind together, ties of history and of kinship. Whatever the differences between Quebec and the rest of Canada, they must be overcome because the relationship between English Canadians and French Canadians is essential to the nation at the present time. More, it is critical to our own future and to the very meaning of our Canadian way of life.

Surely the hope of this nation lies in the acceptance of our differences, our distinctiveness and the recognition of our common problems and our common purpose. That is what John A. Macdonald and George Cartier had in mind in Charlottetown in 1864, when beneath the old gas lamps in the old Prince Edward Island legislature, they committed themselves to building a new nation with a new Constitution.

Today, that same challenge faces us anew. Today, more than ever, Canadians need a vision of what their country can become. We can choose, as parliamentarians, between industrial vitality or industrial decline, between national renewal or national ruin.

If we do not try to change things today, we may not have a chance tomorrow. We must demand a fair deal for families and a fighting chance for our young people. To be involved in that effort is to be involved with the same spirit that fired the imagination and efforts of the first settlers to New France several centuries ago.

In closing, every one of us can be a pioneer in our own time, blazing by thought and service a trail to a better and brighter future. Together, my colleagues and I on this side, are determined to carry our great democratic experiments proudly forward; rekindle the commitment to the human spirit on which the greatness of our country depends; and yes, to pledge our future to building a better Canada in every region, province and community across this great country.

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great deal of interest to what my hon. colleague had to say about the Speech from the Throne.

I must say that for much of his intervention, I really had a difficult time in processing what I was hearing because he was painting such a black, bleak future and such a black, bleak picture of Canada. I was almost not able to get to my feet because I fell into the depths of depression.

I would suggest that what we have to do is begin to look for answers and solutions. It is not enough to criticize what the government is doing and then say that the country is falling into disrepair, disrepute and that terrible things are happening from one end of this country to the other.

We must have a plan. It is clear in the Speech from the Throne that Canada does have a plan led by the Prime Minister and that the budgets on the financial side which have been produced by the finance minister previously have given us hope for the future. The policies this government is putting forward paint a brighter picture for the future than we have had in the past, certainly in the past 20 years.

I would suggest again that it is not enough to criticize. I think we need alternatives. Canada needs hope, not hopelessness as painted by the member opposite.

I would ask the hon. member to give us his personal blueprint, a positive blueprint, for the future of Canada—not just a lot of rhetoric, but a real blueprint. Tell us what your plans are.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the observations and the question of the hon. member opposite. I am not prepared to apologize to the hon. member for the picture I had painted for her in terms of what is out there across this country. The hon. member must realize that, notwithstanding the fact that she is a member of the government and enjoys a majority at this point in time, there are many, many Canadians who are in deep economic anguish. However, the hon. member asked for my answer and I will respond if she would just be a little bit courteous and listen to my response regarding her observation. There are many Canadians who suffer great, great economic anguish, who are greatly concerned about what is taking place politically in this country in terms of national unity.

I do not make apologies for standing up on behalf of those truckers outside. I make no apologies for standing up for the unemployed in my constituency. I make no apologies for standing up for those individuals, both young and middle-aged, who want a fair shake from government and have been denied it. I make no apology whatsoever for putting on the record that there are thousands upon thousands of Canadians whose economic plight has been driven into the ground, down through the ground, by the policies of the government opposite.

The hon. member has posed a very specific question: What is my blueprint? I will give the hon. member just a little sample.

The other day we had an opposition day where we put forward a motion regarding the trucking industry. The transport critic for our party laid on the table nine specific points that the government could pursue without great cost, many of them without great cost to the taxpayers, either provincially or federally. All the government did was thumb its nose at them.

That is one point I want to bring to the hon. member's attention.

Second, the hon. member talks about the blueprint. One of the essential ingredients of an economic blueprint has to be monetary policy. The monetary policies of this government, in terms of its high dollar and high interest rates, are choking small and medium-sized businesses across this country. It is preventing companies from going out and hiring individuals they would normally want to hire.

I believe, as I am sure the hon. member believes, very much in the private sector. We have to facilitate the private sector, which is the engine of growth in this country. That certainly cannot be done with a monetary policy which chokes small business and medium-sized business. You don't do that. That is what this government has done in the regions of this country, in my own region of Atlantic Canada.

It is absolutely devastating. I am not joyful about standing on the floor of the House of Commons and telling members of the plight of those Canadians, but that is the responsibility that I have as a member of Parliament.

The member can speak from her seat and say: "your specific plan". There are three items that the member could act upon. However, the member won't act upon it, just as the member failed to act with regard to what Canadians were saying on the GST and a host of other things.

The hon. member knows very well the answers, the courses of action that have led to this economic recession. The government refuses at every opportunity to accept cogent, prudent advice and change its ways.

We hoped that with a new Minister of Finance we may see some light at the end of the tunnel, but unfortunately he is sticking to those old policies.

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): I, too, have similar concerns to those raised by my hon. friend from Winnipeg, and that is the lack of answers.

• (1620)

I think we have suffered through a 20-minute litany of all of those things that are wrong. Correction, there were a couple of minutes of praise for those good old Liberal times, the times when we had capital gains tax, the national energy policy, the scientific research tax credit, the Katimaviks, and the 22 per cent interest rates, the airplane manufacturers, VIA Rail and all the rest of it done on borrowed money year after year, the borrowing piling up to the point where in March 1985 the national debt reached some $207 billion. Of course, our friend suggests that this government has doubled the debt since that time.

It is almost true. It is up to $390 billion now. My hon. friend knows that almost all of that increase is compound interest on that legacy of debt left to us as a result of the mismanagement and gross overspending of his regime.

The fact is that the deficit this year is something like $30 billion. If his party had continued to be in charge the deficit this year, based on those trend lines, would be $99 billion. The national debt would be in the area of $700 to $800 billion. Canada would be on the verge of bankruptcy.

What have we done? Based on what was left to us, yes, this government has increased taxes and has reduced programs and reduced spending. Every single measure was opposed by the members opposite.

What I want to ask him, and I would like an answer, not this nonsense of fixing interest rates and the absence of the rest of the world, as if we did not have an increasingly interdependent global economy, not this nonsense of a lower dollar, as if we are suddenly going to magically pluck a figure out of the air and lower the dollar—Bangladesh style—and suddenly prosper. What I would like to know is what would the Liberal Party do with the deficit? Apparently it would not increase taxes, it would not reduce spending. What would it do? Just a simple straightforward answer, please.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asks what we would do in terms of the deficit. I think it is very clear that—

Mr. Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek): Borrow, borrow.

Mr. Dingwall: The hon. member does not want to give me an opportunity to respond. The fact of the matter is that his monetary policies and the policies of the Minister of Finance, as echoed by the Bank of Canada, in themselves have contributed more to this national deficit than anything. When people are unemployed, people are not paying their fair share of taxes. Those kinds of things contribute substantially to a national deficit.

The monetary policy is what must be changed by this particular government to get the deficit and economy under control.

In conclusion, I am somewhat surprised that the hon. member would stand in the House and make reference to the national energy program, when the former premier of Alberta, Mr. Peter Lougheed, signed the deal here in Ottawa. The hon. member ought to be ashamed of himself for taking shots at the former premier of the province of Alberta.

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to add a few of my thoughts and words to this debate on the throne speech. By their nature, speeches from the throne are usually pretty general. Other speakers and media commentators have pointed out that they tend to lack specifics. They are not unlike a motto though, something that sets a tone and a direction.

Before being elected to this place, while serving as mayor, I wrote a motto for my municipality. We said that we had pride in our past and faith in our future.

That same motto should apply to our country today. The Royal Canadian Legion borrowed our motto for its diamond anniversary celebration. I am proud to share anything with the Royal Canadian Legion. I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to compliment the Dominion Command of the Legion for its recent initiative on national unity.

There is no group in Canada that has more invested in this country than do its members. The men and women who stood strong to defend our way of life are now, through their national unity campaign, continuing to fight to preserve the country in which they have invested so much.

I believe in the Canada they have worked for. I am very proud of our history.

In reflecting on that motto, one of the reasons that Canadians today may look to the future with discouragement is that they have not learned enough of our past. They do not have the pride in our Canadian history that they should have. Ours is a history of strong people who were willing to put aside individual differences and build a nation, a nation that exists today and is the envy of much of the world.

As members of Parliament, we have all had the opportunity to attend citizenship court. The most recent one I attended in Red Deer had 34 people from 18 different countries. Every one of them was there, not to become a hyphenated Canadian, but to become a Canadian.

In discussing with them afterwards, a number expressed amazement at how little Canadians knew about their own history. There is an old saying that if you do not appreciate what you have, you are going to lose it.

During the recess we each had the opportunity to spend some extra time with our electorate. We must have all heard that which we know, that we face serious challenges in our country and we are at a turning point in Canadian history.

There is a great malaise across this nation of ours. Canadians are concerned. They are also frustrated and upset. It is my strong personal opinion that we must be open to discussions on change in this very institution. However, the throne speech points out many other areas of change that Canadians must be open and receptive to.

There are many agendas across the nation and each is important to the people in those areas, and indeed to Canada as a whole. In my own province we want to see the Senate made responsive to the needs of Canadians and capable of defending the rights of the provinces. It is time for a major change.

I appreciated the comments of the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs when he said that Senate reform would be one of the items that he would be addressing.

Challenges present opportunities and I see a major opportunity given us right now. The ongoing discussion, indeed the conflict and the questions have Canadians involved and attentive to the happenings in this House. The level of involvement and concern possibly makes politicians uncomfortable, but I think that is healthy. People should be aware of what goes on in their political institutions, and those of us who serve in political office have to be ready to accept comment and constructive criticism.

The economy and our ability to compete internationally is another reason why we must work together. A diminished Canada would diminish each of the regions as well. Those who believe otherwise are fooling themselves. It is true that in an individual sense the day-to-day activities of our lives might not be affected. We would still live in the same house, drive the same car, shop in the same store. The sun would still shine, the rain still fall and the seasons pass, but Canada would be diminished and there would be an economic price paid by all. We would lose our place at the G-7, our international prestige would diminish, and the resulting uncertainty could tie up courts and political effort for years. International monetary markets would question investment in this country. None of us can afford that uncertainty, and no thinking Canadian wants it.

Executives at major Canadian corporations were quoted in the press last week as saying:

> The separation of Quebec would do more than divide Canada. It would eliminate jobs and send investment, plants and opportunities to the United States, Europe and Asia.

It went on to say that our unity is strengthened by a strong economy and prosperity is enhanced by a united country, but that disunity in the face of global economic challenge invites decline.

I love this country. Canada is a great nation. I believe it became the great nation it is because of the core values it was developed upon: the belief in God and the dignity and worth of the individual.

Our society was built on the foundation of faith, family and community. I was encouraged by the one sentence in the throne speech where His Excellency said:

> My government will review its policy in relation to the family, the most fundamental building block of Canadian society.

There is systemic discrimination against the traditional family. It is wrong when a single parent will question whether he or she will get married because of the income tax implications and the child tax credit. It is wrong that two senior citizens would question whether to marry because of pension implications.

One sentence in the throne speech is not much, but I will be joining other members of our caucus in this House to encourage the government to act on it.

In many areas of the world the conflicts that exist within Canada today would be the basis of armed conflict. The hon. member for Edmonton Southwest recently remarked that we are engaged perhaps in a form of civil war in Canada, only in typical Canadian fashion we are trying to talk ourselves to death. We have problems and we are talking, and I believe we have the resolve to address them and to work out amiable solutions.

I feel it is very important that we try to understand and get to know people in all regions of Canada.

• (1630)

Recently the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs told rural Albertans that he and his family still live on the same land that was farmed by his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, back 11 generations. Nobody loves the land like an Alberta farmer, and to think of one family inhabiting one piece of land for 325 years gave them cause for serious thought.

Last summer I had the occasion to attend a special anniversary for the McAllister family in the Antler Hill district. It was celebrating the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the first McAllister to farm that land. This year, I plan to join the residents of Willowdale as they too celebrate the centennial of their rural community. These people are proud of their land and they are proud of their heritage. Their forefathers rode across Canada by wagon, by horse and by train to come to an unknown and uncertain part of this country. By coming to the west they helped to build a nation. We, their descendants, are very proud today of what they built. We are proud to be Albertans, but above all, we are proud Canadians and we know that any reduction to Canada is a reduction to us all.

In closing, I have a short poem to which I am sorry I cannot ascribe any author. I have checked it and it is listed as anonymous.

I stopped to watch them tear a building down
Some working men in my hometown.
With a heave and ho and a yes, yes yell,
They swung a beam and a sidewall fell.
I asked the foreman,"Are these men skilled?
The type you'd hire if you were to build?"
He chuckled and said, "No, indeed.
The commerce of labour is all I need.
For I can destroy in a day or two
What skilled men worked many years to build".
And I thought to myself as I wandered away
Which of these roles do I plan to play.

During our constitutional discussions and during the debate, there are all too many people in this country who have been willing to play the role of the destructor; the person who is willing to sit back, criticize and tear down the efforts of the others who are trying to build. We are the recipients of the efforts of many men and women who have constructively worked together in a struggle to forge a consensus and who have toiled with their minds and their bodies to develop the land, a land that is the envy of the entire world and a country that sits as an example.

I am confident that we can ignore the naysayers and overlook those who would simply criticize and tear down for their own political or personal reasons, because the needs of Canada are greater than the needs of any individual. Canada is worth fighting for. Should we succeed in our efforts to overcome the many problems and challenges that face us today, history may record this period as nothing more than a footnote. Should we fail, we will have to explain to our children and grandchildren what we were doing when Canada was ripped apart.

I was elected as an Albertan. I was also elected as a Canadian. I was not elected to see this country torn apart and I want my efforts to be recorded on the side of those who are willing to work and add my skills to the building of the greatest nation in the world, my Canada.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my friend who just spoke if he would comment on an article in *Quorum* today which stated, I believe—I do not have the exact quote in my hand—that he does not really support the present government policy of multiculturalism. Particularly, I think he referred to the funding of ethnocultural organizations. I would like to ask him to explain his concept of multiculturalism and his views on the government's policy and why he said this.

I would also like to know whether he represents many of the groups in Alberta, where there have been many ethnocultural organizations that have been very active and form the backbone of the population of Alberta and our western provinces, generally.

I would also be very interested to know whether his concept of multiculturalism looks at employment equity, racism and the needs for us to implement equality in society. We need to have an affirmative multicultural program that will work toward those goals.

I really think he needs to explain his position.

Mr. Fee: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to reply to the question of the hon. member for Vancouver East. It is not often that those of us who inhabit the backbenches get their name in *Quorum* and not too often do we get a chance to explain.

As the member well knows, each one of us in this House is very often interviewed by people from the media. They take our comments and they write them up. Quite often they attach their own headings and they editorialize a little bit in the comments.

The comments in *Quorum* today attributed to me were part of an extremely long interview that I did with one of my weekly newspapers. It took about a page and a half of the paper to do the whole thing. There were certain elements taken out of it and recorded, one of which was my comments on multiculturalism.

I touched on this very briefly in my comments when I referred to the citizenship court. Canada is made up of different ethnic groups, and Alberta is a tremendous example. In that diversity there is strength. It is also beautiful that we have so many cultures come together. I personally encourage those people to pay attention to their heritage because we have to know our heritage. If we do not appreciate our heritage, we do not appreciate what we have in the present and we cannot plan for the future.

At the same time, there has been no period in Canadian history when we needed to develop a sense of being Canadian more. My comments were critical of any funds that went to a hyphenated Canadian group. I do not feel that we should be encouraging people to stress their differences. Encourage them to recognize their own heritage, by all means, as that is important, it is the strength of Canada, but my comment was that the Government of Canada should not be funding people to be hyphenated Canadians. It is important at this juncture of our history that we develop a sense of community, being together, and what makes us the same, not what makes us different.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. Debate.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, on July 1, Canada will be 125 years old. It is going to be an uneasy birthday because we are wondering if we are going to reach 126, and if we do, what kind of Canada we will have. Will we have a unified Canada, a divided Canada or a Balkanized Canada? Those are the questions that are going through all of our minds and we are very worried about our country.

I mention that because there seems to be a mood in this House that has not been evident in past years: we do want a strong Canada, a united Canada. We have to work a little bit harder to ensure that happens, especially as we approach Canada's 125th birthday. We are only a month and a half away and I think that thought is really bearing pretty heavily on our minds.

Just to emphasize this, last evening I was leaving the House of Commons with a Liberal member of Parliament from the Moncton riding. He had with him a couple of relatives. Their names were Georgie and Murray Seeley from London, Ontario. They wanted to talk about Canada, and we talked very freely.

One of the things that Mrs. Seeley pointed out to me was that she and her husband, who are both World War II veterans, are very worried about what might be happening. Her question to me was: "Do you think we will get through this thing?" That seems to be the dominant question, the theme that is on everyone's mind.

That generation seems to have more of a feeling for this country than maybe the rest of us, because it knows what it is like to have to work for something and to preserve something worth preserving.

In the course of that conversation she asked about one of my constituents, whose name is Lorne Groom. They served together during that war and when Mr. and Mrs. Seeley mentioned the relationship with Mr. Groom, it brought back a lot of memories.

I mention this again for a very specific reason: to point out the sacrifices that many Canadians have made for our country.

• (1640)

Lorne Groom was a very young man in World War II. He is a double amputee who worked very hard and went through university. He raised a fabulous family and still resides in St. Stephen. In fact last week he experienced a great hardship when his wife passed on very unexpectedly.

When we look at people like the Seeleys, the Grooms and others around this country who have sacrificed so much, it really explains in toto why they are so nervous and upset with what is happening. They want to see us confident that we are going to get through this thing.

To me, the mood in this House is that we want to work together to ensure that we do get through our difficulties. We do want a united and strong Canada. We have to work to make it happen. We have taken so much for granted in this country in the last 25 or 30 years. Maybe it has been too easy for us. Maybe it is time that we reflect on the past and the sacrifices that Canadians, who in many cases are older than us, have made for the country and why they are so worried about it.

Despite all the difficulties that we are going through, we tend as Canadians to ignore the positive. There is so much happening in this country that is positive.

I am going to quote from a speech the Prime Minister gave in Calgary on April 22 of this year: "Those who claim that Canada's standard of living and quality of life, our social safety net and our legal system, our culture and our international status add up to failure must have a very strange definition of success. The evidence proves the contrary". The Prime Minister went on to point out that we could not afford to be complacent in this country.

But we are successful. Do we throw that success down the drain? Do we throw it all away? No, we do not. Canadians do not want to throw it all away. We simply have to work harder to continue the kind of success that Canada has enjoyed in the past number of years.

In terms of economic strength Canada is number eight in the world, although in terms of population we rank 31st. We have earned our place and we have to maintain it. We have earned our place at the economic summit. We sit beside countries like the United States, Japan, France, United Kingdom and Italy. We have earned our place. We have to maintain it, but we are not going to do it by being complacent. We have to get at the reasons why we were successful in the past. We have to respond to changes that have to come about but which are not always easy.

We have to take a very strong look at our educational system in this country and what we are doing. Some of the alarming statistics point out that we are not doing it all right. It is estimated that 40 per cent of new jobs created by the year 2000 will be highly skilled. Today, that figure is only 24 per cent.

One of the things that we are very conscious of is that at 30 per cent Canada has one of the highest high school dropout rates in the world. It is 30 per cent. As a nation we spend more on education than 90 per cent of all other countries in the world.

Yet, we have statistics that are so alarming. They point out that a large percentage of our population is not functionally literate. Given those alarming statistics, do we have any hope of competing in the future? Do we have any hope of competing against countries in the world that are changing or have changed with the times, that are willing to commit and have committed resources to those changes that are being dictated to us? We cannot go on in the old sense of doing things, the old ways of doing things.

The Speech from the Throne simply indicates that Canada and this government are willing to move with the times and make the changes that are necessary to ensure that future Canadian generations will be as prosperous as we have been in the past. We are going to commit the resources to ensure that happens.

When Canadians look at us and scrutinize us very carefully in this House in the coming weeks, I hope they can identify that sense of urgency, that we realize what has to be done and we are going to work together to make it happen. A unified Canada is a prosperous Canada. We need to have that economic prosperity, that dedication to task, to make it happen. I am convinced that we will and it will not be the politicians who do it. It will be Canadians themselves who will do it.

The cynicism that surrounds politicians is very understandable. From time to time in this House Canadians witness unnecessary heckling and criticism back and forth across the floor and they wonder what we are doing here to resolve some of the difficulties.

I think the urgency of the times has drawn a line across that type of behaviour and we realize we have to work together. We can have our differences, but we are going to have to work very hard to get through this thing.

On July 1, when we celebrate our 125th year, maybe we will have that sense of optimism that we are going to make it to 126. We are only going to do it by working together, working for that common goal which is a prosperous Canada, a unified Canada.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with interest to the hon. member. I certainly share his concerns about national unity.

I want to comment on the lack of concrete plans in the Speech from the Throne for jobs for Canadians at the present time. I have a question that I want to ask the hon. member.

I know that in my own province of Prince Edward Island the unemployment rate is running roughly 2 per cent more than it was at this time last year. We have a lot of people looking for jobs, as we have all across this country.

We look to this Speech from the Throne to offer them some hope, and here again the government has let them down. Not only that, but last week in my province we were told that the GST centre which was to open in the fall of 1992 will now be delayed one year until 1993.

When the Prime Minister promised this, he said it would be open in the fall of 1992. Then it was delayed until January 1993, then to June 1993, and now we are into the fall of 1993. I must say that last weekend I had a number of people speak to me who were beginning to doubt the commitment of this government to ever open that centre.

I have never heard a logical reason for this delay. It has been reported in the press that some government officials have said that the delay has to do with the battle that this party, my party, waged against the GST. That is absolutely foolish. It does not make any sense. I do not think that this type of nonsense has any place in an issue where the economic survival of a community is at stake. This government started the GST on the date that it had planned and continued through with its plan to collect the tax. If it can do that, surely it can continue with the construction of that GST centre and get it open, if it has the will to do it.

• (1650)

I want to ask the hon. member: Does he agree that the lack of job creation possibilities in the Speech from the Throne, coupled with delays like the GST centre in Summerside, are completely unacceptable?

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, in direct answer to the question regarding the GST centre, that would probably be more appropriate if it were answered by the minister in the House. I am sure the hon. member will put that question to the appropriate minister soon, if she has not already done so.

With regard to the big picture of the economy, one of the things that the opposition fails to recognize is that Canada is part of the western world. The decline in the economy, and if you want, to a recession in the western world, is something that we cannot avoid because we are international players, international traders, and we cannot escape that reality.

If the member would look beyond just Canada, and I know that she does, the devastation in the U.S. with regard to the slowdown in its economy, has been greater than it has been in Canada, far greater. That does not remove us from our own responsibilities. In that sense we have a tremendous responsibility, no question about it, to get the economy moving again.

I believe that we will because I believe that the policies we are putting forward are the types of policies that will get us through the hard times and will create a stronger and more vibrant Canadian economy.

We cannot remove ourselves from the real world. We cannot buy our way out of problems. That was the tendency of previous governments.

Mr. Speaker, if you give me just a minute, I want to explain this. This pen—I often do this when I am speaking to groups—I pull it out of my pocket and I say, this has been the biggest enemy of the Canadian taxpayer since Confederation, especially the last 25 or 30 years. For the last 25 or 30 years successive governments and politicians from all sides—I am not just picking on the Liberals or the NDP, I can say it about Conservative governments as well—have pulled this pen out of their pockets and just written the cheque, knowing darn right well the money was not there. What did we do? We saddled the Canadian people with a huge debt because the easy answer for those 25 or 30 years was write the cheque, buy off the Canadian people. What we were doing was mortgaging the country.

I do not want to see that happen. It will not happen with this government. It did not happen in the last budget brought forward by this government and it is certainly not reflected—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I think that some people in this House realize that this is probably one of the most important debates so far as a throne speech is concerned that we are going to have because it will be during this session that many of the national problems concerning the national unity of this nation will have to be grappled with and, indeed, solved.

Therefore, we must take a very serious approach to this whole business of national unity and the economy. I am a firm believer that when people are dissatisfied over the economy, it certainly gives them more to complain about what is happening in the country. It is weakening national unity at the same time.

In previous speeches in the House, I have said that what this good old nation of Canada needs is a good dose of healthy national spirit. I do not think we are going to get this if we are going to keep on complaining inwardly about ourselves and if we are going to be downgrading ourselves in the eyes of the world.

We have indeed been given a great nation to manage. What we have to do is talk more about our opportunities in this country. We have to talk about the assets that we have been given, that we have inherited in this nation. We have to talk about what the Fathers of Confederation set going—and not just the Fathers of Confederation, but those people before them who for years built the colony which eventually became the nation.

The Fathers of Confederation had great insight for people in that particular age. Many things have happened to date that they could not visualize any more than we in this House today or anyone across this nation is going to visualize what is going to happen in the next 25 years of Canadian history. The country will have to adjust accordingly. We may well have to adjust our Constitution along the way to meet those challenges.

I think we, as Canadians, have to realize that God has given us a great land. We have indeed been blessed. If we do not manage it correctly, then we have no one to blame but ourselves. But there must be the right attitude. You cannot do it if you have a lot of negative attitudes. If you do not have a positive attitude, you are not going to build anything.

We in this nation have seldom been without the necessities of life. Indeed, there have been some people across the country who have experienced hard times and who have had difficult moments in their lives looking after their families, but we have found that for Canadians generally, be it at the community level or be it with our social programs in Canada, a great deal has been done to help everybody over those rough periods here in this nation of ours. We must never lose that feeling of empathy, that feeling of concern for our fellow individuals, any more than we should lose that feeling of empathy and concern for the international community. No nation in the world has been able to build the international highways of good will that have been built up by former statesmen in this House, former public servants in Canada and former Canadians generally.

It is indeed a great time. People say: "Oh, they are challenging times, things are difficult, my goodness what are we going to do next?" Well, what we do is sit down and get going on the challenge. You don't sit around wringing your hands, complaining and bickering and badgering.

I want to mention the economy one more time at the beginning of my speech. During modern day times when the economy goes flat, it affects far more Canadians than it ever did before. Even during the "dirty thirties", as people called them, by far the largest portion of Canadians still lived on farms and in small rural communities, were able to plant a garden and grow potatoes and kill the pigs in the fall, and they got by. They got by, but why? What added quality was there?

They got by because those Canadians, in many cases our parents, came through that because they had a faith. That is something that we have got to develop, within our own minds and our own mentality today. Do we have a faith to go ahead and build this nation? Do we have a faith to go ahead and work hard and be productive? Do we have a faith to believe in Canada?

I don't say this by way of criticism, Mr. Speaker, but I have heard people get up in this House and say: "I am an Albertan", "I am a Quebecer", "I am so-and-so". Well, Mr. Speaker, I am a Canadian. I may live in Ontario, and I am proud to live in Ontario and to have grown up there, but as a federal member of Parliament, I am a Canadian. If we are going to start building a national spirit in this country, we have got to forget those former terminologies that describe us, and from day one we are Canadians. We must make up our minds that we are going to build a national spirit in this country that will give great pride to Canadians at large.

• (1700)

Leadership is very important. Every time we get up in this House and start talking the blues and bickering and bantering with one another, we are discouraging Canadians. We have to stand up in this House and say first of all that we need to have faith in ourselves and we need to have faith in our fellow members in this House and in the other chamber. We have to realize that we are here to do a job for the people of Canada. We have to realize that we are here as federalists and that we are going to build a nation that we are going to be proud of.

We are very vocal at times in criticising the Americans and the way they build up their country and their pride and so on. We sometimes look upon that as being a bit artificial, but when the President of the United States gets on national television and asks the American people to pull together for the good of the nation, they do it. We must have a strong base where we, ourselves, have faith in this nation, where we implant that faith in all Canadians.

People came here from other countries and are Canadians today. They have adopted this country. Some of them have greater faith in this nation than we have demonstrated. I think that is a shame. Let us begin with that premise.

The other thing that sometimes bothers me in this House is comments about politicians. Yes, we know. I have been around long enough to know when people are angry and when they are in good humour. That is a cycle in politics. There are difficult times. A certain generation of politicians may start arguing and bickering at one another and give people the wrong impression. People blame it on television in the House, but there were wars on the floor of this House of Commons long before television was ever heard of. People ask me: "Does television make a difference?" Television makes a difference, but people across Canada see what is going on here.

However, if we would have had television in this House in 1917 when we had the great debate on conscription across this country, people would not have thought too much of politicians at that time either. This is not a new phenomenon, but it does mean that we have to clean up our act. There is nothing wrong with having strong debates, that is the name of the game. This House is not going to become a puritanical temple where people are not going to argue with one another in honest and earnest debate from time to time. There will always be very strong debate in this House.

Politicians sometimes downgrade themselves by admitting that they are not really showing a good image of themselves, that the people are angry with them because they are not doing their job properly or because they are debating. The first thing we have to realize is that this is a debating institution. From there on, as far as behaviour is concerned, it comes down to the question: "Do we have faith in ourselves and do we have faith enough to have earnest debate back and forth across the floor of this House without getting nasty?"

There is a good old rule in politics that I always use, and in my experience it normally works. If you treat the average individual with a little sense of decency and common sense, they will respond twofold. If we, once in a while, gave them a little encouragement verbally in this House, that would do a great deal to encourage them to go ahead with their daily jobs.

Do not downgrade ourselves as politicians. I am proud to be an elected member of this House of Commons. I am proud to be an elected Canadian who can get up and speak on behalf of my constituents, and even for the larger community abroad from coast to coast to coast in this nation. We must realize the great assets we have, the great things we have to work for. We must take examples from those who came to this country with nothing and have succeeded. That is what we have to do. We are only going to do it if we have the energy and determination to do it ourselves.

I want to discuss regional development factors. If we are going to develop a Canadian nation, it has always been the case, over the decades of Canadian history, that as regional development goes, so goes the nation.

Northern and eastern Ontario are in a downturn now. What is happening in Toronto? Toronto is in a downturn because it is losing industry. The larger urban centres of our nation suffer when the regions that feed them suffer because they do not get the same input and do not have people doing the same kind of business with them from right across that particular region.

These are basic economic issues for the future development of Canada. What are important issues in regional development? Well, it has to be admitted that the free trade agreement, regardless of what we think of it on either side of this House, has hurt agriculture in this country. There is no question about that.

The dairy industry is very concerned and has been for some time. There is no question whatsoever that the famous memorandum of understanding, signed by a former Minister of International Trade who now has the delight of sitting in the Senate as a reward, putting a 15 per cent export tax on softwood lumber to the United States hurt the lumber industry. We in northern and eastern Ontario, and in particular this region, have seen the effects of that since day one. There is no question about it.

When we see 300 people walking away from a sawmill, we think of the 15 per cent export tax, we think of high interest rates and an artificially high Canadian dollar. Then we think of all the added expenses the truckers have to put up with in order to transport those goods to market.

How can we succeed under that? Again, I come back to my original theory. If we are going to have faith in this nation, we have got to correct some of those inequities and not just sit back and complain about it. I wish some of us were on the government side of the House so we could do something about these issues. When we get there, we will clean it up.

We are no sooner reeling from the results of free trade with the United States than the government is running headlong into free trade with Mexico. We have already seen what can happen. Of the eight industries that left the town of Renfrew, in my riding, one was the Playtex plant. Some of that business went to Mexico because of cheap labour. Some went to parts of the Far East. Those interests go wherever the low wages are.

What are we going to do to handle that? Are we going to lower our wages in this country down to poorhouse wages? We have more faith in ourselves than that. We may have to adjust and do other things we can do better. It has to be done.

The government had promised that company that it was going to take the tax off the raw material that came into Canada from the United States. So the company thought: "Great, we will stay in Canada". It waited until after the free trade agreement was passed, and what happened? The tax on the raw material coming in from New Jersey, or wherever, was not taken off. So the company felt betrayed and left.

Those are just some examples. It is true that there is a big link between the economy and national unity in this country, as I said in the beginning. It is too bad it has taken the government so long to find that out.

I was delighted to see the recognition in the throne speech, just as I was delighted to see our leader's term: "the Canada round", referring to the next round of negotiations to try to amend our Canadian Constitution and create a base for national unity.

• (1710)

The term "Canada round" was used by the leader of the Liberal Party months before this throne speech came into play. We do not mind them picking up some of our good points. We can give them lots of good points if they would use them. We hope they will.

It is too bad the government is seen to be so eager to produce quickly with free trade agreements. With the deindustrialization of places like Ontario, with what has happened to the lumber industry, as I have outlined, you almost begin to wonder whether this government really knows for which nation it is the national government.

We see the trucking industry in the United States getting preference over our industry and the forest industry getting preference. I just want to say here that on the defence side there are all kinds of contracts. The Americans are holding back some of those contracts for themselves in the United States. Are we really on a free trade basis?

This government was elected in 1984 and stated that it was going to do everything possible for the Department of National Defence. We heard all these great comments, but the fact remains that the defence department personnel certainly are not very proud of what the government is doing for them now.

It wants them to go abroad. It wants them to go into the Persian Gulf and anywhere in the world for peacekeeping. When the soldiers came home from the Persian Gulf, the Prime Minister, the Minister of National Defence and the Associate Minister of National Defence were all there shaking hands with them when they came off the plane.

About two weeks later, they said: "We are going to cut you by 25 per cent." That was their reward. Some of these things have great effect on the regional development of this country. The then Minister of National Defence even mentioned this while some of the troops were still in the Persian Gulf. You can imagine what encouragement that gave to them.

Regional development involves post offices and various industries, government departments and so on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)): I regret to inform the hon. member that his time is up.

Mr. Len Gustafson (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have a bit of a statement and a question.

Basically the hon. member is promoting a protectionist approach to government direction. There is no question there is a world-wide recession. We cannot blame the free trade agreement for the problems we are facing. In my opinion the free trade agreement should have happened 20 years ago. The world is becoming a smaller place in which to do business.

The hon. member mentioned agriculture. For instance, in wheat and grains alone Canada has exported to the U.S. an additional 16 per cent since the free trade agreement.

I was talking to a businessman from Winnipeg who has a leather factory. He tells me business has never been so good. It employs 60 people in Winnipeg and the same number in Nova Scotia. You cannot lay the blame of a recession on the free trade agreement.

Would the hon. member, if his government were elected, support removing the free trade agreement? Would he support tearing it up?

Mr. Hopkins: Mr. Speaker, I never blamed the recession on the free trade agreement. As all Canadians do, I blame the recession on the Government of Canada. You are the ones who created it. To have the gall to stand up here and misinterpret my remarks I think is pretty weak.

As far as saying that I was giving a protectionist speech, my goodness, I just explained what happened with the softwood lumber industry. This government signed a protectionist agreement with the United States just moments before it signed the official free trade agreement. Why did they do that? Because that was the last nail in the Canadian coffin that the Americans wanted. They are hard bargainers, we all know that. They are great neighbours but they are hard bargainers. That was the last nail in the Canadian coffin and they wanted that nail in there before they would sign the free trade agreement.

This government used a protectionist measure to destroy the softwood lumber industry in Canada in order to get its free trade agreement. It will not have to use the same thing with Mexico because they will probably want us there anyway.

Mr. Gustafson: Are you going to keep it or tear it up?

Mr. Reid: Would you tear it up?

Mr. Hopkins: What would we do when we are elected? We are going to look at that free trade agreement and use common sense. We are not going holus-bolus down the road and we will change the things that are hurting Canada. We are not going to coast along with this.

Mr. Gustafson: He won't commit himself.

Mr. Hopkins: The hon. member is trying to say something here about something I never said.

I want to say to him, if the Conservatives are so all interested in free trade, why did they not first of all tackle the provincial barriers in Canada to get them out of the way? They have not done that. They have been in power for seven years and they are still blaming the previous Liberal government. They will still be blaming the previous Liberal government the day they are defeated and the Liberals are back in power again. Then we will have the mammoth job of fixing up all the things in Canada that they have destroyed.

Mr. Ross Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I just want to comment very quickly. As usual my friend from the Ottawa Valley makes a tremendous amount of sense, particularly when he talks about regional development and that sort of thing.

To suggest, first of all, that a world-wide recession is the fault of the Canadian government is a bit beyond even this government's capacity and I think his credence. He cannot deny there is a world-wide recession and he cannot blame that on the Canadian government.

Mr. Jordan: Tell your Prime Minister that.

Mr. Reid: He cannot blame that on the Canadian government.

People ask me what I think about the free trade negotiations with Mexico. I have to say, I do not know, because I do not know what the proposal is. I also say to them that it strikes me as obvious that if the Americans are going to sit down with the Mexicans, and we are on the same continent and the Americans are our biggest trading partners, we should be at the table.

Would a Liberal government, if that remote possibility could ever be imagined, allow the Mexicans and the Americans to negotiate a trade deal and not sit at the table?

Mr. Hopkins: The Conservatives are great at asking hypothetical questions.

Mr. Reid: Well, you're talking hypothetical economic theory.

Mr. Hopkins: The hon. member obviously does not want an answer because—

Mr. Reid: What should we do?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member has just asked the question. I would hope that he would allow the hon. member to answer.

Mr. Hopkins: Mr. Speaker, I get the distinct feeling that he is afraid of what I am going to give for an answer, because he is not going to let me answer.

The Liberal government will use common sense in its trade deals. It is not going to go holus-bolus down the road with anybody if it is going to hurt the economy of this nation.

Why is the Prime Minister finally over in Asia to talk? He is over there because he wants to take some of the heat off the negotiations with Mexico. He wants to take some of the heat off the American free trade, as they call it. It is not very free to many people in Canada. The truckers would not agree with the government that it is free trade. They do not agree with it on deregulation either.

The real essence of Canadian government is that the government of the day, any day, must use common sense, reasonable business management and a little financial management too. While this government thinks it has done everything in the world, that it is just one of the finest bankers going and one of the best financial managers going, the fact is that it has indeed more than doubled—it is on the way to tripling—the national debt of this country in six and a half years.

After the previous Minister of Finance had the gall to say in August 1984: "We don't have to increase taxes to pay off the deficit or pay off the national debt. All we have to do is cancel government programs". The government has cancelled programs day in and day out. It has raised the taxes of this country 33 times since taking office and it has not made an impact. The national debt is still going up by leaps and bounds. That is the kind of managers these people are. It is time they are the customers rather than the managers.

• (1720)

Mr. Rob Nicholson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to talk about the subject of Canadian unity, the theme in the Speech from the Throne.

It has been said many times, but I think most Canadians realize that this is a critical and difficult time in the constitutional history of Canada. Most Canadians are coming to the realization that it is a fact of life and something that we will have to come to grips with, that there will have to be a constitutional accommodation within Canada. I think that can be a very healthy thing.

When you look at the Canadian Constitution, there is no particular reason why an individual should be married under provincial law and divorced under federal law. Hopefully a look at our constitutional documents will yield a new accommodation that will make more sense and will be to the benefit of the Canadian Confederation. It is going to be a difficult job and everyone knows that.

Sometimes partisan considerations can get in the way of making a good accommodation for Canada. I do not denigrate partisan politics. I take pride in the fact that I am a partisan. I love partisan debate. I love the Progressive Conservative Party and I have been a member of it since my childhood but, at the same time, I do not think that either my partisan views or the partisan views of other members should get in the way of coming to the accommodation that we will need in Canada.

Let me give you an example of what I am talking about. I remember, shortly after my election in 1984, sitting down with one my constituents who was very much identified with a political party other than my own. It became obvious after awhile that it was very difficult, these partisan differences between the two of us, to talk about what, in effect, was a mutual problem. After awhile I said to the man involved, "Look, let's make a deal here. I am not going to look for your vote. I do not expect your vote. I am going to take a chance that I will not win or lose the 1988 election by one or more votes. So let's you and I agree that you are not going to try and change me because you will not. Let us get on with the problem and see if there is something that we can come up with."

I do not think that is a bad way for Canadians to proceed. Quite apart from whatever their perceptions are of me or the Progressive Conservative Party, this government or of politicians, it should not colour their perceptions about the need to come to an acceptable solution to Canada's constitutional needs.

If we can solve that, there will always be plenty of time. We have a long, great democratic tradition in this country where there will always be room and time for partisan politics, but this is too important an issue for that. I believe the stakes are very, very high.

I was at a meeting of the Royal Canadian Legion, the Stanford branch, several weeks ago. One of the veterans there, a man by the name of Frank Simon who lost an arm in World Word II, told me and those assembled that night that the veterans had fought for all of Canada, had fought for all of the provinces and all the territory of Canada, and the veterans, he said, are counting on the politicians and, indeed, all Canadians to keep this country together. I think those are good words to remember in this debate because when all is said and done, this is a wonderful country. You only have to visit other countries in the world, you only have to talk to any of the people who come into our office who want to emigrate to Canada, to know just how lucky we are as Canadians. I think it is important that we remind ourselves of that sometimes.

All of us have had conversations where we dwell on the problems that Canada is facing. All of us have letters that enumerate all the things that are wrong with Canada. Of all the letters I get, the ones that bother me the most are not the ones that criticize me personally. They are not the ones that criticize this government. They are not the ones that criticize politicians. They are the letters and comments that seem to take aim at Canada itself. Those are the ones I find very difficult and upsetting, even after being in this business for six or seven years.

What I say to them, to all Canadians, and to my constituents is: "Okay, there are many problems in Canada. I think we can solve them". Perhaps we have even made a list of all the things we think are wrong with Canada. But in every argument there is another side. Is it not equally valid, once we have talked about all the provinces, to talk about all the great things about Canada? Is that not equally valid? I think it is.

Whenever I mention the wonderful things in Canada, the obvious counter argument is: "Well, there are still problems with that. It is not perfect". To which I reply: "The list of things that are absolutely no problems or the list of things that are perfect is a very, very short list". If we acknowledge that, which can be the perennial criticism, we should talk about, we should list, and we should think within ourselves as Canadians about all the things that make Canada the great country it is, if we could possibly list them.

I have been saying to people for many, many years that we have the best health care system in the world. The best health care system in the world is right here in Canada. People say that there are problems with it, that it is not perfect. I acknowledge that it is the best in the world, right here in Canada.

This parliamentary system is one of the wonderful things about Canada. This is an open system. This is a Parliament that gives an opportunity to individuals who are not rich or are not born into an aristocracy. This Parliament is open to all who have ambition and who have something to say about Canada. That is one of the wonderful things about Canada.

We can check all the judicial systems in the world, but I know of none better at balancing the public interest and individual rights than our judicial system.

We have an open, accessible, affordable education system in Canada.

Someone said to me recently: "The geography and climate in Canada mean that we are spared most of the natural disasters we read about almost every night in the paper. Those are things we should be thankful for". However, if this country is going to pull together, if it is going to solve the problems we face, it will take all of us looking at the big picture. It will take all of us looking beyond whether we like politicians. It will not just be politicians that will be able to solve this. We need the special interest groups that will say: "Okay, let us look at the greater good of Canada at the same time as looking at our needs".

We will have to ask the media to say: "There is a bigger picture here".

An hon. member: Good luck.

Mr. Nicholson: One member says "Good luck" to me on that. Mr. Speaker, you can check my record. I have not been a basher of the CBC. I do not think I have ever mentioned it. However, I was a little distraught two weeks ago to read an article in *Maclean's* magazine. I am not going to get into it because there may be rebuttals for these things. I see how difficult it was for us if Dr. Meisel's comments are correct about the coverage of the Meech Lake Accord.

I would say to the media, to politicians, to partisan politicians, to all of us: "Let us give Canada a break this time, because Canada needs some help from everybody". It is worth it.

Sir John A. Macdonald said that if Canada wants to have its own country, if Canada wants to pursue its own destiny, there will be prices to be paid to be Canadians. That was true in 1867 and it is true today. I believe that when Canadians look within themselves, they will come to the conclusion that Canada is worth the effort.

• (1730)

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments with regard to the hon. member's speech.

First of all, I think most members would probably agree with him in the sense that the constitutional debate should be a non-partisan type of debate. I would tend to agree with that also. But the difficulty I have with that and the difficulty that people have with that are the actions of the present government.

The present government, as I see it and as many Canadians see it, has contributed to the problem in Canada. It has contributed to disunity, mistrust and the loss of confidence in the system. Rather than developing the proper attitude and esprit that is necessary, this government has been dismantling many of the institutions that have kept us united over the years.

I can mention the CBC, VIA Rail cuts, and even Canada Post. In many areas in Canada the only federal presence they have in their communities is the post office with the Canadian flag on it. Right at the present moment, even in my own area of Restigouche—Chaleur and in northern New Brunswick, we see what they are doing to Canada Post. Recent announcements indicate the possibility of laying off 11 workers in an area where the unemployment rate is 18.5 per cent. They are going to lay off 11 workers for the sake of rationalization. There is no way that Canada Post can convince me that it is going to be more efficient to send mail 200 miles east to be sorted only to come back west later. At the present time it is being sorted right in that area and then sent directly west.

I find it very difficult to believe that it will be a non-partisan debate. I hope it will be for the sake of the country, but now the biggest malaise out there is not necessarily a mistrust in the politicians but a mistrust in this government. They see that the government has contributed to the problem of unity in this country and dismantled many of our national institutions that were there to keep our country united.

Does the hon. member agree with the type of program that his government is carrying out in the sense that it has announced cutbacks in public servants, some 90,000 of them since its mandate started? It is proud of that and wants to continue that. Does he agrees with the Canada Post policy of completely closing down rural post offices?

Mr. Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member just enumerated, I believe if I counted right, eight different things he sees wrong with the government and with the programs of the last six or seven years.

If the hon. member wants a non-partisan debate, I will tell him something that may sound partisan to him, but it is something I deeply believe in and something I believe to be correct.

Contrary to comments that I read that were reported by Dr. Meisel about the motives of our Prime Minister when it comes to national unity, I can tell the hon. member that I have listened to the Prime Minister carefully throughout two Parliaments now, the 33rd and the 34th Parliaments. I have listened to him speak to our national caucus every Wednesday morning for the past six and a half years. I believe as strongly as I believe in anything else that the Prime Minister of Canada sincerely wants the best for all Canada. He will go to any lengths to preserve the unity of this country in reasonable, fair terms by which all Canadians live. I believe he is capable of doing that. I believe the leadership is in other political parties as well to come together and take that kind of non-partisan approach that will act in the best interests of this country.

I say that because I saw it at the time of the Meech Lake Accord when it was very difficult for political leadership in this House and throughout Canada to come together. Not only do I believe that the Prime Minister can do that. I believe that kind of leadership exists within other political parties in Canada as well.

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I want to express my appreciation for the opportunity to take part in this throne speech debate and to express some of my concerns arising from the government's current economic and other policies which I believe are contributing to the state of this country today and are tearing this country apart.

I listened with interest to the speech of the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. It is important to understand that many Canadians, when they express concern about the unity of the country, are concerned about the economic issues and their status within the national economy. I think that is a serious part of the problem this country is facing today.

I listened to the Minister of Communications when he opened the debate today. He talked about what the Fathers of Confederation were facing in the period between 1864 to 1867 when as the Minister of Communications said they were looking at putting or stitching together a disparate set of colonies with stitches or ribbons of steel.

I am not sure that when he talked about the vision of those Fathers of Confederation that that was actually the vision they had. I think the Fathers of Confederation were probably more concerned at the time in addressing the economic and various social problems they were facing as partisan politicians of the day. They were trying to deal with the problems of their relations with the United States economy, trying to deal with the problems of transportation and communications within what was then British North America, trying to deal with the problems of two very disparate cultures that existed in the North America of the day. Essentially, they were not politicians with long-term visions; they were pragmatic politicians who were trying to deal with the problems they perceived were facing British North America at the time they set out on their project of nation building.

The other thing in the process of nation building that these politicians were facing was the fact that they were operating against the natural geography of North America. Those disparate colonies that the Minister of Communications was talking about were in essence extensions of the geographic systems of North America: the Atlantic provinces are an extension of Appalachia; central Canada is an extension of the central United States.

They were trying to create a nation in British North American that ran contrary to the normal and natural boundaries and process of human communication within the geographic areas of North America.

It was a great challenge. It was an inspiring challenge to those of us who are trying to deal with similar problems in the current day because what those politicians were attempting to do was ignore the natural boundaries of North America and create a nation which, rather than running from north to south, ran from east to west across the natural barriers of the country.

Given what they had to work with I think they did a terrific job. The Canada of today is a tribute to the foresight of those Fathers of Confederation and also of subsequent Parliaments which generally followed in their pragmatic footsteps. To the credit of the founders of the Canadian nation they ignored those natural boundaries, the pressures and the pulls from the United States, and they created this country of Canada.

I think they had to recognize, Mr. Speaker, as you and I have to recognize today, that we are living in the third largest national state in the world, one of the largest countries on the globe. We have a very small population, 27 million people spread in general over a tiny belt of land adjacent to the United States boundary. The logistics of trying to create, manage, and sustain a country that is built on that basis is very difficult for any Parliament, for any government, for any politician and it requires a tremendous amount of pragmatism, of looking at the problems facing you, the circumstances facing you, and dealing in real terms with those problems.

• (1740)

I think over the years that is precisely what we have had. We have been well served by parliaments in terms of their pragmatic approach in dealing with this country—which defies national order—and keeping this country together.

We have been, I think the operative word is pragmatic. Unfortunately, within the last few years, governments have tended to become more and more ideological. In those terms they are following the political culture of the United States, which is becoming more and more polarized in terms of right wing politicians and liberal politicians. As a consequence it appears that the government in this country is becoming more and more oriented to the kind of free market theory that seems to have been adopted by the Reagan Republicans in the United States.

It is that orientation towards the free market theory that has undermined and destroyed the pragmatism that generally governed politicians in this country up to the present government. As a result, we are seeing the forces that are tearing this country apart coming from an ideological commitment and from a dismissing of the pragmatic approach to governing Canada.

As the Fathers of Confederation saw it, Canada was a very large land mass that had to be held together to support a very small population. Well, how do you do that? You cannot do it simply with private investment because no investor in his or her right mind would invest money in such a very small market distributed over such a very large land area. So there was a necessity for government involvement in these kinds of investments.

The Government of Canada became involved in the building of the national railway system. Essentially it was a joint venture between private entrepreneurs and the Government of Canada, so there was public money as well as private money involved in what the Minister of Communications called that ribbon of steel that stitched the colonies of British North America together.

In addition, when the time came to have an airline in Canada, that initiative did not come from the private sector because there was not sufficient market to serve in order for the private sector to make a profit. The Government of Canada became involved and set up the trans-Canada airlines system, which became Air Canada.

The government also became involved in other areas of transportation and communications. The post office became a communications system that extended through every part of Canada, as our leader likes to say, from coast to coast to coast. You could send a letter to any part of Canada whether you sent it next door or you sent it up to northern Canada, it could all be done at the same rate. All Canadians have the right to communicate with their fellow Canadians on an equal basis.

All of these things were done through government investment, because the government and the pragmatic politicians of the day realized that if they were going to keep a small population welded together into a nation over the huge land mass that is Canada, it was going to require a more pragmatic approach than could be provided by the ideologies of the day.

One of the problems that Canada is facing today is that they have an extremely ideological government that ignores the pragmatic requirements of this country and in fact has adopted economic policies that are tearing the country apart.

What has this government done? It has virtually eliminated passenger rail service in the country. That ribbon of steel that the Minister of Communications was talking about no longer serves Canadians in the same way that it served Canadians before. There is no continuous passenger service across this country because the Tories in applying their marketplace test to that institution, decided it did not meet the test. It may have met the national unity test; it may have been important from the point of view of national unity, but the Tories decided that it did not meet the marketplace test and therefore they undermined the VIA Rail passenger service that was used as a link to keep Canadians together from one end of the country to the other.

The same thing is happening with the post office. It used to be that if you went to any community in Canada, from the east coast to the west coast, to the north coast, there was Canada Post with the name of the community on the side and with the Canadian flag flying overhead. This party with its ideological rigidity decided that even though the post office system met the test of national unity, something that Canadians could perceive as an institution in their community, whether they lived in eastern Canada, western Canada, northern Canada, central Canada, it did not meet the market test.

Therefore, the Conservatives dismantled the Canada Post system by privatizing rural post offices, by putting postal services into Seven-11 stores in communities all over the province. When we go to buy our stamps, money orders and pick up our parcels and mail, where do we pick it up? Do we pick it up in an institution with the Canadian flag flying overhead? No, we pick it up in a private enterprise store owned by the Southland Corporation of the United States.

In that way they undermine the unity of this country for market reasons, for ideological reasons. It has created serious divisions between Canadians, serious divisions within the Canadian community. The same thing has happened with virtually every other national institution that was put together, not with a market test in mind but with the national unity test in mind in order to keep this country together.

It is unfortunate that the Tories have allowed themselves to be strictly hidebound to this market test, to this ideological test while ignoring the requirements for national unity.

As the Fathers of Confederation determined, sometimes it does not make sense in terms of geography and the economy to build a nation where there was not a nation before. Sometimes it required a commitment beyond the market test. They challenged that commitment, they met that commitment and they built this nation.

Now unfortunately what we are perceiving in the Conservative economic policy is that they simply apply the market test, whether it is to CBC, whether it is to VIA Rail, whether it is to Air Canada, whether it is to Petro-Canada, and they have failed to apply the national unity test. As a result they are dismantling many of the national institutions that Canadians perceive as necessary to keep this country together.

One of the serious cracks that have occurred in the system of national unity in the last few years is as a result of the so-called free trade agreement between Canada and the United States.

Before I discuss that, I want to discuss social policy because it is not simply the concrete and the steel, and the communication and transportation systems that are the bulwarks of national unity in this country. Pragmatic politicians in later days also saw that there was a necessity to maintain a consistent standard of social programs across Canada so that someone who entered a hospital in the provinces of Nova Scotia or New Brunswick, or someone who entered hospital in the provinces of British Columbia, Ontario or Quebec, could enjoy the same standard of care regardless of where they entered that hospital.

The same is true of social programs, such as welfare, child support and that kind of thing. The same is true of old age pensions and family allowances. All of these things became a part of the bulwark of national unity so that Canadians in one part of the country felt they were equal in terms of the benefits they received from the government as Canadians in any other part of the country.

Conservative economic policy, based on Conservative ideology, rather than on a pragmatic need to keep this country together, to sustain and to maintain it has begun to tear that system of social benefits apart, so that soon in the ultimate goal of this Tory ideology is to disassemble that system of social benefits so that some Canadians benefit more than others or some Canadians in some regions of this country are going to benefit more than others.

The result of that dismantling of social policies, of that bulwark of national unity is going to be threats to national unity, a decline in the sense of nationhood among Canadians because of the feeling that some Canadians are going to benefit more greatly than others.

The same thing has happened with Tory fiscal policy, with taxation policy. I think everybody who reads the statistics of Statistics Canada will know that the changes in the tax system, the so-called tax reform that this party has brought out, have resulted in the rich in this country becoming richer and more secure while the poor in this country have become poorer and less secure.

• (1750)

I ask you members, sitting in the House here today, how you would feel about a Canada that treats rich people differently than poor people, one that oppresses its poor people and makes the rich people richer. You will not have a very good sense about Canada if you are one of the millions of poor people and poor children in this country who see the system treating them unequally.

Before we get involved in the discussions around national unity which look at the Constitution, the distribution of powers and the mechanics of amending the Constitution, we must walk back through the damage that the Conservative Party has done over the last few years, since 1984, to the economic system in this country.

I think Canadians have always felt that, almost exclusively among countries in the world, in this country there was at least a measure of fairness from their government and that they would not be taxed more heavily than other Canadians or would not be excused from taxes because they enjoyed a certain amount of wealth or power. Canadians always felt that there was a certain amount of fairness in a progressive tax system; that the benefits they received from this country would be received equally and fairly no matter where you lived across the country. Family allowances were the same in Nova Scotia as they were in British Columbia. All of those benefits were fairly distributed.

The Tories have begun to tinker with and undermine that system. As a result, many Canadians feel that there are now different gradations of Canadians, different classes of Canadians and that some people benefit to a greater extent while others pay to a greater extent. That is not the way to encourage national unity.

I would encourage the current government to examine some of its social policies and some of the policies that it has brought about over the last few years and find out how they have contributed to undermining a sense of national unity among Canadians. It is not too late to change those policies, to reverse them and to start moving back toward a system in which Canadians feel equally treated by the Government of Canada and equally responsible toward maintaining this country and maintaining the unity of this country because they certainly do not now. It does not matter where you go in this country, there are people who feel they are unfairly treated by the federal government and that some people are treated much better.

Once we restore the balance and restore the equity, we can start talking to people convincingly about national unity. We certainly cannot do it until then.

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member began his remarks by talking a little bit about the history of this country. He prefaced some of the things he said by suggesting that—if I have got this down right—no investor in his or her right mind would take money and invest in such a sparsely populated country. He then went on to tell us how they—I guess the government is what he was referring to—took public money to build a railroad and this, that and the other thing.

I wonder where the hon. member thinks "they" got the money. It takes investment. It takes people with businesses, people willing to risk the money that they have brought from other places to build an economy so that the government, "they", can take some portion of that money and reinvest it in areas where it seems to be doing the most good for the most people.

I would ask the hon. member how he thinks that by spending $1.20 for every $1 or $1.30 for every $1 the government is capable of taking in over a long period of time, this can possibly produce the kind of Utopian world that he is talking about in which everybody has equal access to every single thing and to every single benefit of living in a country like Canada. How can we do that over a long period of time when the debt continues to build and build and build?

Surely at some time we have to allow those people who create the wealth in the country to take the money that they have earned or built through their activities and risks and build some prosperity for the country.

I think that right now we are in a mood where we must begin to develop a new prosperity for the country or all the wonderful things—I have much sympathy with my hon. friend—he talks about simply will not be possible. Perhaps my hon. friend could tell me where governments would get money if it were not for people willing to invest and risk the money that they have in the first place.

Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, there is more than one way to invest in a country. I come from a forest industry community.

It is made up of workers who have invested all of their lives, skills, talents, ability and strength in that forest industry community. Out of that community—I am talking about Port Alberni—Canada has taken millions upon millions of dollars in taxes, income taxes, resource royalties, and products that have been sold overseas such as plywood, paper, pulp, construction lumber and other things produced in that community.

Those things are produced with the investment of labour on the part of hundreds of workers. Those workers invest that labour not without risk because many of them—it is the highest risk work force in the world—die on the job every single year because of safety problems.

They pay their money to the government. They often pay more than the company they work for. That is where the government gets its money to invest in social programs, in new infrastructure development and in those kinds of things that we need in order for this country to survive.

I am saying it does not come simply from one place and that our ideologies should not tell us that it comes strictly from one place. We should not be using only the market test. We should be using the national unity test before the Tories decide to disassemble programs in Canada. Both tests are valid when we are talking about saving a country, not simply the market test but also the national unity test.

I might point out that as a reward for the investment those people in the plywood plants in Port Alberni made over 20, 30 or 40 years in some cases, they were all fired on April 30. They all of lost their jobs in spite of what they risked and invested on behalf of Canada and on behalf of their community over the last many years. Not everybody is rewarded equally in this country.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Rosemont, for a question or comment.

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, I was very surprised at some of the comments made by the hon. member for Comox—Alberni.

First of all, his view of the Fathers of Confederation surprises me, coming from a Socialist member. He saw them and the birth of Canada as part of a great vision. Well, there were two major reasons behind the birth of Canada: Wealthy British capitalists, backed by the Bank of Montreal which actually was the Bank of Canada for a long time until the thirties, needed solid guarantees to build railroads. There was no thought of a great symbol of unity or a great vision. Financial guarantees were needed on the London market, and these very wealthy capitalists made a lot of money on the railroads with the guarantees they got from the people. So this had nothing to do with a great vision for the people of this country.

The second reason for Confederation was that since the union of Lower and Upper Canada had become unworkable, it was necessary to resume the original divisions and give back to Quebecers a certain degree of autonomy within their own territory.

I think the hon. member has become as obsessed as the Prime Minister and the Governor General who always see the birth of Canada as something arising from a great vision. It was a bunch of capitalists who got together to make money, and that was it.

Now, should we keep symbols of Canada like the post office? As far as I am concerned, 90 to 95 per cent of my mail consists of advertising flyers and the rest is bills, although increasingly, these will be debited directly from my bank account.

So if that is a symbol of Canada, I don't think this country will be around much longer.

I realize, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member, speaking for English Canada, wants to maintain national standards and keep something that defines them. The only problem is, and we have seen it now in the field of education, when the Speech from the Throne announced that the federal government intended to interfere in this area. It's the old story. I understand this desire to intervene where there is a certain social cohesiveness as there is in English Canada. I understand this desire to have national standards and to reinforce those standards within a national perspective.

• (1800)

However, in your speech you forgot all about the situation in Quebec. You can have as many standards as you like, but we still have the situation in Quebec, and there we have a major problem, Mr. Speaker. Quebecers—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): If the hon. member does not put his question, he will not be able to get an answer.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tremblay (Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, when you gave me the floor, I understood that you said this was a period for comments and questions. So—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): We are now three minutes over the time for questions and comments. I am allowing the hon. member his comment. If he will put his question, I will allow the hon. member at least a minute to answer it, if that is possible.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tremblay (Rosemont): I would like to ask the hon. member how he could make a long speech about national unity without referring to the people of Quebec? That takes some doing, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Comox—Alberni, one minute.

Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I can make it shorter than that.

During my speech when I referred to Canadians, I was also referring to the people of Quebec.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. Debate. The hon. member for Strathcona has a 10 minute speech, then I return to the hon. member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys.

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to give my response to the Speech from the Throne.

The throne speech addressed three major concerns of Canadians: unity, prosperity and government responsiveness. All are intertwined.

The fragility of unity becomes apparent when our economy falters. It has also become apparent as our national debt has grown, compound interest on compound interest. We as a government must address these economic matters. We must also address the constitutional matters, and we are.

Today I would like to speak about Canadian unity from a different perspective. It is a narrow perspective, but it is one of utmost importance. I would like to discuss the importance of Canadian symbols.

I agree with all the debaters before me who have talked about the health of the economy and the structure of the Constitution and division of powers. Those are of paramount importance. However, we as Canadians have symbols. We must look back at what has united us as a country and at our common historical reality.

We have many, many symbols in this country. We have the flag, we have our institutions, we have common celebrations like Expo '67 and the Centennial celebrations of 1967. We will have one in 1992. We have common rituals, such as the singing of the anthem and the citizenship ceremony. All of these create a feeling of patriotism. We should increase and expand our use of symbols so we can quietly be proud of what we have achieved as a nation and as Canadians. These are positive things we can do to unite our country and our people.

All too often we forget about the benefits we have enjoyed as Canadians and our accomplishments as Canadians. I have been fortunate enough to do a little travelling. When I am in other countries, I realize how good we have it in Canada and for how much we have to be thankful.

We look inward as Canadians, when often we should be looking outward. We have made contributions to peace and freedom through two World Wars, the Boer War, the Korean War and the recent war. Our achievements continue. These are the achievements of Roy Brown and Billy Bishop.

Next year, Canada will celebrate its 125th birthday. In 1927, Canada celebrated its 60th birthday. At that time, celebrations were held and Canadians rejoiced about Canada and the contributions they made to the world.

The Prince of Wales, the future Edward VIII, toured Canada to celebrate our Diamond Jubilee. That year, the Confederation Building, which is part of the House of Commons, was opened. It was to commemorate Canada's 50th birthday. During Canada's 50th birthday we were involved in a war and celebrations were postponed for 10 years.

Canada should commemorate our 125th birthday by opening our Parliament Buildings to Canadians. The Parliament Buildings are one of the most important symbols we have as Canadians. They have become crowded, overused and overworked.

There are plans to reallocate space and build a visitor reception centre in the basement in the entrance under the Peace Tower, where there could be a theatre, public washrooms and some displays. We should do this without hesitation or trepidation. A small expenditure like this is money which is not wasted.

The Government of Canada should help Canadians to recognize their achievements by building symbols like statues and monuments. For example, we could participate with the city of Edmonton to build a statue to commemorate the achievements of the five women who pursued the Persons case—Louise McKinney, Henrietta Edwards, Nellie McClung, Emily Murphy and Irene

Parlby. These women's historic accomplishment was in pursuing the right for women to vote. They took the case all the way to the Privy Council of London, England.

The Government of Canada should not be afraid to erect a statue of these women on the lawn of the Supreme Court. We may want to commemorate other historical figures. For example, those Canadians who have won the Victoria Cross. We think of them fleetingly on November 11 each year. Why, for example, could we not erect statues of Victoria Cross winners in the towns and cities of their birth? Perhaps we could erect one or two each year to ground in reality our achievements as Canadians and to celebrate our common historical experience.

Canadians are imaginative and we, as a government, should share in their sense of how to recognize Canadian achievements. It seems only prudent to ask Canadians to come up with ideas on how to do this.

The confusion of our historical reality manifests itself in the fact that departments and ministers create award after award to recognize achievements of Canadians. For example, the Secretary of State has a National Volunteer Award. The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council has recently established a gold medal for science.

We see a proliferation of awards throughout departments and ministers. There are awards for business excellence and many other awards. Perhaps as a government we should take a look at these awards and bring them together under one administrative unit and then re-examine what we are doing and where we are going.

We have national institutions in Ottawa which people rarely see. We should try to bring our national institutions out to Canadians. For example, why should many of the National Art Gallery's treasures be locked away in storage? Could there not be more travelling exhibitions, more co-operative exhibitions with galleries across the country? Perhaps we might even consider building branch plants: a western art gallery or an eastern national art gallery.

The same could be said of our other institutions such as the Museum of Civilization and the Museum of Science and Technology.

Canadians feel very proud when we think of our international accomplishments such as peacekeeping, fighting apartheid, or emergency relief. We give aid to developing countries but Canadians complain that the money might be better spent at home.

We help countries to develop their economies, train their people and protect the environment. This is largely unknown to Canadians. I believe we must recognize in Canada our international accomplishments.

• (1810)

We have to achieve much more. For example, the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore has suggested that Canada aggressively pursue the idea of an international green cross, an international environmental disaster clean-up organization. I think this is where we could symbolize our achievements to the world, and I believe that the government should pursue this with vigour.

We might also think of pursuing with the United Nations an international environmental agency, something along the lines of the International Atomic Energy Agency. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the International Atomic Energy Agency provides expert advice to countries as well as funding to develop nuclear energy. It also serves as an enforcement agency in checking to make sure that the countries adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

We might develop an international environmental agency along the same lines. This environmental agency could provide expert advice as well as funding to developing nations on environmental matters such as energy efficiency and renewable energy. It could also serve to set and enforce minimum environmental standards.

We have much to offer the world. As a middle power we are limited in what we can do, but perhaps we can stretch our boundaries to move beyond our well-known and effective traditional intermediary role.

I would like to close by reiterating that we as a country should continue to build our symbols and continue to develop and share our common historical reality with Canadians so that we can be proud of our accomplishments.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great deal of interest to the speech of my colleague from Edmonton. I must say that I could not agree more strongly with the principle of national unity, the concerns for prosperity, and certainly the division of powers with respect to the Constitution.

I find it a little bit difficult to accept the fact that all we are really addressing is the Constitution when we should be looking at the issues, as the hon. member put it so well, that bind us rather than those that divide us. He pointed to the importance of Canadian symbols and expressed some creative ideas which could certainly add to the concepts of Canadian unity, and for that I want to thank him.

However, I want to ask him about two things. When we look at the Canadian symbols we could perhaps recognize that the Speech from the Throne does not particularly relate to all the issues that he talked about. In fact I would suggest that the Speech from the Throne has obfuscated the issues of national unity and national economic well-being. Could the hon. member consider that we have to honour those people who have contributed to the two world wars and to the history of Canada by putting some financial wherewithal into our Canadian Museum of History, the national monuments as he has pointed out? I think they are seriously underfinanced.

To date we have been busy building museums in most of Canada, particularly in Quebec, and I think we have ignored one of the most important major symbols that has united us as a country.

The second symbol which I would ask him to address is: What would he do if he were the minister with respect to the Canadian broadcasting system? Can he think of a mechanism that can unite this country from coast to coast better than that which transmits, broadcasts and shows Canadians one to the other?

Mr. Thorkelson: Mr. Speaker, I will first address the issue of the CBC. Certainly the CBC is an important national institution. I believe it can contribute to national unity.

As Gerard Veilleux has said in his speech, stable multi-year funding is important. He has qualified that by saying that probably more important than the amount of money is the knowledge of how to plan and proceed. I would tend to agree with that.

We have set a level for this year, and I would not think it would be too hard to set certain levels for other years.

On the museum issue, as I said in my speech, we should take our museums out to the people. There are ways we can do that through partnerships with provinces and with the private sector. Although I am not as experienced in the cultural field as the hon. member is, I certainly would be prepared to take a look at budgetary matters, but I cannot comment on those right at this moment.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to speak in the debate on the Speech from the Throne.

This is a very important juncture in our country's history. We are faced with gargantuan problems as a nation and as politicians. Following our recent recess, it was reasonable for the people of Canada to assume that the government was going to deal with these problems in a meaningful way in the Speech from the Throne. Unfortunately, all we have are meaningless platitudes and generalities, not coming anywhere near what is necessary to deal with the daunting problems with which we are faced.

The major concerns of Canadians are not addressed. The major concerns of Canadians today are high taxation, unemployment, the Constitution, and the environment. Yet we see in the Speech from the Throne mere generalities and conversation. Where is the fodder, the seed needed to develop answers to the problems that we have as a nation? It is completely absent. This government has indicated that the problems of the country are not first and foremost in its mind. What it hopes to do is be able to skate through the next few months and hopefully along the way, by perhaps tapping into a poll here and there, be able to generate some answer that will be pleasing and meet the approval of the Canadian public.

The Canadian public is not going to be fooled. The Canadian public realizes the seriousness of the problems that face this nation at the present time. The Canadian public realizes, as we do here in this House of Commons, the possibilities of this great country. Yet these possibilities are not being honoured by this government. The government is completely sloughing off the duty which is before it at the present time.

What is it sloughing off, what does it refuse to deal with? Well, it essentially refuses to deal with problems that are of its making. This is what most annoys Canadians. The government entered into a trade agreement with the United States. Now it is talking about a tripartite trade agreement with the United States and Mexico. Yet the trade agreement with the United States is a very ill-conceived document in many ways.

What is happening as a result? We have not received the benefits of the trade agreement that were promised by the government. In fact, we are losing industry to the United States. States from the United States are setting up offices in Canada, presumably trade delegations, with the main purpose of influencing and encouraging Canadian industry to move south of the border. They are doing it. We are not competing with the United States. Our industries are leaving Canada because of high interest rates, because we are not providing for Canadians what the Americans insisted on having for their own businesses and their own citizens. That is a level playing field.

The government would have us believe that we have high interest rates as a result of inflation.

• (1820)

That is part of the reason for high interest rates, but the main reason for high interest rates is that the government has to sell Treasury bonds. The government has to sell bonds to pay the interest on the debt. The reason the government is doing this is because it has not found the answers it promised the Canadian public it would find in the 1984 election campaign. It was horrified that a debt existed in Canada, it was horrified that the debt was approximately $170 billion in 1984.

This summer the debt of this nation will reach $400 billion. Four hundred billion dollars. The government says: "Well, don't look to us, we inherited this problem". The fact that it is almost more than double what it was when this government came to power is not important to the government. It sees this as incidental. It sees the fact that the deficit was there, albeit a much smaller deficit, as the most important thing.

The government will say to us: "We couldn't deal with it, we inherited it, it is not our fault". I would say to the government that it more than doubled the debt in a period of time when the economy of Canada was in very, very good shape indeed. We were going through very good economic times between 1984 and 1990.

If the government is saying it could not deal with the debt at that time, when can we as a nation deal with it? Can we deal with it now, when the government through its poor and misguided economic policies has plunged us into a made-in-Canada recession? No, we cannot. We cannot do it now. Of course, we have to be mindful of spending. However, the fact that the debt has been allowed to grow to $400 billion because this government did not keep its word to the Canadian public has put in peril the programs that this country holds dear, that this country holds as pillars of its society and foundations of the Canadian way of life.

We are now in a position of listening to the government question programs that we as Canadians had reason to believe would be there—hard fought programs which the Liberal government put in place, such as the national medical plan and the old age pensions.

These are programs that Canadians now feel are not solid. They look to the government saying: "My heavens, you have broken the promise of solidifying the economy of this country. You told us that there was not going to be any danger to the programs that we fought for and won. Now, we look at the situation that exists in Ottawa and we are afraid, afraid for our Canadian programs, and afraid for our social programs. We are very concerned about where this country is going".

If it was the plan of the Government of Canada to do away with our social programs, it could not have handled it any better than the government did. The economic mess it created put the Canadian public in a position where they assume that anything can happen. This is a very sad legacy indeed.

No wonder politicians are just one notch above loan sharks in the minds of the Canadian public, when they see what this government has done in taking the country of tomorrow, as we liked to regard Canada, and jettisoning its future, its immediate future. No wonder the Canadian public is upset. They have every reason to be upset.

What has the high interest rate done? The high interest rate has created a high Canadian dollar. That was the whole idea, to make our Treasury bonds attractive. Of course, it has also raised the value of the Canadian dollar. What do we have now as a legacy from this government? We do not have a solid commercial economy. We do not have a solid commercial and industrial base. We have, thanks to this government, ever increasing cross-border shopping. Cross-border shopping is a situation that is going to devastate the border towns and communities in Canada.

Why is it happening? It is because the people of this country are fed up. They are showing their distaste and anger with the government by getting into their automobiles and driving into the United States. This could be corrected if we could reduce the value of the Canadian dollar to where it should be. Then the products in the United States would be more expensive and there would be no incentive to go to the United States. We cannot because the government refuses to reduce interest rates and the resulting high Canadian dollar.

Because of the high Canadian dollar and high interest rates, businesses in Canada are finding it very difficult to compete. They are finding it difficult to sell into the United States. They are moving into the United States because they find they can have reduced expenses if they are located in the United States, and this is not helping Canada.

Whether we get out of this recession this year or next year, we are going to be faced with a smaller number of commercial enterprises in this country. We are going to lose these industries and organizations. This is going to be another sad legacy of this government and another problem with which the Canadian public will be faced.

We entered into a trade agreement with the United States that did not define a subsidy. We do not have a subsidy. We have five to seven years to determine what a subsidy is. A subsidy is not defined. It is defined in the minds of the American people, the American agencies and the American government. They know when Canadians receive a subsidy.

I have a plant in my riding, Sydney Steel Corporation, that is being subsidized because it received federal and provincial government assistance in the 1970s and the early 1980s, long before the free trade agreement was even contemplated with the United States. It is being countervailed against because the Americans are saying that this company received a subsidy.

What about the tax free period of time being offered by the United States to industries that will leave southern Ontario and relocate? What about the free land that is being offered in industrial parks to have these industries move to the United States? Are those subsidies? Of course they are subsidies. Our government is not sticking up for and protecting the Canadian commercial base the way the Americans are obviously protecting their industry and their economic future.

We are saying: "If the Americans want to do it, it has got to be fine, it has got to be great". I am not criticizing the Americans. The American government is obviously sticking up for its own people and its own commercial base. All I am saying is: Why is our government not doing something to protect the Canadian economy? Why are we leaving? Why are we jettisoning our Canadian public?

Something has gone wrong here. What has gone wrong is that this government does not know what to do. No wonder it cannot put anything in a Speech from the Throne. It does not know what it wants to do.

All of the points I have made are to me and to most Canadians extremely serious. The most serious economic difficulty we face is our constitutional problem. Fortunately, we still have investment that can be made in Canada, but a lot of people who would like to invest in Canada will not invest in Canada with this uncertainty with respect to our constitutional future and our unity is up in the air.

• (1830)

What is the government doing? It is dragging its feet. The government is saying: "Well, we are going to bring forward a plan in the fall." Then it says: "Now don't you say anything, opposition, because we want this to be non-partisan." If you are a Canadian and you feel for this country and you see that this government is doing absolutely nothing to try to correct the differences and to try to bring this country together, you have got to say something. You have got to complain that you feel frustrated by what is going on, that we are just marking time and we are going to roll the dice perhaps at the last minute to try and solve the problem again.

You have got to say something to voice your disapproval. According to the government, if you do you are being partisan. Well, I am being partisan because I find that what this government has done is woefully inadequate. It is woefully inadequate to deal with the problems that face this country; the unity question and the economy. How is this government going to deal with the problems of the future if it cannot deal with the problems of the present? What are we going to do with our environment?

The government has a green plan. That was deep sixed like nothing we have ever seen. It saw the light of day and like the groundhog, it saw its shadow and went back underground again. The whole question of the environment is just a real bad joke in this country. We have a very serious environmental concern in Canada and this government is saying: "Wait now, we do not want to get this started. We may be starting something here we are not really ready to handle." It is saying that this is something that can wait. Well, it cannot wait.

Child care in this country cannot wait. This government cannot define economic success and it cannot see that what it has created is an economic hole for itself. It cannot see that regional disparity is increasing. It is referring now to the 1990s in Nova Scotia as the mean decade. It sees transfer payments being cut off. It sees equalization payments disappearing. It sees regional development as a thing of the past. We are losing our support from the federal government. It is now talking about closing more bases in Atlantic Canada. It is closing bases when it does not even have a defence policy. How does it know what to close? It does not know what it is doing.

This is chaos, this is not government. People of Canada are concerned and they have every reason to be concerned.

How can the Canadian public possibly even consider supporting this government in a subsequent election? What the people of Canada want is action. They want us to bring back the Canada that was being evolved through years of hard work by politicians and by Canadians. They do not want the government to deep-six the future of this country. They want the government to deal with the questions. They want their concerns addressed. They do not want any more burying of the problems. They do not want Parliament just to sit every now and then. They do

not want the government to be more concerned with polls and public opinion than with the needs of Canadians.

Canadians have a right to have their concerns addressed and it is time this government realized it and it is time this government did something about it.

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, another interesting talk by a member opposite who has a very deep insecurity problem because what I heard as I listened, and I did try to listen to everything that the hon. member said, was a lot of worry, a lot of doubt and a lot of basic inability to come to terms with reality as it is in the world today.

I guess that inability to come to terms with reality is part of what was wrong with the Liberal government prior to 1984, when it was in power over such a long period of time, when it developed a burdensome debt that we are still trying to get out from under and left a legacy in this country that probably our children and perhaps even our grandchildren will still be dealing with.

I am not surprised, given the sense of insecurity and self-doubt that the hon. member epitomizes on behalf of his party, that they were so incapable of dealing with these problems and these challenges in the past.

Fortunately, the electorate saw the light and elected a government that does have a plan, a government that does have the ability to take the kind of action that the hon. member calls for and a government that has the courage to do things that are necessary, even when perhaps they are unpopular, because we know that we must do what is right over what is perceived to be popular.

I would suggest to the hon. member that change is precisely what we have created in this country. We have done these things, taken these actions that the hon. member calls for. We have addressed some of the problems that were burdening the economy of this country. Maybe our reward for that is to be at perhaps less than a desirable point in the polls right now, but I think that really just points to the fact that there is courageous ability on this side of the House to take the kinds of actions that are necessary.

Our job is to create a climate of security, a climate of hope, a sense of a future for this country where people will be prepared to make the kinds of investments that are necessary to ensure our prosperity in the future. I suggest that is the positive kind of action we are taking.

I would just ask the hon. member opposite if he would tell us what the Liberal government would do to reduce interest rates below the already low rate they are at, at around 9 per cent, when in their term of government, interest rates reached the all time high of over 22 per cent.

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite talks about courage. They do have courage. The fact that they show up in public is in a sense a form of courage. The hon. member also talks about the Canadian electorate as if the Canadian electorate has bestowed some kind of support upon them, a party at 14 per cent. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, more people think Elvis is still alive than support this government. It is absolutely incredible that it would even contemplate this. I mean, holy cow.

Something about reality is that the deficit this year is $30.5 billion. It is as high as it has ever been. This was a government that was going to reduce the deficit. There are 5 million poor people in Canada. That is reality. There are 1.5 million unemployed. That is reality, and 1.8 million Canadians depend on food banks. That is reality. That is the reality that this government has imposed on this country.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I cannot let this moment pass without a comment, which would indicate that I find the question of the member opposite with respect to the fact that she has shown courage, that her government has set a climate of security and hope, for prosperity in the future and has taken the right action and there is nothing better than being right, sanctimonious.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague: Is life any better for the citizens of Sydney? He gave an enlightened speech. He knows what is going on in this society. Perhaps he could tell us how his community feels about the enlightened remarks of our colleague across the floor.

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question.

In my constituency, in industrial Cape Breton, the unemployment rate is 22 per cent. That is the figure that Statistics Canada will admit to.

• (1840)

We are continually losing jobs. Our unemployment rate is growing constantly. Our young people are not coming back to Cape Breton. There are no jobs available. The older workers are retiring or going on pre-retirement or disability. Their jobs are disappearing after them. We are losing these salaries in our community. Our communities can no longer afford to provide the essential services that Canadians have every right to take for granted in this country.

We are in a deep problem in our municipalities. The future economically is of grave concern. To even suggest that this government has addressed these problems is ludicrous.

I would like to say that what Canadians want is hope. We still hope. We still hope that this government can change. We still believe that this country is the greatest country in the world and this country will have its future, but not as long as this government is imposing policies and running the country down like it is at the present time.

Mr. Benno Friesen (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak, albeit 10 to 20 minutes late. I want to thank you for recognizing me now.

I want to join my colleague from Edmonton—Strathcona in expressing my pleasure in having the opportunity to speak to the address from the throne. The throne speech itself gives a blueprint for what the intentions of the government are for the rest of this Parliament. Partly it is built on the record of the past, and it looks backward, but it uses that backward look in order to establish a plan and a blueprint for the future.

In this particular throne speech the focus has been on unity and the economy. It is difficult to bring unity to a country and tranquillity to a nation when there are economic barriers to that kind of security that people long for. When unemployment is high, as it is in parts of Canada today, it is difficult for those people to think in terms of unity of the country, even though they want that for our land. Their first concern is for a job. When there are business failures across Canada, it is difficult for those business people, who have experienced that loss, to think in terms of unity, even though that is one of their first desires. It is very important that we address the economic issues in our land together with the unity questions.

I want to say how pleased I am to be part of a government that has been making the tough decisions that should have been made years and decades ago in order to usher us into the 21st century and prepare us for that.

So much of what we have done in the last six or seven years has been in the nature of restructuring the nation, restructuring the economy so that we can be ready to move with the rest of the countries of the world into a new and emerging economy of the world. Therefore, we have been dealing with such things as pension reform so that our people can have confidence in the future for their own personal lives. We have been dealing with tax reform, whether it is sales tax, corporate tax or income tax. We have dealt with issues like tax reform so that our economy can adjust itself to the future competitiveness of our nation which we are are going to have to face if we are going to trade around the world.

We have dealt with trade liberalization because the world is changing. We cannot expect the world and the economies of the world and the trading patterns of the world to stay the same in order to accommodate us. If the rest of the world is changing, we have to change along with it in order to be competitive, in order to provide jobs, in order to provide the security that our people long for.

We have dealt with the restructuring of our economy and we have dealt with making our country as competitive as possible in order to help our people. When there is unemployment, when there is poverty, when there is any other difficulty, nowhere is it felt more keenly than at the level of the family. So I am pleased that the throne speech included a statement that dealt with a look at the family. It says:

> In addition, my government will review its policies in relation to the family, the most fundamental building block of Canadian society.

"The most fundamental building block of Canadian society." Mr. Speaker, if we are going to have a confident, unified and sure approach to the future, we have to do it in the context of happy families, of sure and secure families.

There are probably a lot of people here in the House and across Canada who ask themselves why have we come back to the notion of the traditional family unit; why is the traditional family unit so important?

I want to take a minute just to commend the member for Calgary North for the extensive research he has done on the way the tax policies of our country have prejudiced the traditional family. I would commend his speech of May 15, pages 125 and 126 of *Hansard* to members. They should look at how, since 1917, the tax policies of successive governments of Canada have ignored the pressures that tax policies are placing on the traditional family.

As I said, some people wonder why we keep harping on this. It is a part of reality to recognize that the family unit is not what it used to be. We can think of *Leave it to Beaver* or *Father Knows Best* or any number of those folksy kind of shows that were popular in the fifties and sixties, and think that that is the traditional family unit. Well, it is not that way.

Statistics show us that in the family today, in 62 per cent, both spouses are working; in 27 per cent, the husband only is working; in 7 per cent, neither husband nor wife is working; and in 4 per cent, only the wife is working. When we consider that in 62 per cent of the homes across Canada both husband and wife are working to make ends meet, we recognize that what we think of in a fanciful way as the traditional family no longer exists.

There are strains on the family, and it should not be the role of government to add to those strains. People ask; why is it so important to deal with family issues? I refer again to a gentleman whom I quote often, a famous sociologist from the University of Bordeaux, Jacques Ellal. He says that if a relationship is to be authentic, the other must be able to rely on the continuity of my behaviour, and know that he can expect certain kinds of words of help or refusals from me. Without such continuity, a relationship becomes impossible.

That is why the family unit is so important. The fact is that marriage introduces a regime of dependability in relationships. Dependability creates security, and security is important not only for the adults in the relationship, but for the children also.

The fact is that through the family we build the relationships that provide that security, but we also have the vehicle that creates the transmission of values which are so very important for our society. Yet, as I indicated, and as my friend from Calgary North has pointed out so vividly, the tax policies of our governments through the years have created tensions for the family.

I quote an example from his speech on page 126. The family earns $60,000:

> One family lives a traditional life-style and has one income and three children, two under seven and one child over seven. One of the parents cares for the children at home. They are married—The other family—is the same in every respect except that one of the younger children is unrelated to the others. Both parents work, earning $36,000 and $24,000, for a total of $60,000.

• (1850)

In the second example, the adults are not married.

> It may seem incredible, but the total taxes paid by these two families differ by over $12,200. That is $1,000 per month more tax that the traditional family pays. Almost half of this can be related to the $36,000-$24,000 income split. The other half is due only to the fact that the traditional couple is married.

That is not the intention of any government. This began in 1917 and has carried on right to the present. It is important that our government take note of the fact that taxation policy is putting pressure on people who value the traditional family, who believe that tight, dependable, secure human relationships are important, who believe that children grow up best in families and who want to transmit their values through the family to the children.

It is important that we deal with this. I am happy to say that the Speech from the Throne indicates that the government is prepared to look at the traditional family as a building block for our society.

There is no doubt that poverty is an important question for our nation, but on this issue it is not a question of poverty. It is a question of fairness and taxation policies that deal fairly with all people. There should not be an advantage for one group of people over another.

I applaud the Prime Minister for taking this initiative to signal to the Canadian people and to the Parliament of Canada that he wants to see a regime introduced in Parliament whereby the traditional family is going to be dealt with equally with other families, and that the taxation policies of this government are not going to penalize those who want to build a traditional family unit.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to take part in this debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

The speech pronounced by the Governor General on May 13 this year outlines the themes, principles and initiatives that the government intends to pursue in the months to come. Several journalists called this Speech from the Throne a straight repeat of the one pronounced on April 3, 1989.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, we find the same themes and the same ideas in both speeches. In other words, in the months to come, the government will follow the same path it has followed since it came to power in 1984. It promises to be a rocky road, if we consider the results of the initiatives announced in the Speech from the Throne in April 1989.

Canadians realize this, because the path this government forced us to take proved to be a dead end. For the first time in our history, we have a recession made in Canada by the Government of Canada. That is where we are now, thanks to the ideas set forth in the Speech from the Throne on April 3, 1989. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I am concerned, because if the government intends to take the same path that led us into this recession, the situation can only get worse.

As I just pointed out, the present Speech from the Throne generally repeats the themes and objectives announced two years ago. Consider the four main objectives the government intended to pursue in its speech in April 1989.

The objectives mentioned were as follows: to build a strong economy; to preserve the environment; to maintain a caring, compassionate society; and finally, to renew the government's commitment to national unity.

Undoubtedly, these four objectives were, and still are, very noble and significant.

Unfortunately, the Conservative Government has failed miserably in these four major areas that are so important to the well-being of all Canadians.

Consider the first component of the April 1989 Speech from the Throne: to build a strong economy. Two years ago, the Conservative Government said it wanted to build a strong economy, encouraged by incentive. Today, the Conservatives seem to have been on the wrong track.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we are experiencing one of the worst economic recessions we ever had. This is not only a serious crisis but a crisis created by this government as a result of unsound economic policies.

The government's so-called incentives merely discouraged Canadians, Mr. Speaker. Just ask them. The incentives mentioned by the Tories two years ago merely worsened an economic situation already vulnerable as a result of high interest rates. Today, the Conservative Government says it has managed to bring down interest rates down, but it created this economic crisis by raising them in the first place.

In April 1989, the unemployment rate in Canada was 7.8 per cent. Today, it is 10.5 per cent. This is the highest unemployment rate since May 1985. In Montreal, the figures are even more depressing. In April 1989, the unemployment rate in the Montreal region was 9.7 per cent, and today, it is up to 14.2 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the Montreal region has been severely affected by the economic crisis created by this Conservative Government. Today, nearly one out of four persons in Montreal, in other words, 25 per cent of the population, is living below the poverty line. This is shameful, Mr. Speaker. Across Quebec the situation is not much better. During the first months of 1991, the number of bankruptcies rose 40 per cent. According to Statistics Canada, 1,818 persons filed for protection under the Bankruptcy Act.

Clearly, the objectives pursued by this government since the April 1989 Speech from the Throne have done nothing to improve the lives of Canadians living in the Montreal region. If with this new Speech from the Throne, the government intends to follow the same path, the economic situation of the people of Montreal can only get worse.

In 1989, the then Minister of Finance promised that the deficit would go down to $28 billion. The exact opposite happened, Mr. Speaker: The deficit is now up to 30.5 billion. As far as the national debt is concerned, my leader, the Leader of the Opposition, explained in his speech how the Conservative Government had accumulated in only six years a debt equivalent to the debt accumulated in 117 years by all previous governments.

In the Speech from the Throne two years ago, the government told Canadians that it would offer incentives, but since then we have seen cuts in unemployment insurance benefits and cuts in the Job Development Program, subsidized housing and medicare.

This Speech from the Throne claims to help those in greatest need, but the truth is, this speech offers no respite for the unemployed, poor families, students who pay GST, the elderly or the sick. There is absolutely nothing in this Speech from the Throne that gives any hope to the neediest in our society. The government seems to be saying that the jobless will have to wait until the year 2000 to find jobs. That is unacceptable.

• (1900)

Mr. Speaker, the question we should be asking ourselves today if we give credence to the government's Speech from the Throne is this: what is going to happen to Montreal's 225,000 unemployed workers between now and the year 2000? Will they starve to death or will live with the hope that, one day, the sooner the better, they will be able to find a job and preserve their dignity? Cutbacks in all support programs during a time of crisis do little to inspire confidence.

Canadians are also sceptical about the latest Speech from the Throne. It states that the government wants to double the number of graduates in mathematics, the sciences and engineering to increase Canada's competitiveness. It is true, Mr. Speaker, that we need scientists and mathematicians if we want to encourage research and development. The fact remains that, in 1987, the total level of federal spending in research and development represented 1.4 percent of our GNP. Today, it is down to 1.28 percent, Mr. Speaker. Yet, I can remember well this Prime Minister stating loud and clear during the 1984 campaign, that he would double investment in research and development. Now, he has just reduced whatever little there was.

So, Mr. Speaker, how are we to encourage our young people to pursue their studies in science when the government makes no effort to promote research and development. This is evidenced by the fact that we spend less in that area so vital to our economic progress than any other industrialized country.

This government admits that the Canadian economy needs to be revived. The way to go, according to them, is to negotiate a North America-wide free trade deal. As you know, Mr. Speaker, I represent the riding of Saint-Léonard, a riding seriously hurt by the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement. In my riding there is an important manufacturing industry and companies like Maxim Canada Inc. and Rosita Shoes suffered the consequences of this government's disastrous economic policies. How can you expect the Canadian workers to compete with the Mexican workers who earn $2 an hour on average?

Mr. Speaker, the government seems to link national unity to economic prosperity in the Speech from the Throne. I have to say that, if indeed the unity of our country depends on the economic prosperity promised by the Conservatives, we are in serious trouble.

A key factor contributing to national unity, Mr. Speaker, is the promotion and strenghtening of our national identity. Our identity is based on cultural achievements. It is clear that this government does not care as much about this aspect because there is only one short reference to it.

One of the best tool for promoting and strenghtening our identity is the CBC. Unfortunately, the government has closed down stations in Calgary, Saskatoon, Windsor, Corner Brook, Sydney, Matane, Rimouski and Sept-Îles. How can we talk about culture and identity while, at the same time, dismantling a tool that has served us well in that respect? I believe that the task is becoming harder and harder, Mr. Speaker.

This Speech from the Throne, just like the one of April 3, 1989, clearly shows the Conservatives' lack of leadership on the Constitution and national unity. Since the Meech Lake Accord failed, Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have no constitutional position or platform. Canadians have a government that offers no solution to the country's constitutional deadlock.

The government's answer to this dilemma is to create another committee, Mr. Speaker. Canadians have enough of being studied; they want answers, they want results. This committee is not to report until January 1992. That means Canadians must wait eight more months before finding out the Conservative government's constitutional position.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, this government is waiting till the last minute to solve such an important problem. It is playing poker with Canada's future. It would seem that the government has learned nothing from the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. Every minute that the government lets go by on this issue is wasted time that could have been used to solve the constitutional problems and finally concentrate our efforts on the economy and job creation for all Canadians.

Obviously, the government lacks leadership. However, on our side, Mr. Speaker, my leader, the Hon. Jean Chrétien, has shown his real leadership qualities by outlining his approach for solving the constitutional problems.

On April 21 in Montreal, the Liberal leader presented his approach for a constitutional framework based on principles that are fair to Quebec and all of Canada. This approach requires the government to take a stand and make public before June 1, 1991 a concrete reform proposal resulting in a Canada-wide referendum. This referendum would carry with the support of the three main political parties represented in this House, Mr. Speaker. Of course, if these three parties did not support it, this referendum would be illusory.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote you a passage from the Speech from the Throne that seems to justify the Liberal leader's proposed approach. It is found in the section on national unity and reads as follows: "A constitution should unite a nation. Canadians should be able to see themselves mirrored in their constitution."

That is exactly what the Liberal leader proposes with his winning popular consultation formula. Canadians must be given an opportunity to express their feeling of belonging to this country. What finer way is there is there to help Canadians identify with their Constitution than to have it so directly approved by all citizens?

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada on his courage in putting forward a concrete constitutional proposal while the country waits another eight months for the government's proposal. Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader has clearly understood that the time to act is now.

Another point that I would like to raise is the question of Canada remaining a generous society. Those words are from the Speech from the Throne of April 1989. Mr. Speaker, caring means open and accessible. Unfortunately, under the Conservatives, Canada has become far less accessible and caring for its citizens and would-be citizens.

Honourable members know that we have two long lists of people waiting to enter Canada. Some of these people have their spouses already settled here, but they are refused admission into this country, and worse of all, they are refused access to their own families. There are couples who have been living apart for four years, one spouse being here and the other in another country. This is unacceptable, especially from a country which claims to be caring and tolerant. Had we had this policy years ago, Mr. Speaker, you and me would not be here today. So, if we are a caring and tolerant nation, we should open the doors, and allow family reunification. This is another of the fundamental policies of a caring Canadian nation.

Mr. Speaker, as I already pointed out, Canada has become less caring towards its own citizens when it decided to cut programs aimed at the less fortunate among us. The fate of the middle class, the fate of the unemployed in the Montreal area, the fate of the sick do not matter, what counts is big business, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in the few remaining minutes I would like to talk about Montreal. Last Friday, we learned that Pascal Hardware had gone bankrupt. This bankruptcy adds 2,600 unemployed to the 225,000 already without work in April.

• (1910)

Mr. Speaker, Pascal was a big company for sure, and this is why it made the big news. We put the question in the House and asked the government what policy it was going to put forward, what was it going to do to help those 2,600 workers who lost their jobs, who have no hope left for the future.

But, we tend to forget that many small companies are going out of business every day, that many jobs are lost with the failure of those small companies. No one ever mentions them. But, there are thousands upon thousands of jobs lost every day. And still, as we are facing the worst recession brought upon by this government, here we are, listening the same Throne Speech as in 1989, Mr. Speaker.

As I already asked him earlier today, I would like the Minister of Finance to tell me, what he is waiting for before introducing new measures to revitalize the economy, so Canadians, especially young Canadians, can have faith once again in this country. It is a fact that if there are jobs, and if young people can find hope, we will be able to find a solution to many constitutional problems that plague this country, as any other modern country confronted with important changes, Mr. Speaker.

But, for almost seven years, this government has been rebashing the same speech. It raises interest rates—true, after having raised them, it is slowly starting to get them down—but it is too late, Mr. Speaker. People have lost faith. We just have to look—we just had a long week end, and that is where the tragedy is—never had we seen so many Canadians crossing the border to go shopping, Mr. Speaker. This is very serious.

How many victims are there? I am not only talking about Pascal. How many other victims have there been who are not important enough to be make the headline in our dailies? It still goes on. Why have Canadians lost confidence? Why do they not buy in Canada anymore? Here is the crucial question we must ask ourselves. How can we stimulate our economy if our Canadians people do no longer trust our economical system and our products and if prefer to cross the border. They even charter busses to go shopping across the border.

Every day, my colleagues ask the government some questions. What are its answers? It does not have any. But it is necessary to look at the whole situation, Mr. Speaker. Canadians are fed up with the GST, free trade and high interest rates and the time for good sounding rhetoric and studies is over. The Canadians people, as I was saying earlier, are fed up with studies. They want to see some concrete action, they want to work and they want their children to have hope in this great country of ours.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions or comments. The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. There are four speakers left to speak. I would appreciate it if the hon. member would make a short comment and ask a question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to what my colleague had to say and I am sure all hon. members would like to join me in congratulating him on his remarks.

My comments will deal in particular with the Canadian footwear industry, because this is one sector of our economy which has been badly hurt. Our footwear industry was dealt an almost fatal blow. Once again the policies of this government are responsible for the hardship this industry went through.

In my riding, when I was elected in 1984, there were 450 jobs in the footwear industry. Nowadays, for both plants, the Alexandria Footwear, which is the Rosita Shoes Company my colleague knows quite well, and the Brown Shoes Company, that figure is down to about 100 jobs at the very most.

So, wouldn't my colleague agree with me that all the hardship suffered by our Canadian footwear industry including first the effects of the quota reduction, second, the incidence of the Free Trade Agreement, and third, the recession which has, of course, reduced our footwear consumption by limiting our purchases, that all this is a complete disgrace?

I would like my colleague to comment on that.

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question.

As I pointed out, when I was elected in 1984 there were about 2,000 jobs in the footwear industry in my riding. Today, Mr. Speaker, there are about 100.

There was Rosita Shoes, a big factory that employed between 600 and 800 people. Today, the factory is closed, and that was almost two years ago. Excelsior Shoes also closed. Only Christina Shoes is left, with about 100 jobs. In a riding like Saint-Léonard, with a lot of small businesses, a lot of factories specializing in clothing or footwear, all these factories are gradually disappearing. In addition to factories closing down, the POWA program to help older workers who lose their jobs in these situations, especially in the footwear, textile and clothing industry— To avoid having to pay these benefits, the government introduced a rule which says that to be

eligible for the program—this in a region with a population of over 500,000 residents—the factory or business that closes down must have at least 100 employees. However, more than 75 per cent of Canadian businesses are small businesses with fewer than 50 employees. So no one qualifies, and every day—and I am sure you have the same situation in your own riding, Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. member does in his—we have people coming to our riding offices. They are over 55. They have no unemployment insurance. They don't have jobs, and the chances of finding one are practically nil, Mr. Speaker, and the government is playing games with the rules.

That is the human tragedy we are seeing today, as a result of this government's policies.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. Debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gaby Larrivée (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take part in today's debate on the Speech from the Throne. I would like to start by saying how proud I am to represent my constituents in the riding of Joliette in a responsible government that looks to the future.

In 1984, this government inherited a country that was divided, poorly governed and in debt to a dangerous degree. That is why we will probably need more than one generation to correct the deficit problem.

Since 1984, our government has made a number of courageous decisions in order to put the country's finances in order and reduce government spending. We have reduced a government apparatus that had become far too unwieldy and costly. We modified our taxation system to make it fairer and more equitable. We improved our relations with our trading partners, which helped us develop new markets and conclude a free trade agreement with the United States, our principle trading partner. In fact, 70 per cent of our exports go the United States. Thanks to this agreement, we have found new outlets for our goods and obtained more secure markets.

We have updated our structures to improve productivity. One example was our decision to eliminate a hidden sales tax—the manufacturer's sales tax which created unemployment and made our industries less competitive—and replace it with a visible tax that is much fairer because it protects the neediest through a system of regular refunds. This is one more example of this government's determination to put the country in a better position to meet increasingly strong competition on external markets. We embarked on deregulation and privatization to make our domestic market more competitive and more productive.

In 1984, we started implementing a strategy for improving our competitive position, and we did so successfully. Of all industrialized countries, comparatively speaking, Canada has created the most jobs and has attracted unprecedented levels of private foreign investment.

All these structural reforms do not necessarily produce tangible results overnight. However, we know the result will be increased productivity in the years to come, for the greater benefit of Canadians. However, we cannot stop there. There is still a lot to be done to achieve the prosperity we want for ourselves and for future generations.

The Speech from the Throne tells us how.

• (1920)

North America–wide free trade is the logical next step if an acceptable agreement can be negotiated with Mexico and the United States.

We will have to maintain controls on government spending. Steps will be taken to cap federal program spending. Legislation will also be introduced so that all GST revenues as well as monies from further privatization of Crown corporations will be used to reduce the national debt. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that this meets the expectations of the people.

We will work with provincial governments to eliminate interprovincial trade and investment barriers by 1995.

We are also planning to generate 2.5 million new jobs over the next nine years, while raising the real incomes of Canadians by 25 percent by the year 2000. That will require the cooperation of business, labour and the various levels of government.

However, all these efforts will not produce the expected results if we keep putting all our energies in a debate over constitutional issues. Since the Constitution was patriated in 1982 without Quebec's consent, our national unity has been in jeopardy.

All my government's efforts to rectify this situation and bring Quebec back to the constitutional table were sabotaged. The proposal which was signed by all the provinces would have allowed us, had it been ratified, to undertake with much more serenity the thorough reform the entire Canadian population wishes. Unfortunately, that is not the case.

Therefore we must do all we can now, in that difficult context, to overcome all obstacles, dispel the people's doubts and ready Canada to go forth with confidence into the 21st century. We must do so while protecting the rights of all Canadians. Throughout the country, Canadian men and women must be able to identify with their Constitution and recognize in it their hopes and aspirations. That is why our approach relies on public consultation. And that is what we are doing now with the Citizens Forum and the Beaudoin–Edwards Parliamentary Committee.

And we will continue to consult the public through a parliamentary committee when we will deposit our propositions in the fall. Our propositions will have to reflect Quebec's unique or distinct character as well as the special interests of all the regions of our country. They will have to be based on fairness and efficiency.

Mr. Speaker, any commitment must necessarily be based on a reasonable compromise and conciliation. To reach the objective of a more united and more prosperous Canada, we will need the cooperation of every Canadian man and woman of goodwill who will show tolerance, generosity and fairness.

Economic prosperity is first of all a matter of human resources. While entering a knowledge era, our quality of life will depend on the quality of our knowledge.

In the Speech from the Throne, we are made aware of the fact that four out of ten Canadian adults cannot read or do math well enough to perform everyday tasks. Three out of ten students dropout of high school before graduating.

Mr. Speaker, my government recognizes that education is a provincial responsibility and respects that fact. But, if we do not act to change that situation, at the beginning of the next century, one third of our people will have no jobs to ensure our prosperity.

Canadians are concerned about these statistics and expect their elected members to propose ways to tackle this problem. That is why our government has included in the Throne Speech goals to cut, by the year 2000, illiteracy rates in half, to ensure that 90 percent of Canadians attain high school diplomas by age 25, and to double the number of post–secondary graduates in mathematics, sciences and engineering.

Of course, we want to pursue these goals within the jurisdictions of the provinces, but with their cooperation.

Canadian industry spends half as much on training its employees as American industry does, a fifth as much as the Japanese and an eighth as much as the Germans.

We have to close the gap. The governement establishes for himself the goal of quadrupling the training provided by employers to their employees. Mr. Speaker, if we want to ensure prosperity for future generations, we must resolutely follow that path.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have enough time to expand on what the government proposed in the Speech from the Throne to do for the environment, the family, the handicapped and the natives.

However, I can assure you and my constituents that I will continue, under the leadership of our Prime Minister, to work with courage and determination for Canada's unity in the greatest respect of the aspirations of our peoples.

[*English*]

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words this evening concerning the Speech from the Throne, a speech aimed primarily at finding a way to solve our national unity and constitutional crisis, a crisis which most certainly concerns two fundamentally different visions of Canada. On the one hand is a vision based on the concept of the two founding nations, on the other hand is a vision based on the concept of equality—equal–

ity for all Canadian cultural origins, equality for all 10 provinces, and equality for all Canadians.

For a very substantial number of English-speaking Canadians, at least, this crisis goes well beyond the Quebec issues. It also involves the concerns of native Canadians, of women, Canadians whose heritage is neither English nor French, national standards, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, multiculturalism and our system of government itself.

It is very much a crisis of confidence in our present system of government. Those feelings were clearly evident in the Meech Lake debate, and again, they are now very clearly evident in the findings of the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future. However, in the face of this lack of confidence and trust in our present system, both the minister of constitutional affairs and the Prime Minister have said that we are going to solve our unity and constitutional crisis by using the very system that so many Canadians do not trust to represent their interests. That is, the present House of Commons and the present Senate.

With the greatest of respect, that will not solve this crisis. When the minister of constitutional affairs says, as he did last week in this House, that members of this House and members of the Senate will solve this crisis in, and I quote: "the most open and innovative way", does he truly believe that the real decisions are going to be made here in this House in an open way, and not by the Prime Minister behind closed doors?

When the Prime Minister said last week that there is no greater constituent assembly than the House of Commons, and that the House of Commons will assume national leadership, did he really believe that the members of this House would assume the leadership role in this crisis rather than he, himself, as the Prime Minister of this country?

If the press and the media truly believed that the House of Commons will assume the national leadership role in this crisis, would the Press Gallery not be packed tonight? It is not. They were here for the speech of the Prime Minister and for the party leaders. They are not here now.

If there truly is no greater constituent assembly than this House of Commons, should Canadians not be hearing their members of Parliament in this very crucial debate deal with the issues that Canadians have raised before the Citizens' Forum in an open and an innovative way?

It is no wonder, then, that so many Canadians have no confidence in the ability of this House or its members to speak for them. That is why Canadians want to be involved in this process themselves. That is why we need a truly representative constituent assembly, one that Canadians will have confidence in, one that truly speaks for them, and that they feel truly speaks for them.

• (1930)

Ideally, such an assembly should be directly elected and made up of men and women, native Canadians and Canadians born elsewhere, represented proportionately and geographically as they appear in Canadian society itself. It would be very difficult within the time set for the Quebec referendum by the Belanger-Campeau report to design geographic constituencies for an elected assembly which accurately reflect the demographics of Canada. It is quite possible to establish a non-elected but representative constituent assembly within such a time frame.

The 1991 Canadian census will be carried out on June 4. By mid-January 1992 we will know the present demographic and geographic composition of our country. At that time all Canadians interested in sitting as a member of the constituent assembly could file an application, pay a deposit and submit nomination papers signed by at least 200 persons from the demographic and the geographic category that he or she wished to represent in the assembly.

Two hundred and ninety-five of the applicants, the same number as the present number of federal constituencies, would then be chosen by computer, as suggested by former Supreme Court Justice Estey, to constitute a representative assembly as reflected by the 1991 census. Present politicians would be eligible to apply but they would have no better chance of selection by the computer than any other Canadian.

The assembly would convene 30 days after its selection, choose its own chairperson, establish its own procedure, consider all submissions, concepts, ideas that were presented to it in writing and make its constitutional recommendations to Parliament four months later, just as the United States constituent assembly in Philadelphia did in 1787.

These recommendations would then be subject to ratification by all Canadians in a federally sponsored referendum, tabulated on a province-by-province basis. This would ensure that all Canadians were involved in

the constitutional process and that their feelings were made clear to this Parliament and to the provincial and the territorial legislatures.

The recommendations and the results of the referendum would then be submitted to Parliament and to the 10 provincial legislatures to be dealt with in accordance with the amending formula of our present 1982 Constitution Act. This approach would ensure that Canadians get the Constitution that they want and not the Constitution that we, the politicians, want them to have.

It has been said that Quebec will not participate in a constituent assembly. Mr. Remillard has said so publicly. To the best of my knowledge, Premier Bourassa has not. Premier Bourassa has said that he will not talk to anyone else but the federal government and that it is unacceptable to Quebec to talk to the other provinces. It is just as unacceptable to Canada that Quebec talk only to the federal government, a federal government and a Parliament that it really does not trust.

The only real solution is a truly representative constituent assembly in which we all participate. If Quebec refuses, the constituent assembly can be used to develop Canadians' response to Quebec, a response that Quebec tells us it is waiting for.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): On debate, the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton. I would just like to thank hon. members for deleting questions and comments so that we could get all these speakers in, and then starting on Monday we will probably have a new routine.

Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this important debate.

Apart from the over-arching importance of the need for Canadian unity, the section of the Speech from the Throne of particular personal interest to me is the section on participating in prosperity. In particular, this section places appropriate emphasis and federal government attention in human resource development and in the field of education.

In the area of human resource development, the speech rightfully notes that in the interdependent world we live in prosperity will, more and more, be a factor of knowledge, skills and innovation. Increasingly—thanks for the support back here—economic prosperity is first and foremost an issue of the people. Canada's ability to prosper in a global economy will be determined by the level of Canadians' educational achievement, by the sophistication of our management skills and by our attitudes to work and to change.

Globalization requires a new strategic alliance between government, labour and business. It means striking new effective partnerships, new forms of co-operation and collaboration between all major stakeholders if we are to meet the challenge of the integrated global economy.

While technology is certainly an important component of competitiveness, it is not by itself sufficient. A high quality work force and organizational innovations are required to capture the full potential of the new technologies that are around us.

The message is clear: Canada needs to build on its past performance in human resources to maintain its high standard of living and to ensure prosperity for future generations.

Canada ranked third, after the United States and Japan, out of 23 OECD countries, in terms of its human resources according to the 1990 edition of The World Competitiveness Report. Canada did poorly, however, in areas such as managerial initiatives, 15th; vocational training, 16th; and availability of skilled labour, 15th. These areas are now, more than ever, of key importance to competitiveness in Canada.

While Canada's education and training systems have served us well in the past, it is not clear that our systems are geared to meet the new job requirements of the emerging global economy. Nor is it clear that they can respond to demands for continuous learning and retraining brought about by a technology-driven, rapidly changing system.

If we are to meet future competitiveness challenges, we will need to increasingly view the development of human resources as an investment as opposed to a cost item.

The thrust of the Speech from the Throne is that the potential for gains in productivity, flexibility and responsiveness offered by the new technologies can only be realized through the skill and innovation that workers and management bring to their adoption and to their use.

It has been said that intelligent machines work best when paired in innovative ways with skilled workers. In this light, the challenge for all major stakeholders is to craft a way that ensures new workers entering the labour force of the capability to learn new skills many times in their working lives. Once they are in the labour force, they will probably have to be retrained a number of times. So they should be encouraged to learn new skills, to accept new challenges and job changes.

The Speech from the Throne is essentially about preparing us for the 21st century. For example, it is about developing a strong training culture in this country and continuing to move toward a more active training system than one that is based strictly on income maintenance. Our wealth and resources, both material and human, have led us to a point of complacency about the importance of skilled and innovative workers that must be drastically altered if we are to meet the challenge of a knowledge-driven economy.

In the wake of strong growth in the labour force over the past several decades, we have developed a weak training culture and thus have failed to adequately recognize that investment in human resource development is just as important as investment in plants and equipment. So we must do these things to be competitive.

The demographers tell us that by the year 2040, Canada will change from a country with abundant labour and scarce capital to a country with scarce labour and abundant capital.

Throughout the 1990s it is anticipated that the labour force will grow at a slower rate than in the previous two decades. It will grow at only an average of 1.2 per cent. What does this mean to Canada? It means we must put greater reliance on the current labour force and the pressures of adjustment will affect the existing work force much more directly than in the past.

Predictions of future job prospects also tell us that more and more will require higher skill levels with the growth of this information-based society. Fuelled by changes in technology and economic restructuring, Canadians have begun to witness the occupational transformation which is occurring in this country. We have experienced a shift from primarily a goods economy to a service economy. The problem arises in that there will be a general increase in the skill content and education requirements in most occupations and many future jobs will require higher skills.

• (1940)

Almost half of the jobs created between 1990 and 2000 will require more than five years of combined education and training beyond the completion of high school. The problem is that these requirements will exceed the current education and training levels of many workers.

Some 60 per cent of the workers today possess no more than secondary school education. In the absence of action there could be an increasing mismatch between the skills available and those that will be in demand. In the end Canadian industry and our economic prosperity depend upon a flexible workforce capable of taking on new jobs, changing occupations, acquiring new knowledge and developing new skills.

As we emerge as an information-based society, the need to adapt to the new skill demands on a regular basis will affect increasingly the number of Canadians. In tomorrow's society our workers will have to maintain a core of specific occupational skills, i.e. literacy and numeracy. They have to access skills up-grading and will need to be multi-skilled.

In effect, workers will increasingly be required to undertake a lifetime of learning in the work force. The convergence of these demographic and technological trends raises important questions about how well equipped we are to maintain and improve on our relatively high standard of living in Canada. For example, as envisaged in the Speech from the Throne, an important vehicle or mechanism through which the problem of skills-training can be addressed is our education system.

In the field of education, the speech correctly notes that in the dawning knowledge age how well we live will depend on how well we learn. Canadian men and women must have access to both the skills and the life-long learning opportunities necessary to improve their job prospects and ensure their prosperity.

Like our approaches to training and human resource development, our education system is under pressure to reform its curriculum so as to better prepare students to contribute effectively to a rapidly changing knowledge and technology intensive economy. There appears to be considerable agreement that schools should provide

students with the basic skills they will need for a lifetime of learning so they can be trained and retrained.

Canada is near the top of the OECD countries in terms of spending on education. Currently Canadians are investing some $50 billion in education and training systems, $45 billion in formal education, and $5 billion in adult training. The federal government spends over $10 billion a year in education, a terrific amount of money, but it raises some great concerns about the results.

Despite the high levels of money poured into it the current education system produces something short of world-class results. The commitment to a discussion paper on learning is not intended, as noted in the throne speech, to violate provincial jurisdiction. That is set out or acknowledged in the speech itself. It is looking beyond jurisdictional squabbling to what is good and best for the country as a whole.

This is a commitment targeted toward a system apparently in need of direction and reform. The question is seemingly one of quality in education. Our education system is facing challenges.

The discussion paper will be out in a short while. All Canadians will be asked to participate and we will be looking forward to setting some new directions in education, as we have noted in this speech and in the throne speech, which are so needed for the development of our people so that we keep them in our schools, reduce the drop-out rate from our high schools and reduce this business of 17 per cent functional literacy and numeracy on graduates.

We are looking forward to important results from this discussion paper so we can carry on in developing our human resources in Canada. We must move in to the 21st century in the right way so that we maximize our prosperity in Canada.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, after nearly seven years in office, this government has brought in a throne speech which was heralded as the most critical and important in Canadian history.

While we have heard about the need for new ideas, we can find few new ideas in the path the throne speech has laid out.

There were some positive signals, however, although they were vague.

First, there is no doubt about the importance of eliminating interprovincial trade barriers to ensure Canadian competitiveness. The Reform Party has advocated this for some time. It is hard to imagine an economic policy which has free trade with the U.S. without free trade within Canada. However, it has taken a long time to realize that problem.

Second, regarding the call to improve education and training, there is little doubt of the need for Canada to do this to ensure economic prosperity. However, defining the problem is not a prescription.

Third, the government description of the changes in the way Ottawa works are almost directly out of the Reform Party manual and were a primary reason for my party's creation. However, one has to ask whether description of problems equals the will to change. If Canadians want reform of interprovincial trade, education system and the Parliament of Canada, they certainly need to send reformers.

Of all the issues facing Canada, the issues of national unity and constitutional change are the ones which are to be of key importance in this session of Parliament and to Canadians outside these walls.

Our ability to settle the fundamental question of Canada's unity will decide whether Canada enters the 21st century on a sound footing as a united country or whether it staggers into the next millennium still seeking solutions to problems that have gone unanswered.

For the record, the Reform Party proposes that the Constitution of a new Canada ought to be built on the following basis:

First, new Canada ought to be built by those who want in. Canada should not be built by accommodating those who wish to divide it in order to remain united.

Second, new Canada ought to have a genuinely federal system, including a strong national government with strong regional representation through a Triple E Senate

and strong provinces to protect cultural identity and regional character.

Third, new Canada ought to have a division of power which fulfils the needs Canadians share, especially the needs for a competitive economy, a sustainable environment and a responsible community.

Fourth, new Canada ought to be a country which respects the democratic values that Canadians share and protects the interests of Canadians in the current constitutional situation. It ought to have a new Constitution which is accepted by demonstrated popular consent. It should not be a federation where powerful interests succeed in getting their ideology entrenched in the Constitution of Canada so the public cannot choose a new course even if it wanted to.

In summary, the Reform Party believes that new Canada should be a balanced democratic federation of provinces, distinguished by the conservation of its magnificent environment, the viability of its economy and recognition of the equality and uniqueness of all its citizens and provinces.

In the 12 months since the defeat of Meech Lake, the Reform Party has put forth its view. The Liberals, NDP and various provincial governments have also put forth their views on future constitutional development. The federal government has yet to put forward any concrete constitutional proposals of its own.

Almost a year after Meech Lake we have had hearings, committees, forums, the Prime Minister's committee of committees, the promise of more committees, and yet no concrete proposals of where the government actually stands on this issue.

We have been given vague proposals and high-sounding platitudes, talk of economic costs and benefits, but no vision of exactly what the government wants for this country, except that it remain united, which most Canadians, including myself and the Reform Party desire as well.

Certainly, one of the major reasons that Meech failed to win public support was the top-down, closed-door process. From the Reform Party's perspective, if the process is not correct, there is little chance that the content will bear the public's approval. The process followed is as important as the content, because the proper process will ensure that the content is good for Canada and acceptable to the Canadian public.

It is almost unprecedented for a government which has lost the confidence of the Canadian public and has already seen its major constitutional agenda fail to announce its intention to keep control of the entire constitutional process in upcoming negotiations before obtaining a new mandate.

While all of us who sit in this House have a constitutional responsibility to deal with major areas of concern to Canada, it is an undeniable fact that the parliamentary institutions and individuals are held in some degree of contempt by the Canadian public. This undermines the ability of Parliament and the government to propose even truly good constitutional changes to a suspicious public.

• (1950)

If the old Canada parties close ranks, the public will think they are trying to put something over on them. If the old Canada parties act on partisan lines, then the public is just as likely to consider it to be political posturing.

Reformers believe that the process of constitution-making in Canada must be as open and as broadly based as possible. Even before Meech, the Reform Party was a strong advocate of constituent assemblies, a concept which has very much come into vogue.

Of course, we would like to see a process involving directly elected delegates to these assemblies held on a provincial or regional basis as well as one held for aboriginal people.

Reformers believe that aboriginal people should be given the opportunity to define among themselves their position in the new Canada, their relationship to the federal government, and their rights and responsibilities, and not merely to have their conditions simply studied further.

Reformers believe that constitutional conventions held on a provincial or regional basis before a national convention is convened help to ensure that the hopes and aspirations of all provinces are put forward. This will help to ensure that the best opportunity to reach consensus is reached.

Many Canadians are suspicious of a call for a single national convention before each region has had time to develop its position and, for that matter, of the Prime Minister's insistence that the the House of Commons, with 50 per cent of its seats representing only two provinces, deal with constitutional negotiations on behalf of an entire federation.

Reformers believe that ordinary citizens would best be able to stand for an election to a constituent assembly. While Canadians recognize the hard work and dedication of their elected officials, they also recognize their very partisan nature, the excessive party discipline and the deeply held ideological bias of many elected representatives, characteristics which most Canadians simply do not share. This leaves Reformers to prefer a non-political, non-partisan convention.

Also, the short-run vision of our politicians to gain electoral success contrasts with Canada's need for a long-lasting Constitution and united country.

Of course, Reformers believe that once a constitutional package has been developed by a constituent assembly and ratified by the elected provincial legislatures and Parliament, it should be ratified by a referendum of each province.

Reformers believe that a constitution developed in a bottom-up process with a constituent assembly at the front end followed by a referendum is the best way to achieve the consensus which Canada needs and which Canadians are now demanding.

When Canadians and Reformers speak of consensus, they mean a consensus of the people of Canada, not the traditional mythical consensus of old Canada's politicians, which was a consensus of political elites, the Canadian establishment and other people who matter.

Old Canada's supporters will say that consensus cannot be worked out if too many people are involved. Certainly, this is a slightly warped view of what true consensus is. Consensus, it is said in old Canada, can only be worked out in secret and behind closed doors. Compromise in old Canada can only be achieved when a majority government can force through compromise when it cannot achieve consensus. Compromise in new Canada can only be worked out through a genuine process of give and take, where each side is involved.

Reformers believe that, free of threats or ultimatums, the process of a constituent assembly and a referendum is the best way of assuring that genuine compromises are developed and reached so that each region has an opportunity to ensure that their hopes and aspirations are addressed and embodied in the Constitution.

A constitutional package developed in a public consensus-building process, as the Reform Party has suggested, stands the best possibility of being a deal that will bear the will of Canadians and of being a package that will withstand the test of time.

If, however, this constitutional package is reached by bullying threats and coercion, especially over economic circumstances, if a deal is developed as the result of panic to meet a deadline or an ultimatum or else Canada will not survive, if a deal is reached that is perceived, like the 1982 Constitution, to exclude a province or region of Canada, or if a deal is perceived to be for the benefit of one province and the exclusion of the others, like the 1987 accord, if the deal finds accommodation without finding solutions to deeper underlying problems, if it addresses the concerns of one group and excludes others, if it is a deal where people are spoken to but neither listened to nor understood because of a top-down process, then the deal reached will either fail or only be a temporary solution that will help only to inflame underlying tensions and divisions.

It will ensure that Canada stumbles into the 21st century, uncertain about its future, its direction and its unity.

For three decades various political leaders and political parties have proposed solutions to Canada's problems. They have not solved our problems, and in many cases have not even addressed the real problems.

One of the primary reasons Canada's major problems, especially those concerning Quebec have yet to be answered is that Canadian politicians have failed to believe, or comprehend, the honesty of some positions taken.

It has often been said that Canada should not separate because we have built a country that is the envy of the world. Canadians all know that Canada is a country worth preserving, and Reformers have always said that we want to preserve Canada as one country if possible; however Canada cannot continue to be a house divided against itself.

Almost 2,500 years ago there came into existence a great confederation which produced a golden age which was the envy of the ancient world. Its architecture, philosophers and poets are still held in reverence to this day. At the centre of the confederation of ancient Greece there was a great city surrounded by great walls which no army could breach. Inside these walls was the rich city and culture and the first democracy known to man. While the confederacy was vast, the democracy was limited to those few who lived within those walls; those living outside the walls began to perceive and those living

within the walls began to believe that the purpose of this confederacy was to build a civilization that would be the envy of the ancient world.

Despite its greatness, the ancient Greek confederacy and its great civilization crumbled because of internal dissension, the result of failing to listen to the hopes and aspirations of the confederation outside the walls of Athens.

Now parallels can be drawn from events of 2,500 years ago. The historian of the great dissolution of that confederation, Thucydides, wrote "The Greeks did not understand each other any longer, though they spoke the same language". Some may say; well, I am speaking of the two major language groups in Canada. However, what some others see in Canada is the inability of the politicians of old Canada, living behind these walls, to hear and to understand the people already living in new Canada.

Finally, a country cannot be founded or maintained merely by threats and fear. Neither can a country be built merely upon the economic benefits to the participants or to make the world envious. Debate about a commitment to Canada should be more than just a discussion about the economic costs and benefits. A country can only be maintained by a clear commitment and a feeling of belonging on the part of all its citizens and all its provinces.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, The hon. member spoke about a vision of a new Canada compared to an old Canada. I guess I come from the old Canada and I identify with the old Canada. It has proven to be, in spite of a small population, one of the most prosperous in the world, an old Canada that has carved out a place for itself in the history of the world. It stands as a symbol of what can be done when people come together and work with vision and commitment, a symbol of which it can be said that there is a vision that understands that bigger and stronger is not always better, where compromise is of value and not just confrontation.

I find it peculiar that the Reform Party presents itself as a party of the grass roots, and yet when I sat at my television set and watched their convention I discovered that of all of the parties in this country, it is the Reform Party that is the least grass roots, because one individual stands at the top and spreads his gospel down. I ask the hon. member to respond as to how that happens.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): She can come back Monday and respond.

It being 8 o'clock p.m. this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 o'clock a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 8 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, May 23, 1991

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

TABLING AND REFERENCE OF 1991 REPORT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have the honour to lay upon the table the 1991 report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada.

Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 32(5), this document is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on House Management.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

TABLING OF REPORT OF FOUNDING CONFERENCE FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF CSCE

Hon. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to table in the House, in both official languages, the report on the Founding Conference for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the CSCE, held in Madrid from April 1 to April 3, 1991.

* * *

[*English*]

EXPORT AND IMPORT PERMITS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-6, an act respecting the exporting, importing, manufacturing, buying or selling of or other dealing with certain weapons.

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

* * *

STATUS OF ARTIST ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-7, an act respecting the status of the artist and professional relations between artists and producers in Canada.

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

* * *

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-206, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Parliament of Canada Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to explain the purpose of this bill.

It is to ensure that when a vacancy occurs in the representation a by-election shall be held within 80 days after the speaker sends his warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of the writ.

This bill was suggested by the hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore so I know it will win widespread approval on the other side of the House. I see the parliamentary secretary sitting here. Perhaps the bill could be given second reading at once and could be referred to a committee so the matter could be studied promptly and dealt with very quickly.

In any event that is the purpose of the bill.

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

• (1010)

CROWN CORPORATIONS DISSOLUTION OR TRANSFER AUTHORIZATION ACT

REINSTATEMENT OF BILL

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions and agreement on the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing or special order of this House, the following bill introduced in the Second Session of the Thirty–Fourth Parliament be reinstated forthwith in this session as follows:

An Act to provide for the dissolution and transfer of certain Crown corporations and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof, be deemed to have been introduced, read the first time and ordered to be printed, read a second time, referred to and reported by a Legislative Committee with an amendment (Bill C–73); and that the bill as reinstated be called for debate during this sitting or any forthcoming sitting.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

SUPPLY

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions on the following motion as well:

That, notwithstanding the relevant provisions of Standing Order 81, Supply Proceedings for the current trimester be subject to the following provisions:

1. the last allotted day be Thursday, June 13.

2. every estimate or supplementary estimate referred to a committee be reported or be deemed to have been reported by Friday, June 7.

3. "extension of consideration by a Committee" (as set out in Standing Order 81.(4)(a), (b) and (c) be subject to a notice of motion from the Leader of the Opposition to be given not later than Tuesday, June 4, with such motion to be deemed adopted when called on "Motions" on Thursday, June 6; and

4. there be eight days allotted for the business of Supply for the current period ending Thursday, June 13.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Does the hon. the parliamentary secretary have unanimous consent to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

PETITIONS

RURAL CANADA

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured once again to rise in the House pursuant to Standing Order 36 and present a petition on behalf of the constituents of Kentbridge, Chatham, Thamesville, Ridgetown, and Blenheim. This petition is with regard to the Conservative government's direct attack on the rural way of life, including cuts to Via Rail, abandoning small rail lines, the neglect of fisheries, forests and other natural resources, cuts to the CBC and the erosion of the royal postal services, particularly the closure of small post offices, many of them being the backbone of rural areas.

The petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to support Canada's rural way of life, to support the maintenance of rural post offices and postal services, and to reject the Conservative agenda of cutbacks and closures.

BALTIC STATES

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from residents of my community and elsewhere regarding the Baltic states. The petitioners call for the use of every means available to prevent further bloodshed. They call for a peaceful restoration of independence to the Baltic States and they wish to send Canadian parliamentary observers to the Baltic States. They urge the government to raise this issue at the Security Council of the United Nations and to press the United Nations to send its observers to the area immediately.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by a large number of people in my constituency of Notre–Dame–de–Grâce in

Montreal condemning the government for its cuts to the CBC and calling on Parliament as a matter of priority to ensure that the CBC be further strengthened to serve as a primary instrument of Canadian cultural sovereignty, providing high quality service to all Canadians.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Douglas Young (Acadie—Bathurst): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to table the following petition which stresses the problems caused by the GST, reflected today in a number of reports; it also states that the cost to the consumer is much higher than was predicted by the government. Residents of Duguayville and Hacheyville in my riding ask the government to rethink this disastrous policy that continues to feed the recession in this country.

[*English*]

CANADA POST

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I want to present a petition to the House on behalf of a number of people from the Windsor, Essex County area. They petition Parliament to call on Canada Post to honour Marie Sklodowska Curie by issuing a commemorative stamp on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of her birth, November 7, 1992.

This petition has been duly certified by the clerk, and I present it pursuant to the relevant standing order.

CANADIAN FLAG

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by numerous residents of Kingston and the Islands in support of a bill to make it an offence to destroy or desecrate the Canadian flag.

I note that such a bill was introduced as a private member's bill during the last session, and I hope that the hon. member who introduced the bill will come forward with it again.

This petition supports the intent of this bill and urges this House to adopt such a bill.

EQUALITY RIGHTS

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition on behalf of people from Quesnel, Kingston and the Islands, Calgary and from all over Canada.

These petitioners point out to the House that a report has been prepared by the committee on justice and legal affairs on equality rights in Canada. The government has accepted this report and its recommendations saying it would take whatever measures necessary to ensure that sexual orientation is a prohibited ground of discrimination.

These particular petitioners ask that government and Parliament act to bring forward immediately an amendment to add sexual orientation to the Canadian Human Rights Act as a prohibited ground of discrimination.

NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, I rise under Standing Order 36 to present petitions, a large number of which are signed by people in the Ottawa area.

Whereas our Parliament is located in Ottawa and legislates the National Energy Board, the proposed move of the board to Calgary, according to the petitioners, will seriously affect the ability of environmental groups and other interested parties to make representations to the board. The only persons to derive a benefit from this proposed relocation are the big oil and gas companies.

The undersigned petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reconsider and stop the move of the National Energy Board to Calgary.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Shall all questions stand?

[*English*]

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I have a question on the Order Paper dated May 13. While that may sound like a very recent question, I put the same question on the Order Paper in February during the last session. A 45–day answer was requested and now it is the mid–May.

The government has had since February to prepare an answer to this question. I would have thought that as soon as I put it down on the Order Paper the answer would have been forthcoming. It has had months and months to prepare this answer. I wonder why the government has failed to comply with the rules of the House and answer this question within the 45 days. It is not a difficult question. The answer may be embarrassing to the government, but it is not a difficult question.

With respect, I hope the parliamentary secretary has some explanations as to why there is negligence in failing to answer this question.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend raises a very important point, and that is the whole question of how we treat issues, questions or bills that are dropped as a result of a prorogation and then require a reintroduction process.

I hear his arguments. They are very valid, and I am sure that the hon. member will want to discuss with his caucus whether we should apply the same argument to bills that were in similar treatment in the last session.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Shall the questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1020)

[*English*]

NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved that Bill C–2, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to begin the debate on Bill C–2, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act. As my colleagues will recall, in the budget speech of February 26 last, the then Minister of Finance, the hon. Michael Wilson, announced that the Government of Canada had made a decision to relocate the National Energy Board, or the NEB, from Ottawa to Calgary, Alberta.

The bill we are discussing in the House today is a necessary piece of work in order to facilitate that move. The bill to amend the National Energy Board Act will make it possible for the Government of Canada to follow through on those commitments and plans.

This bill and this move has to be put into some context. The National Energy Board was formed in 1959 by the then government of the late Right Hon. John Diefenbaker during the time when Canada's oil and gas industry was being organized in an attempt to make it a national economic instrument for the development of Canada, with particular interest for the producing provinces.

In 1961 the so–called first agreement on how Canada's oil and gas resources would be used in Canada was formulated. Colloquially, it became known as the Ottawa Valley line because from Canada's Pacific coast to the Ottawa Valley western Canadian oil and gas would be used for those Canadians living in that part of Canada.

That agreement had followed a very acrimonious debate, the so–called 1957 pipeline debate. The result was that when the government came into office, there was an attempt to bring about some form of order within

the industry. Equally important, there was to be an agency to allow both producers and consumers to have access to a regulatory process bringing some order to both sides of the energy equation.

I believe that agreement served Canada very well. It allowed us in western Canada to develop an industry which today is a major economic engine, not only for that region of the country, but all of Canada. If one takes a look at Canada's balance of trade payments, it is that industry which is very instrumental in Canada's economic growth and stability. Even in the most recent gulf crisis, when other countries were looking for sources of supply of oil, Canada remained in a self-sufficient position and was not asked by the International Energy Agency, for example, to develop strategic petroleum reserves, as other countries such as the United States, Germany and Japan have had to do.

Since 1961, there have been in this House a great number of debates relating to ownership of the resource and control of the resource.

Those of us who come from western Canada have always argued that the Natural Resources Transfer Act of 1930 once and for all confirmed conclusively that resource ownership lay in the hands of the provinces. I mention that as background.

Even in the early days when the National Energy Board was formed, it was argued that as a demonstration, so that the Government of Canada should have a presence throughout the country, it should be located some place other than in the national capital.

That is history. I am pleased that through this long debate this legislation is a further step in fulfilling not only the commitment made in the most recent budget speech, but the vision of the value this industry could have to Canada's future.

This move is being made for a number of very good reasons. I hardly need to remind hon. members that we live in a critical juncture in Canada's history, at a time when the forces of disunity and divergence threaten the unity of a nation that generations of men and women have toiled to build.

It is extremely important at this point in time that national policy be responsive to the aspirations of Canada's regions for a fuller participation in our national life and greater proximity to the making of decisions which shape the economic future of our country.

Western Canadians in particular have increasingly felt that their problems were not always well understood in Ottawa and that decisions were sometimes taken without a full appreciation for their views and perspectives.

I could quote nothing better than the member for Edmonton—Southeast. In his book *Uneasy Patriots* he said, and I quote but one paragraph of which there are many I could quote.

On page 96 he said:

> Defenders of the NEP—

The National Energy Program.

> —agree that one of its objectives was to establish the leadership of Ottawa in the energy sector. The means chosen was a bold attempt to create a new community of energy leaders with a primary loyalty to the federal government. This group was to join industrial-financial elites in Toronto and Montreal who have historically identified closely with Ottawa because of various federal measures such as the Bank Act. The NEP was thus profoundly anti-western because until 1980 our energy industry was one of the very few sectors centred in Western Canada. It was, to many Westerners, as if a national government with no elected representation on either coast had told our east- and west-coast fisheries that they should relocate their industry decision-makers to Ottawa.

That puts it in perspective.

The more than 2000 miles between the nation's capital and the principal cities of western Canada partly explains this sense of alienation. These feelings are aggravated by the fact that decisions concerning the nature of development of western oil and gas resources are perceived to be made far removed from where they impact most heavily, namely in the west.

While many Canadians appreciate the nature of the harsh realities which govern life in western Canada—most importantly, volatile and unpredictable international grain and energy markets—it is important that this understanding be reflected in our national institutions. They must be ones in which westerners can take their place as full and equal participants.

There has been another change and that is regarding cost recovery. Obviously, when we are being asked by the industry, once it makes application to the National Energy Board, to pay for the National Energy Board's costs directly as interveners and not only as taxpayers, it is important to take another note.

• (1030)

Over 80 per cent of the National Energy Board's activities relate to oil and gas produced in western Canada. The board's decisions on these matters are of importance to all Canadians. Some petitions have indicated that and we are mindful of that fact. But the board's decisions touch upon the lives of westerners in a more direct and tangible way.

The new location for the NEB will in no way diminish the quality or direction of board decisions. The planned relocation of the board from Ottawa to Calgary, while symbolic, is more important than that. It is a demonstration of the government's desire to ensure that its institutions and decisions are seen to be responsive in areas where regional impacts are profound.

Some have alleged that moving the National Energy Board will somehow throw into question the integrity and impartiality of its decisions. The argument that a national institution such as the NEB can act in a non-partisan fashion in Ottawa and not when located elsewhere is simply, to put the best face on it, preposterous. Moreover, it is an insult. It is an insult to the intelligence of the audience, it is an insult to western Canadians, it is an insult to the board's staff and it is not worthy of those who utter it. If they have other arguments, economic or whatever, I can understand the argument, but I do not understand the impartiality argument because one could say, in reverse, if that is the case, because the board has been located in Ottawa since 1959, all its decisions have been against the interest of the industry or the west as a region.

We are saying very clearly, there might be other economic arguments, but no one can question the board's integrity.

We recognize that the National Energy Board has diverse responsibilities that extend well beyond oil and natural gas. I want to assure Canadians that the board will continue to fulfil its role as that of a truly national institution. In that regard, as the board has been doing in the past, we would like to emphasize that it will continue to conduct hearings relating to pipeline and electricity transmission routes for example in centres right across Canada. They will be in close proximity to where the project impacts and public interests are the greatest.

Most importantly, I would like to emphasize that the integrity of the board as an arbitrator of diverse industry and consumer interest is not in question. The board will continue its mandate to regulate in the Canadian public interest fairly and effectively, taking into consideration the views of all interested parties; consumers, producers and others.

I think it is also worth mentioning that the NEB employees, as they become increasingly aware of the opportunities associated with both working and living in the Calgary area, will view the relocation favourably.

I appreciate that any change of location will bring about disruption, but the fact of the matter is that when we speak about the Public Service, we speak about it in exactly those two words; it is a service to the public and it is the service concept that has to be stressed.

The National Energy Board has taken steps, in co-operation with the Treasury Board—and I want to thank the President of the Treasury Board—many of which are precedent setting, to ensure that for these individuals, the move and transition to Calgary is as smooth as possible.

I have also had an opportunity to meet the mayor, members of the council, school boards, French speaking associations in the Calgary area and educators, and I can say, without any hesitation, that the welcome these Canadians will receive in Calgary will be second to none. I appreciate the work that has been done in the Calgary region for these people.

Some individuals, regardless of what assistance we offer, will either not be able or will choose not to relocate to Calgary. The NEB will make every possible effort, within the limits of available resources, to help these employees find alternative employment.

The board's regulatory calendar for public hearings for the rest of the year and into earlier 1992 is a heavy one. That is for reasons primarily on the gas side and pipeline proposals, as well as electricity export proposals. We are taking every necessary measure to ensure that there is no loss over the transition period in the continuity and effectiveness with which the board performs its duties.

This applies of course to both its traditional duties and those frontier lands functions which it has assumed with the dissolution of the Canada Oil and Gas Lands Administration.

To show how these things work, roughly 10 days ago the governments of the Northwest Territories and Yukon signed a memorandum of understanding for further development in the regulatory process in conjunction with the federal government's responsibility of the regulation of oil and gas, particularly north of 60.

I recall in 1979 when we were negotiating with these very people as to the future of their area, specifically on the COPE agreement. Now some 10 years later, the people who were negotiating the agreement are now ministers in those governments and they also see the need not only for regulation, but also very strongly endorse their western Canadian presence.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, the move to Calgary will offer a new chapter in the history of the NEB. That history has been one of achievement in the past. We as Canadians do not face the reality, for example, that our neighbours to the south do where roughly 50 per cent of their oil needs must be imported, while we have a self-sufficiency in oil and gas. Obviously more work has to be done in terms of frontier lands, oilsands projects, other projects such as offshore with Hibernia, LASMO and Cohasset-Panuke because the oil production in the western sedimentary basin is dropping. We knew that. Our projections were correct.

These are changes that will come in the industry. One thing I know is that as the board relocates in Calgary it will continue to offer high standards and excellent service to the Canadian public. I believe Canadians will recognize that Calgary is in fact a major energy city and this national endorsement is another affirmation of that fact.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, as the energy critic of the Official Opposition, I would indicate at the outset that the leader of my party and the party supports the spirit and letter of Bill C-2. The important issue of employer-employee relations, a subject which is not the long suit of those on the other side, will be dealt with by my colleague from Ottawa West when she becomes the second speaker for my party.

We believe that the matter should be moved quickly to a legislative committee and there the questions of employee rights and employer responsibilities can be dealt with quickly. As you will be aware, Sir, being an Albertan yourself, the NEB has already leased space in Calgary. You and I both wish it were in Edmonton but I think as northern Albertans we recognize that unfortunately Calgary, speaking as a northern Albertan, does have the ERCB and is the more logical place to put the NEB than our own city.

Space has been leased and the move is going ahead. I think the member for Ottawa West will deal in detail with what it means to the careers, children in high school and university and a good many families of those who do not choose to go with the board to Calgary.

• (1040)

It should also be stressed—and I think the minister mentioned this point—that the relocation of the NEB to Calgary will save our western oil and gas industry money and make it easier to deal with a regulatory agency.

As a member from Edmonton, you will be aware, Sir, that since 1986, two years after this government came to office, approximately 50,000 bread winners in the western oil patch have lost their jobs. The industry continues to hurt badly.

At present energy company representatives have to make frequent trips to Ottawa. One of the advantages of moving the NEB to Calgary will be a reduction of the costs of coming to Ottawa and staying in expensive hotels and the like.

I might tell the minister that last night I had dinner with one of his former constituents. I have to say, without revealing any names, that I do not think that particular former constituent is going to be voting for the minister's party any more.

Mr. Epp: Especially if he is a former constituent.

Mr. Kilgour: In fact they went to school together and the minister knows the former constituent very well.

An hon. member: It is his brother.

Mr. Kilgour: Currently energy company representatives have to make many trips to Ottawa to present information and opinions on issues being dealt with by

the NEB. Trips for the hearings are often lengthy—and I think that is an understatement—and expensive particularly since the government has made applicants pay to have their cases heard by the board to cover the costs of operation.

It is estimated that 90 per cent of the National Energy Board's operating costs, about $25 million yearly, is funded by the deeply wounded oil and gas industry from western Canada.

Another point is that in spite of the NEB's best persuasion on the petroleum companies to get their co-operation in recruiting competent and knowledgeable men and women, the number of candidates as employees for the board has evidently declined. Many of them are from the oil patch and simply do not want to live in our national capital region. That is now a requirement under the NEB Act.

It is very important that NEB board members and employees be impartial and capable of balancing all of the affected interests and regions of the country, consuming as well as producing, electricity, nuclear and all the issues they deal with in the decision-making process.

I congratulate the minister on his reading habits. I am glad he quoted from the book. I guess if he can quote from it, so can I. I am going to quote from both of them. I would like, if I may, Sir, to read—

An hon. member: I have them both.

Mr. Kilgour: Oh, you have them both. Well, why didn't the minister quote from that one too?

I would like to quote from the section of the first book *Uneasy Patriots*, called *Oil Sands, Coal and Natural Gas*.

Mr. Arseneault: Who is the author?

Mr. Kilgour: You have known him a long time, Mr. Speaker. This was written in 1988. I know you have your copy with you this morning. A paper presented to provincial energy ministers in 1986 estimated that without new sources of supply Canada would require imports to meet one-quarter of its light crude and oil needs by 1990 and more than half by 2000.

It seems to me to follow that western Canada should aim to become the technological world leader for oil sands energy development. It would certainly help Edmonton.

A new mined oil sands project in Fort McMurray which was to start in 1996 unfortunately will not, and an upgrader at Lloydminster to start in 1993, recently announced amid much controversy as to its economic viability and I understand viability remains a major problem for that facility, could become an important component of a prairie manufacturing base in the overall national interest. I skip down a bit and I mention that the security of the future supply is so critical that the risk appears to be warranted. The U.S. now has a strategic oil reserve of about 515 million barrels which, at $20 U.S. per barrel, represents a $10 billion investment in oil security without including carrying charges on the investment.

I have recently written to the minister on this matter so I will repeat it from the book. "Ottawa must also recognize that the oil sands sector badly needs help in other spheres. For example, new oil in sand extraction technologies appear to hold real promise for efficiency and reduction of water and air pollution when compared to the hot-water processes now used by Syncrude and Suncor at Fort McMurray".

Even the member for Edmonton East seems to agree with it. He can do that in his speech.

"Imaginative new research and development programs funded by Ottawa should assist the more promising of these technologies with a view to enhancing existing western strengths. World leadership with all of its spin-off in terms of exportive services should also be a goal".

This next paragraph I think the member for Edmonton East may not agree with.

"Substantial growth for gas exports from western Canada was predicted in a late 1986 study by the National Energy Board—"

That has certainly been the case since.

"If, however, NEB does not permit exports beyond 1991," as was then a possibility, "a cost-benefit analysis by the Alberta Research Council predicts a virtual calamity for exploration and development in this important western industry and estimates that the present value of a no-export policy after 1991 for Canadian consumers because of resulting lower prices would be $8.8 billion between 1988 and 2003"—get this, Mr. Speaker—"the net present loss to Alberta producers"—your constituents and mine and many others—"alone would be $25.3 billion, making a net loss to the economies and governments of the western provinces of $18.3 billion over the period. Given the indications that large quantities of gas are still to be found within the western

provinces, it is surely in the general national interest to continue exports beyond 1991. Ottawa, or the Western Diversification Office, might usefully address this issue, if only by funding further research on the employment and other costs to the west of alternative gas exports supplies".

I promise not to quote any further from that book.

By the way, before I forget, I hope the member for Edmonton East will tell the members of the House whether he and his party support the move to Calgary and that he will correct me in his speech. The member for Edmonton East has indicated that he was "indifferent" about the move, but would not fight it. I hope he will explain that comment to 2.5 million Albertans when he gets up to speak.

A conviction shared by outer Canadians is that we are chronically under-represented in the Public Service, including Crown corporations, of our own national government. Atlantic Canadians protested this soon after Confederation. Toronto, Ottawa, Hull and Montreal together contain almost half of the more than 200,000 federal employees. I speak, Sir, as a former federal employee so I hope you will forgive me for that.

About one-third of the federal government employees live in the national capital region. In the United States the equivalent figure for Washington, D.C., is only 12 per cent. My leader, Jean Chrétien, revealed during the early 1980s that only one out of seven senior executives in the federal Public Service lived outside of Ottawa and Hull.

Mr. Chrétien also noted that as many as 70 per cent of the senior government policy makers in this city had little or no regional experience and as many as half of them had never worked outside Ottawa during their entire careers.

There appears to be a clear consensus now among federal mandarins that there is no such thing as a parallel career for their colleagues "in the regions". Job classifications, salaries, and a host of other factors make it clear to everyone that the best careers are the ones that begin and end in Ottawa.

In my view, there should be some real effort to recruit people from all areas of the country and there should be an equal chance for everybody, whether they are from St. John's, Yellowknife, or Nanaimo. I will give the minister an example which I am sure will concern him. I am a former Winnipeger, Mr. Speaker, and I should confess that to you. A friend of mine, with a couple of university degrees, went to the Public Service of Canada in Winnipeg three or four years ago to see what jobs were available. Nothing of interest to her was available. She got on an aeroplane, came to Ottawa and rented an apartment for a month or two, I think it was. She went to the Public Service Commission here and found all kinds of interesting jobs, of which she accepted one and began to work in Ottawa. Is it right that somebody who cannot afford to fly to Ottawa and open an apartment here does not have the same access to these jobs as somebody living in outer Canada? That simply has to stop if we are going to do something about national unity in our country, which we all want to do, except the people in the back row.

• (1050)

In mid-1989, my office did a little study. We found that of 220 senior people from 28 federal departments and agencies—and there are about 40, so we did not do them all— only about 10 per cent of them were born and educated in western Canada. We have, as you know, about 30 per cent of the population. Obviously, we have about one-third of the number of senior public servants in Canada that we should have based on population.

What was it for Atlantic Canada? It was 4 per cent. Atlantic Canada, as you know, has about 10 per cent of the population. For the north, it was 0 per cent. In short, Atlantic Canada, western Canada and the north, eight provinces and two territories, had about 14 per cent of the senior public servants by birth and by education.

When the ex-Minister of Finance announced his budget recently, there was sustained applause from the government members, I am sure it included the minister, when he announced that the NEB would be moving to Calgary. I wonder why, and I do not mean to be unkind to the minister, it was not in the text of the finance minister's speech. I hope that the minister, when he is giving us the reason, will also tell us how much this move is going to cost.

To those opposite, this was great politics. In fact, moving the agency to Calgary is a very long overdue proposal. I might tell the minister that I had dinner last night with two other people from Calgary and they both

told me that they were not going to vote for his party next time. This is just in passing.

An hon. member: Harvey is quaking in his boots.

An hon. member: Are they from your riding?

Mr. Kilgour: No, no. They live in Calgary.

As members know, Albertans marched in the street against the GST. The Prime Minister's caucus, I believe, has been at the brink of revolt. In fact, two of us were expelled from the caucus for voting against the GST. The Reform Party—

Mr. Peterson: Send us more.

Mr. Kilgour: The member for Willowdale may not appreciate that the last poll that I saw for Calgary indicated, and appreciate that Calgary has been the most loyal Tory city in Canada for generations, that 11 per cent of Calgarians were planning to vote for the Tory Party in the next election. In Edmonton, Mr. Speaker, you may not be pleased to know, it was reported by one of your favourite newspapers, *The Edmonton Sun*, that the number of people planning to vote for the Tory Party in the next election was 9 per cent.

Mr. Van De Walle: What about St. Albert?

Mr. Kilgour: I did not see the figures for St. Albert. The decision to move the NEB was done so hastily that there was insufficient time to include the announcement of the printed text of the ex-Minister of Finance's budget speech.

How are Ottawa's myriad agencies, departments and Crown corporations doing in an age of instant communication in providing regional leadership to our private sector? In 1989, only five out of forty of our largest or best-known national Crown corporations had their head offices outside of what I call inner-Canada; Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa. Not one of the five was in Atlantic Canada, and the five in western and northern Canada were the Canadian Wheat Board—well, they cannot very well put that in Ottawa—Cameco, formerly Eldorado Nuclear, in Saskatchewan, NWT Power Commission in Yellowknife, Petro-Canada in Calgary and the Canada Harbour Place in Vancouver. Five out of 40 of our largest Crown corporations are in western Canada. The other 35 are all located in either Ottawa or Montreal, none of them in Mississauga. Some seem to me to be especially out of place, given the nature of their activities and locale of their clientele.

For example, why is the Farm Credit Corporation in Ottawa? I think it would be of interest to members from the west to know, which I was reminded of recently, that Mr. Chrétien attempted to move the Farm Credit Corporation to Camrose—I see the member for Camrose and that area is in his seat—and it was blocked by the government which he supported in 1979-80. Mr. Chrétien has also moved jobs to Sudbury. He has moved jobs to Atlantic Canada. He has been in a real sense the author of decentralization in this country.

Why, for example, does the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, the Farm Credit Corporation, Canada Ports and the Canadian Dairy Commission need to be located in Ottawa-Hull?

I share the concerns expressed by many of the 285 NEB and COGLA employees, who are very unhappy about uprooting their families in some cases. They were shocked by the announcement in the media of the move. There was no consultation with employee representatives prior to the announcement, I understand, and I hope the minister will clarify that as well. It was rather typically insensitive and arrogant of the government to notify them over television that they are going to undertake a major change in life style.

I feel they understand that very little thought or planning has gone into the move. I understand the minister's department still does not have a budget for the move, but he will tell us about that. I hope he will tell us the details of it.

Calgary may look distant and forbidding to an anglophone. For the 30 per cent of the NEB work force who speak French, I would point out that we have a 12,000-strong francophone community in Calgary. It has pledged to offer its help, and I am glad the minister spoke of that. I am told the Catholic Board of Education can accommodate all francophone families in the city's two French-language schools.

It is estimated that about half of the employees will elect to make the move, as was the case when TransCanada Pipelines moved its head office to Calgary from Toronto last year. Those who decide not to move will receive, as I understand according to federal policy,

priority for hiring in the Public Service. The member for Ottawa West will speak further about that, I believe.

Mr. Malone: I'll bet she will.

Mr. Kilgour: Might that be on the record, Mr. Speaker. The member for Crowfoot said: "I'll bet she will", and I hope the people taking notes of these things got that. It was one of the best lines I have heard from the member for Crowfoot.

Certainly some board members of the NEB and a certain percentage of the 285 employees will choose to remain in Ottawa. New staff would then have to be recruited from the producing sector in Calgary. I would point out to those opposite that there are a good many unemployed engineers and geologists and the like in Calgary, and hopefully some of these men and women will have a chance to work for the board. Some concerns have already been raised about their presumed predisposition to the producer's point of view. You know, if they go skiing up on Connor's Hill in Edmonton, they might ski with somebody who works for an oil company.

The ERCB has been in Calgary since its inception and I don't think anybody has ever accurately accused the ERCB of being a tame agency, a corrupted agency or biased in favour of the producers.

The NEB has proven to be an extraordinarily objective tribunal. It has not shown any propensity to favour a particular interest group. I think it would be very unfair for anybody to impugn the integrity of the agency by suggesting that its impartiality and even-handedness would be threatened on the basis of relocation to Calgary. It is also true that it is a move from the "corridors of power" to the capital of the oil and gas sector, one of the few to be located in western Canada. Should we question the board's impartiality? I do not think we should.

Ontario and western Canada have had their energy differences in the past, and may have again in the future.

• (1100)

Differences may occur—

Mr. Horner: Do you remember black Tuesday?

Mr. Kilgour: Yes, I do. If you are not careful, I will read from my book on that subject.

Differences may occur, but the location of the NEB hardly seems to justify renewed tensions. When the idea to establish some form of national energy body was first suggested to the minister, C. D. Howe, an Ontarian, snapped: "What in hell would such an agency do that I do not do already?"

The question was rhetorical. The creation of the NEB was not a sudden flash of inspiration, it was a natural progression of regulatory developments stretching back to the early 1900s.

What was new then was the fact that for the first time an independent tribunal had been established to provide advice to the federal government on certain energy matters, based on evidence put before its members at public hearings conducted in the nature of a court.

The board continued to be actively engaged in an advisory capacity because of its broad knowledge of energy matters generally, familiarity with the operation of many sectors of the industry and its involvement as a regulator with respect to many of the energy issues that came to the fore over the succeeding years.

Over a period of 32 years the scope and extent of its activities have expanded significantly, in part because of the broadening of its legislative mandate by Parliament, but even more because of the enormous growth in the scale and complexity of energy issues in which the board was involved, both as an adviser and as a regulator. It certainly stood the test of time.

I think I still have a few moments. The minister may have missed this section of the book, and I am sure the member for Mississauga missed this section of the book. As an Albertan, since much of the energy industry, oil and gas is in western Canada, I would like to say something about my own province which may even be of interest to the minister.

It reads: "The lack of western diversification does not satisfactorily explain the volatility of the Alberta economy. Why were the province's booms and busts since 1980 significantly worse than in Texas or Oklahoma, two American states with similar reliance on oil and agriculture? Why did the province experience a net loss of about 100,000 people between 1980 and 1989? During the decade, home prices collapsed; 14 provincial financial institutions failed or were forced to amalgamate; approximately one-third of the credit unions were placed under direct government supervision. The social

and human costs to thousands of Alberta families and individuals were enormous.".

The Calgary economist, Robert Mansell, points out that unemployment in the province did not return to its pre-1981 recession high until May 1987 compared to November 1983 for Ontario; in 1984 for Atlantic Canada; in June 1984 for Quebec.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom in Ottawa that it was the drop in oil and farm prices that caused the most severe Alberta recession since the Great Depression, Mansell notes that the average price for oil and gas producers did not decline until 1986 and farm receipts remained quite stable during the period.

By 1980, Alberta's petroleum industry accounted for almost one-third of the provincial economic output, approximately one-half of all construction starts and about 80 per cent of the province's yearly spending." I say parenthetically, Mr. Speaker, that probably about 20 per cent of your constituents and 20 per cent of my constituents, perhaps more in southeast Edmonton than in yours, are directly involved in the oil and gas industry as a way of earning their livelihood.

"The growing dependence on the oil industry made Albertans increasingly vulnerable to anything that threatened new investment in the sector, including the NEP and high interest rates. Another important factor was that by 1980, Ottawa's taxation spending and energy policies as a whole were withdrawing about $15 billion more each year than the national government was injecting into the province through all forms of federal spending.

A major consequence of this was the transfer of numerous jobs and incomes out of the province, which severely weakened the provincial economy." I skip a paragraph and this one is worth noting.

This was written in 1990: "Albertans wonder why Alberta and not our largest and richest province, Ontario, has continued between 1980 and 1988 to be the only province from which Ottawa removes more in federal taxes than it spends. Why should parts of outer Canada be the cash cows of Confederation, providing cheap inputs for the industrial heartland?" If I were writing that now I would note that Ontario was losing about 3,000 jobs a day, I understand, in the manufacturing sector. The free trade agreement will have to be renegotiated by a new government after the next election.

While the Mulroney government continues to spend more in Ontario than it raises in federal revenues, thereby increasing inflation, his finance minister argues that sky-high interest rates are necessary to dampen inflation.

In August 1990, the Prime Minister told his constituents in Charlevoix—I do not want to speak against the Prime Minister. I will leave that part out.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Kilgour: Do not coax me.

Some additional data on federal spending and taxation by province released by Mansell in August 1990 were equally distressing. Between 1961 and 1988 Albertans contributed $145.7 billion. Will the member for Willowdale tell the opposite side how many zeros there would be in $145 billion?

Mr. Peterson: Almost as many as in the Conservative Party.

Mr. Kilgour: Expressed as 1990 dollars, it is more to Ottawa's revenues than it received in federal spending and transfers.

British Columbians were the only other net contributors to Confederation during the same period. Ontarians, who might have been expected to have contributed generously to have-not provinces, received $24 billion more in spending than it paid in taxes during the same years.

Most of the national government is located in Ontario and the argument is frequently made that this explains this anomaly. How then to explain that between 1970 and 1979 Ontario made a net contribution to residents of the other provinces of about $3.6 billion?

Mansell's latest figures also indicate that since 1980 alone, the province of Quebec has received $95 billion from Ottawa, more than it contributed to the national government.

I will spare talking about the CF-18. I would ask the minister, when he is explaining the budget, to put it on the record and tell us why the one surface mining laboratory in western Canada, that at Devon, Alberta, which had, I believe, 12 PhDs working there doing research on surface coal and who wanted to do research, as I understand it, on things like the oil sands and other important matters, was, in effect, disbanded. Why were 12 professionals who had moved in good faith from

Ottawa to Devon, Alberta, in effect told that they could get out of Alberta and go back to some other line of work? I hope the minister will correct me if I am wrong. We have had a good many letters and exchanges on this. I would be grateful for his comments on that.

I guess this has been a pretty long talk. I think I have made all the points I was planning to make. I do not want to take any more time in the House. I hope it is clear to those opposite that this party, subject to what the member for Ottawa West will say, supports this move. We support decentralization.

I will end on that note.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Under the new rules the first two speakers have 40 minutes plus no questions or comments. Now we have the third speaker, the hon. member for Edmonton East, who will have 20 minutes plus 10 minutes questions and comments.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I am tempted to refrain from dispelling the tension that I am certain has gripped the House now as people anticipate on which side of the issue the New Democratic caucus will fall. It is with concern for the well-being and equanimity of my colleagues in this House that I decide at the top to inform them that the New Democratic Party, on the basis of a free vote in its caucus, will support this bill and will support the move of the National Energy Board to Calgary.

• (1110)

Having said that, I feel compelled to point out in a number of regards why the quote was attributed to me and noted by the hon. member for Edmonton—Southeast to the effect that the move of the Energy Board to Calgary was a matter of indifference. I did say that, but before getting into it, I would like to note that what we are dealing with here is a matter of government policy that was apparently conceived so hastily that it was shoehorned into the budget speech long after the date for the actual printing of the budget speech had passed.

This means that those of us following the finance minister's words on the written page found ourselves hearing the announcement of the move without being able to read it.

This indicates, better than anything else could, the nature of the haste of the decision. Why was the decision made in haste?

An hon. member: Why?

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): I would suggest that it is because it was made on the occasion of the return to Ottawa of the Prime Minister, who previously had been in Calgary and in the west and who had discovered to his dismay that all of these nasty rumours circulating in the national capital about the collapse of the Conservative Party in western Canada were not rumours at all. They were facts.

It was resolved that something quickly must be done to address this problem. "What to do? What to do? What to do? We could alter our economic policies and bring in new policies that will be of benefit to the west but no, no, no. That would require stepping on too many important major corporate toes. What to do? What to do? What to do?"

The decision was made to move the headquarters of the National Energy Board, its board and its staff, to Calgary, the perceived hotbed of Reform Party activity, in such a way as to salvage at least a couple of seats in that city for the Conservative Party.

As the minister noted in his remarks upon moving second reading of this bill, the move is a symbolic one. "Symbolic" was the term he used, and that is correct. It is more easily understood to be correct when you consider exactly what it is we are moving and why. In this sense it is and remains a matter of indifference to me.

What now is the National Energy Board? Why, as the member for Edmonton Southeast noted, are applications for employment with the board actually declining? The National Energy Board as we find it today is little more than a pale shadow of its former self. It has every bit as many employees but its duties and the range of activities that it is charged with undertaking on behalf of the

Canadian people have been radically cut back, in five areas especially.

Those who have been following the energy industry for a while will remember the old concepts of security of supply and, consequently, the surplus test.

Before the passage of the free trade agreement, the National Energy Board had broad powers to regulate energy exports to ensure that they were in the Canadian public interest. Old section 119 of the NEB act gave the board the power with the approval of cabinet to: "revoke or suspend the licence if"—in the case of a licence other than a licence for the exportation of power—"the board is of the opinion that the public convenience and necessity so require."

More specifically, section 118 of the old act gave the board the power to "satisfy itself that the quantity of oil, gas or power to be exported does not exceed the surplus remaining after due allowance has been made for the reasonably foreseeable requirements for use in Canada".

This included the so-called and justly famed surplus test. Mr. Roland Priddle, the Chairman of the NEB, noted in his testimony of August 27, 1988, before the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs when it was studying Bill C-130, an act to implement the free trade agreement, in response to a question at pages 34:39 of the transcript of that hearing: "You are correct. Under the law as it presently stands, the government cannot initiate an export where the board has declined to issue a licence. So if an applicant has failed to convince the board that the gas is surplus and that public interest criteria are met, the government cannot then nevertheless grant a licence unless it took special legislative powers to do so and to override the National Energy Board."

Mr. Priddle in the same instance: "When Bill C-130",—that was the free trade act—"is enacted, unless it is amended, it would not be possible—to put the clock back and restore the application of the surplus test." "So unless the bill to implement the free trade agreement were changed, no, it would not be possible to revert to the present style or the old style of applying the surplus test".

Once again, the chairman of the committee *pro tempore*, the Hon. John B. Stewart asked: "Under section 83 of the present National Energy Board Act, if the board refused a licence to export, the government could not overrule the board. Is that correct?" Mr. Priddle responded: "That is correct, Mr. Chairman".

The free trade agreement did away with the surplus test. Annex 905.2 of the agreement contains the following provision:

> It is understood that the implementation of this Chapter includes the administration of any "surplus tests" on the export of any energy good to the other Party in a manner consistent with the provisions of Articles 902, 903 and 904.

That was the specific elimination of the so-called surplus test.

After the amendments to the National Energy Board Act were made as result of the Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act in December 1988, the NEB was ordered to give effect to the agreement in new section 119.2 of the act. The cabinet, instead of the NEB, was given the power to restrict exports, and then only if the FTA provisions were not violated. That is in new section 119.3 of the act. The NEB can only suspend its determination for granting an export licence for 120 days. However, even before the 120 days are up, if the minister or the cabinet disagrees, the NEB is to issue the licence in question with all due haste. That is in new section 119.6 of the act.

To make it even more specific, the NEB cannot violate article 904(a), (b) or (c) of the free trade agreement. That is provided in section 119.5 of the new act. It is clear from the free trade agreement that the old surplus test is gone, an entire area of NEB jurisdiction wiped away.

Second, with regard to price determination, the board has suffered another major chop. Under the old National Energy Board Act, the board had the power, and I quote from Section 118(b) of the old act:

> —to satisfy itself that the price to be charged for power exported—is just and reasonable in relation to the public interest—

And under section 120(2) of the old act the cabinet could set the export price or range of prices for oil and gas. These provisions were not deleted by the free trade amendments to the NEB Act, but the free trade agreement itself supersedes them. Specifically, new section 120(2) of the NEB Act allows cabinet to exempt oil and gas exported to the U.S. from any price regulations. More important, article 904(b) of the free trade agree-

ment prohibits the maintenance of export prices higher than domestic prices. Price discrimination is gone.

Do not forget, Mr. Speaker, that article 409 of the free trade agreement ensures that the proportion of exports does not fall below the previous 36-month average—the so-called free trade ratchet that requires us to continue to sell energy to the United States in a proportion of production not less than that which we exported in the previous three years. Again no higher export price can be charged.

The third big cut is the elimination of the so-called least cost alternative test. Under section 6(2)(z)(iii) of the NEB Part VI regulations—this took some research, Mr. Speaker—the National Energy Board required applicants for exports to demonstrate that the export price "would not result in prices in the country to which the power is exported being materially less than the least cost alternative for power and energy at the same location within that country".

This was one of three price tests the board established in 1967 to ensure that exporters should seek full market value for Canada's energy exports, especially in cases where there were non-arm's length transactions; discounts to penetrate new markets or to take a greater market share from other Canadian exporters, or, third, to dispel accusations of unfair trade.

On September 2, 1986, then energy minister Marcel Masse instructed the National Energy Board to review changes that could be made to simplify and reduce the regulation of electricity exports. This report was to include a review of the appropriateness of the existing three price criteria used to assess proposed electricity exports.

What do you suppose happened, Mr. Speaker? The National Energy Board conducted the review as requested stating that "the third price guideline may be a dispensable element of electricity export regulation". It added that if the guideline were deleted "the benefits accorded the bargaining position of a Canadian utility by dint of the existence and federal application of the third price guideline would be forgone".

• (1120)

That is from pages 1, 34 and 35 of the *Regulation of Electricity Exports*, a document published by the NEB in June 1987.

Canada agreed to eliminate the least cost alternative test for the export of energy goods in the free trade agreement in annex 905.2.

The fourth cut was contained in Bill C-23, the elimination of public hearings for most electricity export applications. Cabinet, not the NEB, now makes the final decision. The passage of Bill C-23 last session means that most electricity export applications and applications for international power lines will now not require that a public hearing be held. This used to be an important part of the NEB's job, but no more.

The final decision on whether a public hearing is held is no longer made by the NEB, it is made by cabinet. In other words, the cabinet can overrule a decision by the NEB that a public hearing should be held. This politicizes the process and seriously undermines the authority of the NEB, as we argued at the time, but that is the case. That is the fourth cut.

Fifth, and most recent, is the elimination of the market-based procedure, including the benefit cost analysis to assess natural gas export licence applications.

Price controls were eliminated by this government in the name of deregulation in 1984 and 1986. The volume-based surplus tests, as I noted earlier, were eliminated. This left the NEB relying solely on the so-called market-based procedure to assess the national interest of natural gas exports.

This procedure, briefly stated, is a complaints process where Canadian users are assured supplies of gas on conditions as favourable as export proposals. It includes an assessment of the impact of export proposals on Canadian natural gas exports, and a determination of whether proposed exports are in the national interest.

This market-based procedure, including the benefit-cost methodology used to assess natural gas export licence applications, was one of the few regulatory mechanisms that remained to protect the public interest of Canadians.

The elimination of the NEB's benefit-cost analysis sanctioned, indeed it invited, a situation in which exports of a finite, strategic commodity could result in net harm to Canada.

Even the Government of Alberta, that staunch advocate of free market ideology, recognized and made adjustments for the shortcomings of the natural gas market. It blocked attempts by home owners, hospitals, school boards and other core natural gas users in Ontario

to purchase Alberta natural gas at deep discount prices, arguing that these short-term sales were not in the interest of Albertans.

However, what the Alberta government stood up for in its own interest has now been abandoned, with regard to the rest of Canada, in terms of effective regulation by the NEB. This happened, under pressure from the industry and the government, on March 15, 1990, a little more than a year ago.

In its decision to abandon the market-based procedure, the NEB stated that it will: "Henceforth, not require applicants for licences pursuant to part 6 of the act to provide evidence on the net social benefits of their projects."

In short, as we pointed out at the time, this means the NEB has no effective way to block exports of finite, strategic resources even if these exports result in net harm to Canada.

As I said at the outset, the NEB is but a pale shadow of what once it was. Proof of this is the recent decision by the NEB to allow completely TCPL's application for rolled-in tolling on the building of the new pipeline to the northeastern United States, a pipeline that will be paid for by Ontario consumers. That decision was made before the board was moved to Calgary. That decision was made when the board was still right here in Ottawa.

What of intervener funding? What of funding to be supplied to those who would appear before the NEB regardless of where it is, especially as the NEB has been given new authorities to conduct environmental assessments under the so-called EARP guidelines? That, too, is still not there. The location of the NEB is, in that sense at least, a matter of indifference to me because the NEB is no longer allowed to do the job it was originally created to do.

However, I do support the move of the NEB to Calgary anyway, for three reasons.

My first reason is that, as the minister himself pointed out, over 80 per cent of the NEB's activities now relate to the oil and gas industry.

Second, in Alberta there is academic, industrial, consumer and environmentalist expertise that will be of tremendous use to the board in its assessments.

Third, it is long past time that this government started paying attention, real attention, to the concerns of the west, and not just at the symbolic level.

I will be dealing with a concrete matter in this regard during the oral question period this afternoon.

There remains only to note the concerns of the employees of the board and of the Public Service at the way in which this entire matter has been handled.

My time has expired, Mr. Speaker. I acknowledge that. However, my colleague from Nanaimo—Cowichan will, when the speaking order comes around to him, deal thoroughly with those concerns. Those concerns which we hope will be effectively addressed by the government were all that stood in the way of the New Democratic Party supporting the move of the NEB to Calgary.

We believe, on the basis of a conversation I and others, including the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan, have had with members of the Public Service and with Mr. Roland Priddle, the chairman of the board, that adequate provision will be made for those employees. Therefore it is with some considerable pleasure that I tell the House that the New Democratic Party will support this bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I have a few comments on Bill C-2, which proposes to transfer the National Energy Board to Calgary. Obviously, I am concerned to see jobs leaving the National Capital region, especially since this seems to be a political decision and a very partisan one at that.

Whether it is better to centralize or decentralize is an issue that I would prefer to debate in the legislative committee. What concerns me most today is the problems this will cause for employees in the National Capital region, for instance loss of jobs, and also the way they were treated. The minister told us that he spoke to the municipal authorities in Calgary and the school boards, and that the people of Calgary would roll out the welcome mat. I am sure they will, and I am sure the same applies to high schools and elementary schools, because

these jobs are coming to Calgary. I am not worried about that, but I am worried about the following: How will families from the National Capital Region be treated? How were these families treated by the Department?

Mr. Speaker, I expect no one likes to hear the news on television or read it in the paper that his employer is going to transfer him—whether he is willing or not—a thousand miles from his present residence. I am worried about the francophone community in Ottawa. I am worried about anglophone and francophone communities in the national capital region that will be uprooted, because both husband and wife work to pay off the mortgage on their house. Will they have any guarantees that their spouse will get a job as well?

If we assume that the wife works for the National Energy Board, is her husband guaranteed a job? The department says it will help people look for jobs, but the minister told us earlier that there was quite a bit of unemployment in Calgary. Won't they have a problem here? Who will be given preference, the spouses of employees who will be transferred to Calgary or Calgary residents?

• (1130)

This is an interesting question. Among the families which will have to move there are certainly children who will have to change school systems since they are different from one province to the other.

The difference is even greater for francophones. I understand two French-speaking schools are prepared to accomodate them. But will they be integrated into the catholic or public school system? Will the families have a choice between the two systems? What kind of future is in store for these children? It is certainly a concern.

I very much regret this way of dealing with these families, hurrying them like that and suddenly disrupting their life in the national capital region, the life of professional civil servants. That is what concerns me the most, Mr. Speaker: the families of the civil servants being transfered.

What are their chances of finding a job? What are their chances of development in a new setting, far away from the capital? What guarantees will the government give to help these people not only to look for schools and jobs but also to find schools and jobs to ensure the future of the entire family?

[*English*]

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak for the board or the department with regard to the adjustment provisions that are being made for the employees, but I can at least set the hon. member's mind at ease in this regard. In terms of the amenities, educational opportunities and business opportunities that are available and in terms of the spectacular scenery and environmental wonder surrounding it, the city of Calgary is second to but one city in all of Canada.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise to make a comment. The member for Edmonton East deserves tremendous congratulations from this House and from the people of Alberta for the persuasive role he has played in drawing attention to the need to have some serious decentralization of policy in this country, as symbolized by this move of the National Energy Board to Calgary.

He was particularly persuasive in our caucus and has persuaded us that we, from all parts of Canada, should be supporting this move. We have our concerns about the way in which the workers here will be treated. We have received some assurances and we would hope that when this bill comes before the committee, there will be an opportunity for those concerns to be given a full airing and to be sure that they are met.

We support fully the idea that it is important that the west have the headquarters of the National Energy Board, that it be centred there. Alberta is the obvious place for it.

The member for Edmonton East has shown great leadership on this and I would like to congratulate him. I ask him if he would like to focus for a minute or two on the workers and how they might be treated in this shift. It is important, both from the point of view of the employees here and, of course, in Calgary, and how the workers would be received in that city.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, again I will attempt to be brief. First of all, I would like to thank the hon. member for those generous remarks. I will attempt to give them as wide as possible distribution in my riding.

With regard to the question of the employees, I would note that I have had discussions in this regard with the chairman of the National Energy Board. I know that my colleague, the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan, who will be speaking directly to this question a little later in this debate has met with representatives of the em-

ployees and, indeed, directly with employees. The two of us are satisfied that the adjustment package put together is a generous one. However, there are still elements in which it must be further fine-tuned. We look forward to getting the bill before committee to address that question.

There is no question that the manner in which the employees were notified was shameful. It was tawdry. It is a wrong that I do not suppose any adjustment package, however generous, could ever set right.

On the whole, we do not believe that the treatment being accorded the employees of the board is sufficiently poor to warrant opposition to the bill.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to speak on this bill. I know the government had hoped of having it go through with virtually no debate to escape any examination, in fact to even escape the bill being referred to a legislative committee where witnesses could be heard and the concerns of employees could be raised, along with any other matters that people might want to bring to the attention of Parliament.

However, we have made sure that that does not happen. We are insisting on it going to a legislative committee because we think there are issues that need to be addressed.

This was an extremely sudden decision of the government, an extremely sudden announcement that did not appear in the budget speech and seemed to roll off the top of the head of the Minister of Finance, as so many other things seem to have done from time to time.

That decision, with so little planning going into it, created great unfairness, threw 300 families into turmoil and in fact threatened to disrupt the operations of the board. It had not been looked at. It had not been examined, as this kind of decision would normally be. Planning had not been done for it and a schedule and so on set out.

We see some problems in the way the employees are being treated and these need to be addressed. That is why this bill must go to committee. That is why we need to hear from people who are affected by this move and to address some of their concerns.

It is evident, given the way in which it was announced and the way in which it is proceeding post-haste, that the timing is dictated more by the political agenda of the government than concern for the operation of the board or the lives of its employees and their families. I would like to give several examples.

The treatment of the employees in this case has been arrogant and insensitive in the extreme. There is nothing like finding out that your whole life is going to change, your whole career is going to be disrupted and your whole family is going to be disrupted on television at night. That is the way the employees of the board found out that their employer was moving and either asking them to go with it or leaving them behind.

A week before the budget announcement, a large number of employees were transferred into the National Energy Board but were given no hint, no indication that accepting that transfer into the board would mean a major move more than half way across the country for their families.

The government is playing with words in attempting to deprive employees of rights they are entitled to under their contract and under government policy by insisting on calling this a relocation and not a decentralization. This deprives the employees of entitlement that they are entitled to: entitlement to notice with time to plan their lives, time to plan their careers and time to work other family responsibilities around a reasonable and rational adjustment to the requirements of their employer. The decentralization policy, that is, moving a work unit—and I doubt that anybody would call this anything else—requires a normal notice period of one year. It is clear that the employees have been given a matter of weeks, not a matter of months to make a serious decision.

In rushing the move, the government is causing undue and unnecessary hardship for employees and eventually for the board. As late as April 4, employees were told not to even list their homes with a realtor, even though they were being asked to decide just four weeks later whether they would be moving to Calgary or not. Employees were told at the same time that information on the relocation package would not be available until the end of April, and at that time their decision had to be made by the middle of May. This, I understand, has now been

extended to the end of May but it is still unfair to give employees who have been loyal and hard-working, who have made the board what it is, a matter of a few days and weeks to make a major decision like this about their lives.

• (1140)

The government suggests that families with school-age children should relocate before September 1, but only a token portion of the board's operation will even be in Calgary by then. What will these employees be relocating to? It is not until the end of October that the major component of the board will be up and operational in Calgary, if the government's plans go ahead on schedule.

Employees are faced with deciding this week. But it will be five months before most of the board's operations will move. Now I ask the government, why is it so crucial that employees make decisions within a matter of weeks? Why does it consider that employees need only a matter of days and weeks to make this kind of decision, when the government needs at least three to five months' notice to make its moves?

Employees are asking what is the rush when this move has been under consideration on and off for nearly two decades. Surely it is possible to plan in a way that is humane to workers and humane to their families and to the other obligations they have in their communities, and still accomplish the government's objective.

Mr. Speaker, there is serious concern about discriminatory treatment, about some employees being treated as elite employees who are important to the board and others being treated as unimportant employees to the board. We have some employees being offered red carpet and expensive treatment because the board needs to keep them, and others not being offered similar treatment. Similarly, we have very special and very expensive packages for people who are moving, but no equally special consideration for those who, for one reason or another, cannot move with the board. This is not the discriminatory and unequal kind of treatment that these employees or any other employee of the government deserve.

It started within hours of the announcement, when the government hired Decima to design a package that would entice employees to relocate. The proposal from Decima made it clear that out of the 350 employees of the board, their job was to put together a package that was acceptable to 35 employees. They did not want the employees to know this, so their survey scheme was going to include twice that many so that nobody would know they were targeting a special 35 people with special and discriminatory treatment.

Do we have an elite in the National Energy Board? Do we have some people who are more valuable employees than others and deserve to be treated more generously? I don't think that is the kind of Public Service we want.

Let me give you an example. We are told head-hunting services will be provided for the spouses who relocate with an employee. The same opportunity, the same treatment will not be given to employees who stay, they will be subject only to the normal workforce adjustment policy—and there is even some question about that. We question whether this head-hunting service is only available to certain employees' spouses and whether it is a simple employment counselling service that is available to the rest of the spouses who are not one of the select 35.

Those who relocate will be reimbursed if they take an exploratory trip to Calgary to find out whether they would like to live there. But those who decide not to relocate will not get reimbursed for those expenses. Is that fair? Is that equitable? I don't think so.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation for the space agency and for the Canadian Centre for Management Development contained special provisions for employees to ensure that they were not disadvantaged, whether or not they went with the new agency. Why does this bill contain no mention of the employees, no mention of provisions for them?

The government will say that employees are subject to the normal work force adjustment policy which gives them priority for other appointments within the Public Service for a limited period of time. In fact, that policy expired on March 31. It has been extended to June 30, but just until June 30.

The employees want to know, and I want to know, what happens to them after that? What about the employees who have worked their way up to senior positions but do not have the paper qualifications for similar positions elsewhere in the government? Perhaps the minister might want to answer this. Has the NEB asked the whole Department of Energy, Mines and

Resources to assist in relocating these people and ensuring that they are employed.

What about people with highly specialized skills who, for one reason or another, cannot go to Calgary, much as they might like to? These are the people that the work force adjustment policy is far too limited to serve well. They are too specialized, they have become specialized in serving the Government of Canada, and therefore are less employable by other employers.

Where is the head-hunting help for these people? Where is the help for these people to find alternative employment? What about employees who are close to retirement? The government has all kinds of money to convince people to go to Calgary. What is it doing for people who are staying here? This is not their decision. They should not be the ones to suffer for it. Are we going to throw somebody out on the street without a job, a year from retirement, and make no special provisions for that person? I would hope not. These are certainly questions that need to be addressed at committee.

The government might say: "Well, that is peoples' choice. If they do not want to come with us, tough luck". I do not think that is a good policy for any employer, public or private. It ignores totally the fact that many people are unable to relocate. Often, the people who are unable to relocate are women. They may have a spouse who is the higher income earner and it does not make any sense for the family—and people do consider their families in these decisions— to uproot because of one spouse's job.

Many, and most of them are women, now have custody arrangements which prohibit them from leaving a certain region without going back to court, and that can take a long time and may not even be possible. Many have the care of elderly parents or other family or community obligations as a result they simply cannot pick up and move in a very short time frame, as is happening in this case.

What about those who decide to relocate and then cannot for one reason or another, and it may be any of the above, it may be illness or anything? These people will be considered to have abandoned their positions. In other words, they will be out of a job overnight.

The move is creating particular problems for francophones, many of whom have spouses who are not bilingual. I know the department has offered language training to those spouses. However, the plain fact is that to move to another community without a milieu that is familiar to you in your own language, your traditional connections to your culture and heritage and language, is more difficult for a francophone family in this case than it is for an anglophone family. I think the government has to pay special attention to that.

The National Energy Board has now indicated that it intends to apply for special employer status. One reason is to allow for higher rates of compensation than it now pays its employees in the government.

• (1150)

For many of its employees the board will have to pay up to $15,000 a year more in a location where it is competing with the private sector in the resource industry. Many employees will have to be paid that much more, or they simply will walk across the street and take a job in industry.

This special employer status has certain implications for the employee. They are not terribly clear as to what those implications are, and they are certainly entitled to know.

Does this, for instance, let the board pay support staff, who earn less, at lower rates if it allows it to pay some employees at higher rates? What assurances do these employees at lower rates have that their salary level will be protected? How does this affect those who go to Calgary and then decide to return two years from now if they are with a separate employer as opposed to their current status with the National Energy Board?

The employees have talked to me about their concern about the impact on operations of the board as well. Consultants say the normal rate of relocation for private sector moves in a case like this is approximately 50 per cent. That obviously must have a serious impact on the board's operations because the government has left very little time to make plans to ensure that there can be a smooth transition.

As a result of the political "symbology", as the minister calls it, of this move, the board itself but not most of its employees will be moving to Calgary on

September 1. In fact the board will not be fully operational until the end of October. That seems to me to create quite a little gap.

I want to address very briefly concerns raised by others, as the minister has done this morning. The minister has received letters from, among others: Consumers Gas, Union Gas, the Industrial Gas Users Association, and the Ontario Natural Gas Association. They all opposed this move and raised some very serious concerns about it.

While the minister has attempted to calm these concerns this morning, certainly one of the letters suggested specific amendments to the act that would relieve concerns about the neutrality of the board, its impartiality.

The minister's statements this morning—I take them at their word—are not helpful when spokespersons for the industry in Calgary start saying: "Won't it be nice when our kids are going to the same schools and we are skiing at the same ski hills and the board is more sensitive to the needs of the producers?"

It is not helpful when the Calgary Chamber of Commerce says that the board will be closer to its principal clients. I hope the minister is aware that its principal clients are the public. Its principal duty is to the public interest, not the producers, not the shippers or the exporters.

Consumers Gas has asked for a specific provision in the act with respect to public interest.

The concerns are exacerbated because this move coincides with the board becoming financially self-sufficient, that is funded by the industry. In fact we know the ultimate cost is to the consumer and not to the industry. Suggestions have already been made by the Canadian Petroleum Association and the Independent Petroleum Association that producers should have more control over the operations and the policies of the board.

Concerns about the public interest are legitimate and need to be addressed in legislative committee.

I want to say simply that the board reports to Parliament. It co-ordinates with many departments and agencies, even more so now that it has responsibility, beyond what it thought, for the environment.

The board has maintained an office in Calgary continually. Has the government considered whether, for purposes of parliamentary liaison and efficiency in liaison with other government departments, it should now maintain a smaller Ottawa office as well?

It is important for the employer and for the operation of the board that this move be carried out providing employees with every opportunity to make a decision to stay with the board. That is why we want to see some of these issues addressed. That is why we want to look at the schedule for this to see if it really makes sense to say employees have this week to decide and then stretch the move out over five months. Can we look at another schedule that is better for the board, better for the employees, and better for the public interest?

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I have just a couple of quick comments and then a specific question for the hon. member.

My first comment is that there may be members in this House who will not sense the extent to which this is important to Alberta or, as it might be, important to the province of Saskatchewan. But we are two provinces unique in the development of this country. Constitutionally we stood apart and different from all other provinces.

When Canada was formed in 1867, the presumption of resource ownership belonged to the four original provinces. It belonged to Prince Edward Island a year later, in 1868, when it became a province; likewise to Manitoba and to British Columbia.

However, in 1905, when the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan became part of Canada, the federal government kept from those provinces the ownership of natural resources. For 30 years the province of Alberta never raised enough money in taxes to be able to pay for schools and hospitals. They indebted themselves every year. For 30 years they fought, until 1930 when they won the Natural Resources Transfer Act.

Ingrained in an Alberta or Saskatchewan person is that deep resentment that somehow the federal government had coveted unto itself the resources of only two parts of Canada, where there were provincial ownerships in all other cases. It is more than symbolic. It is extremely important to those two western provinces for all of its right reasons and its symbolic reasons.

I want to ask a question of the hon. member for Ottawa West. I note that she said there are persons who had worked their way up and she had concerns for them. There are persons close to retirement and she had concerns for them. There are many who are lower income spouses, and again she expressed concerns as a

good member of Parliament representing constituents of hers who by and large are public servants. I commend her for the compassion she is showing.

The real question is when a move in the public interest ought to be made. That argument could be put for every move to every locale and every situation.

I just want to ask her specifically: Is she or is she not in favour of moving the National Energy Board from Ottawa to Calgary?

Mrs. Catterall: The member was not listening very carefully to my speech. I said I had concerns I wanted to address. I think we all recognize in this House, and I certainly do, the importance of government services being available to people across this country.

The member is obviously unaware that 70 per cent of the Public Service is not in the national capital region but is decentralized across this country. Only 20 per cent of the jobs in this community are Public Service jobs. It would be nice if before he got up he knew what he was talking about.

I also want to point out to him that he mentioned Alberta and Saskatchewan. He forgot to mention that Manitoba was formed as a province in 1870 and did not get control of its resources until 1930.

Mr. Epp: It was 60 years.

Mr. Kilgour: The minister is right.

An hon. member: Do you favour the move?

Mrs. Catterall: We want to see this bill go to committee so we can see those concerns addressed. I would like to be able to support this bill whole-heartedly.

• (1200)

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, one of the questions raised by the member for Ottawa West concerned a suggestion which was put forward in a letter to me by companies like Union Gas, that if we shift a regulatory agency such as this from Ottawa to Calgary, in this case, somehow this would represent a process of tying the agency more closely to the producer side of the industry.

I must say I find that a very strange argument. I do not see why an agency's location should affect what it is able to do in terms of justly and carefully considering questions which come before it. That is one of the reasons for some of the concerns of our caucus with respect to the workers being affected by this which we intend to take up in committee.

Nevertheless we felt that it was possible to have precisely the same kind of careful, judicious analysis of questions that come before the National Energy Board in Calgary as in Ottawa. It would seem to me that to suggest otherwise is to say there is something about the air in Calgary that destroys the capacity of people to be judicious and impartial, and that is certainly not the case.

I would therefore ask the member for Ottawa West if she would be prepared to make quite clear that she was not putting forward any suggestion that a shift of the National Energy Board from Ottawa to Calgary would lead to any change in the impartiality and the judiciousness with which that board has operated in the past and will operate in the future.

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I suggest the member might have listened to what I was saying. I was referring to correspondence from people who have expressed legitimate concerns about this particular aspect and have asked the government to take particular steps to ensure that that does not happen. I think the board has always recognized that it was important to keep an office in Calgary—this is nothing new—to keep contact with the oil industry, and it has done that well over the years.

I would not for a moment suggest that the board would do anything but fulfil its mandate under the act and act in the best interests of the people of Canada.

None the less I think it is very important that with this bill before committee, the committee also address the concerns that have been raised by significant interests in the energy field. I repeat the point I made during my speech that if the board has always felt it important to keep an office in Calgary to be close to the producing industries, perhaps the government should now consider that it might also be important to keep an office in Ottawa since the board does report to Parliament and does work very closely with many other government departments.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, earlier today I presented a bundle of petitions, some 2,500 names, all expressing concern about this

move and signing the petitions in opposition to the move of the National Energy Board to Calgary.

I have another group of petitions with some 300 names. Most are from the Ottawa area, but some names are from different communities in Quebec, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. I suggest that they are doing so in part because they just do not know enough about the way in which the whole thing is being handled to this point in time. New Democrats have always supported decentralization, to the best of my knowledge, if it is done in an orderly manner. We are mainly concerned about the way in which the employees are handled. Certainly in this case there is no question, and others have commented on this, that the employees were handled very badly, including the chairman of the National Energy Board himself who put up a notice in the board office to the effect that he knew nothing at all about the move other than what he had heard when the budget speech was read.

The minister of energy in presenting and speaking first on the bill said that it was in the budget speech. Technically it was because the budget speech is what the minister said in the House. Certainly we all know it was not in the printed material which was made available to the minister for his speech when he was presenting it or in the material that was distributed since, other than *Hansard*, which is the budget speech.

That is how the chairman of National Energy Board found out about the move according to him, and to this point we have no reason for doubting it. If he did not know then certainly the employees did not know. Perhaps even the Minister of Finance did not know, except that he got a note before he got on his feet asking him to announce this.

Why was it done in the budget speech? To the best of my knowledge it is not a budget item. Why did it have to be done then? If it were going to be kept secret from everyone the excuse could be that it was a budget matter, it was in the budget speech, but we know it was not in the budget speech until moments before the minister stood up to speak. There was no reason for the secrecy, for not letting people know if the decision was actually made earlier than the budget speech which was presented some day late in February.

Why has everyone concerned with this move been treated so shabbily as to tell them with so little notice what was going to happen? From the start the employees have been handled badly and that is the nature of our concern about this legislation.

If it were in the budget speech one would expect to find some reference to the cost. I would suggest if one read through the budget speech very carefully one would look in vain to find any reference to what it is going to cost. I have heard figures running anywhere from $40 million to $70 million. Who knows? Nevertheless it is happening. It is happening in a real hurry. That the means the cost of finding the accommodation in Calgary will probably be higher than it might have been had the government had the time to look with some care. The cost of abandoning space in Ottawa itself may be high. We do not know. Certainly the government has given every indication of downsizing. It would seem unlikely that the space currently filled in Ottawa is going to be filled with other employees unless they are spread more thinly.

The loss of expertise has been commented on. One does not know how much. How can we know? The employees had originally until the middle of May to make up their minds. They now have until the end of May to decide and only then will we know just how many will be lost and also the loss of expertise. That is a real question. Estimates have suggested that some 50 per cent of the staff will be unable or unwilling to move or a combination of both. People with families may find that they are quite unable to move, especially if there are two income earners in the family. If one has other employment here in Ottawa it is going to be very difficult for the two of them to pull up stakes along with their family and move to Calgary and it is not quite as difficult perhaps for them to stay here.

It is going to present a problem. People who have been working for the National Energy Board for some time probably have accumulated a lot of pension time and were looking forward to working for the National Energy Board until they retire. Now all of a sudden they have to deal with a situation in which their work is going to be moved some several thousand miles away from its present location and with very short notice.

• (1210)

In filling the vacancies, the government has been reassured by the Chamber of Commerce, according to a letter that went to the then minister of energy, I believe, that there would be plenty of expert employees in the oil industry available and willing to fill in the vacancies in the National Energy Board. I expect they would be

willing. If they are unemployed right now they would be even more willing.

Unfortunately, that lends weight to the argument that they are going to be more under the influence of the oil industry in that location than they would be here in Ottawa. I think it is important that the NEB be able to do everything possible to convince people that this is not the way the system is working. I expect the National Energy Board will be very much aware of that and will be watching that carefully.

I have talked to employees' representatives and I have talked one of the employees and will be talking to more. I am pleased that this matter is going to be referred to a legislative committee so that there will be an opportunity to get in to more of the details.

One of the questions that I and others have asked is why does it have to be by the end of the September? Originally, I think it was September 1 and now it is the end of September. I do not know why it has to be that soon. Why could the government not have taken more time? Would it not have served its political purposes at least to have said: "Yes, it is happening. It is going to happen. We are going to be there a year from now or some such date"? That would have given everyone, the board itself and the employees, much more time to make their preparations and decisions. It seems to me that could have been done and it could still be done. I do not know what the magic is about the current date of September 30. If it is going to have an affect by then the deadline given to the employees has to be real because the board has to know who it is going to have working for it when it arrives in the Calgary office and opens shop.

I do not think anyone is really complaining about the special provisions enabling employees to make the move with minimum cost to themselves, at least in terms of dollars and cents. The guarantee that employees leaving Ottawa will get at least market value for their homes is a good one but even then there is so little time to make that decision, even with the deadline being extended last Friday.

The employees are going to have to sign up for two years if they are going to move to Calgary, but any time in the third year or between the end of the second and the end of the third year they can change their mind and decide they made a mistake in going to Calgary. I do not know if it is clear whether the board would move them back to Ottawa or move them wherever they wanted to go. I have not been able to determine that yet because I just have not had a chance to read all the material.

It is tough to decide in a couple of weeks whether you are going to accept today's current market value for your home or wait and perhaps think that maybe in six months the market is going to improve and you may receive a higher amount. Why do they have to decide at the same time as they are moving? Why not give them that two or three year period to make the decision as to whether they would dispose of their homes here in Ottawa?

For all I know there may be more in the agreement than I am aware of but my understanding now is that they have to make up their minds as to whether they are going to accept the board's offer of getting minimum market value for their home at the same time as they decide whether they are going to Calgary.

I see no reason for that deadline not being extended, even if the government decides that it cannot do anything about the September 30 deadline for opening up shop in Calgary.

There will be opportunity now that we are going to committee and certainly we are co-operating fully. All the opposition members, as far as I know, are co-operating in getting this bill to committee because we believe that is where we can best hear from the people who are being affected. The employees are the ones I am particularly concerned about at the moment but there are others who are being affected by this, such as the industry itself. I am sure the oil industry will want to make representations as to what a great idea it is, the oil industry from Calgary anyway. It may be that user industries and other energy groups will want to make representations of their own. I am looking forward to this bill being referred to the special legislative committee, getting answers, we hope, to some of the questions and perhaps getting some movement from the government on the deadlines it has imposed, deadlines that are totally unfair to employees who heard about this from someone who heard it in the budget speech.

Giving people a choice of being out of work or of moving hundreds of miles away is really no choice at all. And to find out that this decision has been made by watching television has only added salt to the wounds of the employees.

We expect employers to treat their employees with dignity and respect. These workers were treated with what can only be seen as contempt and disdain.

We do expect the government to be a little better than the average employer when it comes to treating its employees fairly. We do not expect it to keep secrets like this when there is absolutely no reason that we know of, no reason has been advanced, for keeping it a secret until the last moment.

What I am talking about is fairness to the employees. I am not talking about the location in Calgary. I have lived a little while in Ottawa and during the war I lived a while in Calgary. There is not a heck of a lot by which to choose but if I had my choice I would go to Calgary. They do not have time to find that out before they have to make their decisions.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): The minister asks why we are concerned.

• (1220)

We are concerned about people. That is why we are concerned. This government has not looked after the people who have made the National Energy Board what it is, which is a really good and responsible agency of the people of Canada. That is why we want to make sure their concerns are addressed.

I just heard another Tory member of Parliament discounting Manitoba entirely, talking about this caucus having no western members in it. Has he not heard about Manitoba? Has he not heard about B.C.? Are the prairies to him just Alberta and Saskatchewan?

I want to ask a question of the previous speaker. He seems remarkably uninformed about the situation of the employees. That is typical of NDP members. They tend to get up and speak at the last minute, try to get themselves a briefing with one person who is supposed to give them the truth from on high, and do not really know what is on the minds of the people they are talking about.

The hon. member seemed to imply that the schedule for this move is all right, even though it requires people to make a decision by next week to disrupt their whole lives, while the government has another full five months

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): I will be very brief.

I have a question for my hon. friend and it is based on what I have seen in my 12 years here. I know that the federal government is often accused of being centralist in its attitudes and approaches and this bill is an effort to take the National Energy Board to the place where the action is. In other words, since most the people dealing with the National Energy Board are from the western provinces we should make it easy for them.

I have a question and then I have a comment. There seems to be, perhaps organized by the hon. member for Edmonton Southeast, a complaint here from people in the the west that we are moving this National Energy Board to Calgary. As a central Canadian I have great difficulty in understanding why members from the west, such as the hon. member who just spoke, are concerned about us taking this western operation out to Calgary. It seems to me to make good sense. I do not understand why the Liberals and the NDP are fighting this effort by the government to take it to the west.

That is my question. If I may reach back into my past as the housing spokesman for our party back in 1981, and having followed it ever since, I can say that one should never worry about the prices of houses in Ottawa; they do not go up, they do not go down and they do not follow the trends of any other city in the country. This place is recession-proof. I do not understand why the member for Edmonton Southwest is fighting this transfer of the National Energy Board to Alberta. It may be the transformation he made when he went in to a party without any western members. That could be, I do not know.

I would like my hon. friend from British Columbia to explain if he knows whether this is an organized plot to prevent the National Energy Board from going to Calgary.

Mr. Stupich: Mr. Speaker, I tried to make it plain that I was speaking for the employees and asking for fair treatment for the employees.

I am going to read briefly from a letter from the Ontario Federation of Labour:

actually to implement its decision. Does he think that is fair? Does he think it is fair that people who are relocating with the board are getting special and privileged treatment, and people who cannot, are not?

Mr. Stupich: Mr. Speaker, it is not fair that any employee should be treated in that manner. That is the point I was trying to make in my speech, that we are concerned about fairness for the employees. We are concerned about it whether the Liberals or the Tories are in charge of the move. There have been examples of decentralization that the Liberals have implemented where they paid no more attention to the concerns of the employees than the Tories are today. They are both wrong. The employees should be the ones that are treated with real concern when their lives are being uprooted in the way that some of their lives are going to be uprooted in this case. It is wrong whether it is the Liberals or the Tories that do it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I am taking part in this debate on Bill C-2 simply to make a few comments on the fate of the National Energy Board's present employees who live in the National Capital Region, mostly in Ottawa, which I try to represent as best I can.

Mr. Speaker, the arguments for moving the National Energy Board may be valid and I suppose they are for some western MPs. I have heard some convincing arguments but I hear contrary ones from my constituents and I would like to put the remarks I am about to make in this context.

We must not forget the very important human factor involved. I remember that we had an interesting debate in this House in 1989 on Bill C-16, creating the Canadian Space Agency and dealing with other matters. Mr. Speaker, it will be remembered that the main concern then was for the public servants and workers affected by that decision.

Mr. Speaker, the number of positions at the National Energy Board has gone from 50 in 1959 when it was created to nearly 330 today, in 1991-92. The Public Service Commission report, which I have consulted, shows that the National Energy Board had 291 employees in 1990, of whom 273 were in the Ottawa area. This means that 273 families will have to choose in the next six months to relocate to another city in another province or, if they decide not to move, hope to find other employment. The lives of 273 families will be put in turmoil by this government which I think has been insensitive by not foreseeing in its bill a situation that could be distressing for many of them. The proof, Mr. Speaker, is that I have letters from constituents who express quite eloquently the situation their families find themselves in, with children at school or university. They will have to make a serious decision: Do they move or do they break up the family, in a sense, leaving the children to complete their education here? Do they take the children with them, and God knows the problems that can mean socially and for their education.

Incidentally, Mr. Speaker, the testimony of one of my constituents shows very well how hard this decision is. This lady left her native province almost 20 years ago. She settled in the region, here in Ottawa, with her husband, who works for the National Energy Board. They have laid down roots here, Mr. Speaker. Their daughter attends the University of Ottawa; their son is in high school. The woman works. She has found a satisfying job that she loves and would like to keep and of which she is very proud. If her husband decides to leave Ottawa, they will have to decide what to do about the children.

If she chooses to follow her husband, Mr. Speaker, which is quite normal, the separation between the children and their parents will be painful. She will have to leave her job that she loves. There is no guarantee that she will find another one in Calgary. Once the school year is over or once they have completed high school or university, because it is not easy to move from one institution to another, the children will also have to decide on a career.

When you are 20 or 30, Mr. Speaker, those decisions can be made and it is sometimes exciting to relocate and have new experiences in another place in this great country of ours. For a family, it can be very trying at times. The responsibilities are great and I think that the choice can be a nightmare.

Mr. Speaker, of the 291 person-years or persons affected by this decision, 131 are in managerial, scientific, professional or technical positions. The NEB or National Energy Board estimates that 50 per cent of the employees will remain in Ottawa. That is an estimate. This means that the Board's expertise will be cut in half. Fifty per cent, or some 65 to 70 additional people, will

have to be hired to replace those who decide not to move.

Mr. Speaker, what will happen to those people who decide not to follow their employer to Calgary? They will be put on a priority list for one year. What will happen to them after a year? I do not know. Mr. Speaker, 80 of those 291 employees are French-speaking. Although Calgary is a friendly city, as I admit, and Alberta as a whole has a large, lively French-speaking community, our perception of Alberta is a province that is stingy in providing services to the linguistic minority. Therefore these French-speaking public servants, who make up 27.5 per cent of those who will have to relocate or leave their job, are legitimately concerned about their children's education and whether they will obtain in Alberta the same services that they had here in Ottawa, Ontario.

• (1230)

Mr. Speaker, the question is, can the government offer any hope to these public servants, these families who heard the news, as we all know, through the media. The news was announced the day before a budget. I wonder why these employees were treated differently from those who worked for the Space Agency?

To get back to that experience, I would like to remind hon. members that although the second reading stage of a bill is basically intended as an opportunity to consider the principle of the bill, and we acknowledged that principle, as I said earlier, because there are a number of pros— There are many reasons why we supported this initiative, but there is also reason to be worried about the human factor, about what will happen to the Canadian men and women who are now working at the National Energy Board.

[*English*]

I want to remind members of clauses in Bill C-16, an act to establish the Canadian Space Agency and to provide for other matters in relation to space.

Section 28(1) of that bill states:

> Where a position in the Public Service of Canada is transferred to the Agency within ninety days after the day on which this Act comes into force, the incumbent of the position continues in the position in the Agency, unless the incumbent otherwise elects prior to the transfer, and any person so continuing is deemed to have been appointed to the Agency in accordance with subsection 16(1).

Then it goes on to subsection 2.

The preoccupation at that time was identified by Brian Leddy, the National Research Council's Vice President of Personnel. He said they were preoccupied with the anxiety about the problems of uprooting families, getting French language training and finding suitable schools for children.

Mr. Leddy said in an interview, and I quote from *The Ottawa Citizen*, March 19, 1990:

> All the government's regular workforce adjustment programs, including early retirement, severance packages and retraining would be available to eligible individuals.

That experience is not, in my view, at least from what I understand and from what I have heard, going to be repeated with the transfer of the board to Calgary. I would think that in committee the government would want to answer some questions.

I give credit to previous speakers for raising this issue. I agree with my colleague from Ottawa West on her comments. I know the member will be in committee, bringing forward some of the concerns people in the Ottawa area have expressed to us but not specifically about the move. As I have said, there are reasons to support it and there are also reasons against it. However, we are talking about the principle of second reading here.

If I know my rules, the principle of the bill is at stake here. That is the most important part, as far as I am concerned, of any bill's process, the principle being that the decision has been made by the government to move an agency to Calgary from its Ottawa head office location by law. All the bill does, essentially, is make it possible for the board and its employees to be outside the national capital, in Calgary. What happens after that? I guess the government will not have to come to Parliament any more if it wants to move the board to any other place in Canada.

Section 1 says very clearly that after the move to Calgary the Governor in Council may approve any decisions to relocate the board. I think that would also be of some concern to some people and we might want to get some explanation from the minister in committee.

But to come back to my point.

[*Translation*]

It is pretty obvious to a member who represents his constituents, and the hon. member for Ottawa West said as much as 70 per cent of our public servants are outside Ottawa and scarcely 20 per cent work in Ottawa. There may be 27 or 30 per cent in the National Capital Region as a whole, including the Quebec side, the Outaouais region.

In my own riding I have about 10 per cent, but for obvious reasons, I have a lot of these people living in Ottawa—Vanier who wrote letters expressing very strongly their reluctance, their worries and the problems they had.

As far as the principle is concerned, we acknowledge that the decision has been made and it is going to happen, but we now have to decide how it will be done, and that, I think, is what the legislative committee will have to consider. How will the government ensure that no employee's rights are violated, and that employees do not suffer economically, socially or in their family life?

Mr. Speaker, that is why the Liberal caucus, through its critic and the hon. member for Ottawa West and the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester, did not express the kind of reservations the Solicitor General wanted to use to turn this into a partisan issue. We did not make this a partisan issue. We said that the decision was made, and we respect that decision. It was the government's decision. It wasn't our decision but the government's. As I said earlier, there are many reasons for thinking this could have been done differently, with more consultation, with a little more tact, with more attention to the personal and human factors. It was not done and we deplore that, but there are times when in this kind of situation, special measures must be taken after the fact.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, before expediting this bill through the House, I think it is only fair that the bill should go to committee, so that the minister has a chance to explain and we can have the assurance that this government, which in the case of the transfer of the Space Agency to Montreal was receptive to certain comments by Opposition members, that this government will also be receptive in this particular case and that it will deal sensitively with the employees who will be asked to move.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Malone): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Malone): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

* * *

CROWN CORPORATIONS DISSOLUTION OR TRANSFER AUTHORIZATION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-8, an act to provide for the dissolution of the transfer of certain Crown corporations and to amend certain acts in consequence thereof, as reported (with amendment) from the legislative committee.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Lewis moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

• (1240)

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today for more than one reason.

I want to address the third reading of what was known as Bill C-73. This is an act that deals with the dissolution and reorganization of several Crown corporations.

One of the aspects of this that gives me some pleasure—and I hope it gives my colleagues some pleasure—is that we have an opportunity to resurrect or revive a bill that died at the end of the last session of the House.

In being able to do that, I think all of us in the House can manifest a degree of co-operation that for most purposes will enhance and further the interests of the taxpayer who pays for the cost of running this place. Also, it would advance the speed with which we deal with the bill and thereby permit government to get on with the work that is specifically proposed.

This particular bill has had the benefit of significant scrutiny at the legislative committee stage. That is one of

the reasons why we in opposition at this point in time are able to conclude that Parliament and the public have sufficiently examined what lies behind the bill and its purposes. This enables it to be dealt with reasonably expediently here in this new session.

I want to congratulate the chair of that legislative committee and the members on it for the way in which the bill was handled at committee. However, I want to raise an item of caution. It relates to the way the government has proposed legislative committees to deal with bills such as Bill C-73 in the future.

We all know that in the new rules that were passed here a few weeks ago, legislative committees are only permitted to call witnesses on technical matters. I objected to that restriction at the time the rule was passed, as did many others on this side of the House.

I would like to point out that if committees in the future follow that rule strictly, that is deal with technical matters only, then the very full review of Bill C-73 at legislative committee will not be able to take place in this House in the future. That is a negative in terms of procedure.

I want to caution Parliament about that and about a too rigid application of that restriction on legislative committees in the new rules. Committees must have sufficient latitude and not just deal with crossing the *t's* and dotting the *i's* on a bill, or whether the words put on paper will effectively accomplish the legal purpose of the bill.

We also have to give some attention to what the effect of the bill will be, based on the procedures that the bill proposes.

In this particular case dealing with the dissolution of these Crown corporations, all the members on the committee—not just the opposition, but the government members—did spend some time thinking about what would take place after the provisions of the bill were in place, giving authority to government officials to do certain things with Crown corporations.

There are six parts to this bill. There were two in particular that involved the disposition or sale of Crown assets of significant value. One involved B.C. Place in Vancouver where the federal government owns the land and the facility and the other involved Harbourfront Corporation in the city of Toronto. In both cases, the government owns millions and millions of dollars worth of real estate.

In this particular bill the provision simply said that the minister, in most cases the Minister of Public Works or the Minister of Transport as the case may be, would dispose of the government holding, as he or she thought appropriate. That is an awfully vague provision without much in the way of oversight by this Parliament.

That bill simply asked parliamentarians to say: "Yes, Minister of Public Works, you may take this asset worth $200 million, $300 million or $400 million and sell it as you think best". The taxpayers of Canada have an interest in how the government sells a $300 million or $400 million asset in bits and pieces. In committee we had to inquire into what the proposal was.

Regarding B.C. Place, and I want this to be on the record—it is on the committee record as well—the government has stated that it will dispose of it in a way that, at a minimum, gives the local governments in Vancouver the right to acquire it. I believe the intention is to actually move the asset over to provincial or municipal ownership.

We did not get the same assurances regarding Harbourfront in Toronto. I should also mention that in relation to other portions of Bill C-73 there were other assurances given by the government appearing before the committee as to what it would do when the assets were disposed of, when the corporations were dissolved.

In dealing with the Harbourfront Corporation, which is the one major corporation involving much more money than any of the others—a few hundred millions of dollars, mostly real estate assets—we in opposition had three concerns. We were reflecting concerns put forward, not just by our constituents, but by the government of the city of Toronto and the government of metropolitan Toronto. I do not believe that the provincial government itself has raised any caution flags, but I am sure we tried our best to accommodate their role in the disposition of this very significant harbour front asset.

All three areas were dealt with at committee. Believe me, they were more than just technical matters, much more than that. As a result of the committee inquiries and the communication that was had during and subsequent to the committee inquiries, a number of the misunderstandings or questions that existed then have been resolved. The real tough questions involved in Harbourfront have not been resolved. Those hard ques-

tions involve money. Unfortunately we do not always have a solution to money problems.

However, I would like to run through those areas for the benefit of the record. The first involved what appeared at the time to be a very significant premium being given to three large Canadian developers who were very active in the Toronto waterfront. At the time the Harbourfront transition committee, which was composed of Harbourfront officials and directors, had publicly recorded their projection that the premium, the giveaway that the developers would receive, would amount to approximately $36.6 million.

There is no one in this place who could sit here and not be disturbed at the prospect of the taxpayer doing a land swap or a flip with developers which gives them $36.6 million more than they give back to the taxpayer. That issue was raised and discussed. Subsequently, because of public concerns about this the city of Toronto commissioned a consultant study. That study was just recently published and made public.

• (1250)

It appears that the premium which was initially expressed to be approximately $36 million is estimated by this particular group of consultant to be in the vicinity of $5 million or $6 million. I do not want to say that now it is only $5 million or $6 million and that it is not a big deal so let us forget it; $6 million bucks is still $6 million bucks. In a fair, objective guess by a consultant, which is all they can do, that premium now, on the public record, is calculated to be closer to the $6 million level.

As one prominent individual who was quite involved in this process of resolving the Harbourfront challenges has pointed out, an expropriation process which the public, the federal government, the province, the city or metro could embark on, would cost as much as $5 million. By the time they have finished with new evaluations of the properties, retaining solicitors for all parties involved in the process, dealing with any expropriation hearings that might result in the event that there was a failure to agree and significant costs by the developers in preparing the lands for development there now based on existing zonings or zonings they thought they might have, it could possibly cost $5 million.

At one point the city of Toronto and the province of Ontario were so concerned about this area that they actually, by ministerial order, froze development and rezoning activity on all of these lands. If you are a developer and owned these lands, as soon as the freeze went on someone has a hand in your pocket because you were stuck with an asset that was not producing income and it was frozen. I think we should recognize that as an economic reality.

Now that the premium is guessed to be $6 million, I leave that on the public record. If the government's view is that the premium is worth it, valid, viable and acceptable to the taxpayers, then that government will bear the responsibility for that deal when it takes place. There is nothing that we in opposition are going to be able to do to derail it once this bill goes through. The public will then make the decision.

The first issue, the swamp of the pipeline lands, we consider to have been adequately canvassed and developed on the public record, including the record of this House.

The second involved the endowment fund. This is easily canvassed. It is the money issue. The Harbourfront Corporation has carried on for years extremely valuable cultural, artistic, athletic and public participation programs on the Toronto waterfront. These were programs and activities in a city urban culture that simply would never be there if Harbourfront did not exist. That was the legacy of politicians and government officials from almost 20 years ago.

The concern of Torontonians was that this entity would be able to continue after the federal government completed its job of reshuffling ownership and basically getting out of the business of providing cultural entertainment on the Toronto Harbourfront. I take it that is the government's objective. I might object to that. I am of the view that the federal government is involved in providing cultural programming and support in a number of Canada's cities, Toronto included. I am of the view that it should continue.

In any event, the deficit issue, the endowment fund issue for Harbourfront, the federal government has stated that it will be in a position to pay into an endowment fund for Harbourfront $80 million from the sale of Harbourfront real estate assets. That is after the land swaps and all of the other rezonings and activities which must take place.

If they give $80 million, it is the view of most who look at the scene that the income from that endowment fund would be insufficient to maintain Harbourfront even at its current reduced level of activity. I accept that there are those who call many federal institutions fat cows—no disrespect to cows—and that perhaps we should all be trying to make federal institutions get along with a bit less money. I am going to use the calculations that were provided in the report produced only two or three days ago and made public at City of Toronto Council. They are as follows.

If the $80 million fund is used in perpetuity to provide income only to Harbourfront, that $80 million will finance a funding shortfall, a revenue shortfall, at Harbourfront of only $1.5 to $3.5 million per year. I will not make any value judgment on whether or not that is a lot of income. I simply put that on the record.

If the $80 million is simply viewed as a fund from which Harbourfront will draw income and capital to finance deficits over the foreseeable future, Harbourfront's funding from that endowment fund will only last according to the consultants until 2003.

The third possibility had to do with an if. If the federal government—or all levels of government—were able to commit to fund Harbourfront at a level that was consistent both with its past level of expenditure and revenue and its projected level of expenditure and revenue, and based on the shrinkage factor that I have just alluded to, the endowment fund according to the consultant would have to be at least $193 million, roughly double what the government is proposing to provide now.

I will leave those facts and figures there. It is our view here on this side of the House that our role now is to point out these things. The harder decisions will be in the hands of the Minister of Public Works as he or she disposes of assets and takes the money and puts it into an endowment fund.

Harbourfront is going to live and thrive or it is not, or maybe we will stumble along somewhere in the middle. My view is that Harbourfront should live and thrive and continue to do the work it has always done on the Toronto Harbourfront.

Before moving out of the debate here, I wanted to raise another caution flag. It is important when pursuing the public discussion and the communication that have permitted us to deal with this publicly that we deal with the concept of commercial confidentiality. Even today, as I stand here now, I am unable to obtain information that would permit me to make an even better judgment about this.

Regarding the commercial confidentiality imposed or requested by the developers or by the public individuals who have been working on this issue, I understand where it comes from. It is a request by individuals that evaluations of their corporate assets, their strategic goals and their development proposals not be made public. The problem I have with that is that we are dealing with public assets here. We are already dealing with what the taxpayers own. I start off looking at this whole area and saying we cannot permit confidentiality to preclude the taxpayer from knowing everything that is going on with these assets.

I see, Mr. Speaker, you wish to take note of the clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Malone): It now being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this day.

The House took recess at 1 p.m.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

TAXATION

Mr. Bob Wood (Nipissing): Mr. Speaker, on February 11 of this year, the Minister of Finance tried to pull a fast one on Canadians. On that day, he issued what appeared to be a harmless press release concerning some technical matters dealing with family and private trusts. What it

really amounted to was perhaps the biggest tax windfall for the wealthy in history.

In 1972, a law was passed which stipulated that after 21 years any increase in the value of assets in trusts would be subject to a capital gains tax. That meant that in 1993 the government would have come into billions of dollars in tax revenue. Instead, what was proposed was a loophole that allows the tax to be put off for decades.

Isn't that something? While the national debt is being saddled on the backs of the working and middle class, the wealthy get the tax breaks.

Why were these changes not announced in the budget that was delivered only days later? Why was no estimate of lost revenue provided to the Canadian people? Indeed, this would have proved too embarrassing for the government.

After all, it was the Minister of Finance who said: "I am asking Canadians to share the burden of fiscal restraint—the challenge to all Canadians is to do what each of us can do to strengthen our country."

It seems that this government wants to challenge some Canadians more than others. Of course, the fight against the deficit will go on.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FAMILY VIOLENCE

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian ambassador to the UN announced yesterday, at the first session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, that the Canadian Parliament will ratify by the end of the year the bill of rights approved at the Summit for Children held in New York City two years ago.

In September 1989, prime minister Mulroney was co-chairman of the international conference. By January 1991, Canada had already set up a children's bureau coming under health and welfare Canada. Benoît Bouchard is the minister in charge of coordinating all government programs to ensure they are in keeping with the provisions of the bill of rights. Canada also invested $136 million this past February to support the fight against family violence.

Mr. Speaker, these are concrete steps taken by this government to help families torn by family violence.

* * *

[*English*]

AIRPORTS

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, in his frenzy to cut costs, the Minister of Transport is permitting security firms to undercut one another as they scramble to secure contracts with airports. They do this without any regard for existing wage rates or respect for existing collective agreements.

At Terminal 1, the security firm Aeroguard is demanding a wage cut of $2 an hour from its employees as well as elimination of a group insurance plan. The company is threatening the 100 passenger screening agents with lay-offs if they refuse these cuts designed to get the contract for Aeroguard.

How long is this government and the Ministers of Transport and Labour going to allow these conditions to persist? When are workers rights going to be protected? When is this government going to realize that the safety of the travelling public depends on skilled workers? When is this government going to live up to the words of a previous transport minister who stated that he would not permit such contracts to be let on the backs of workers?

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, a recently completed United Nations survey confirmed what many of us in this country have known for a long time, that Canada is a great place to live.

Through examination, a number of categories including health standards, education, social conditions, taxation system and disposable income, the UN determined Canada ranks second only to Japan in terms of over-all standard of living.

It seems incredible to me that there are those in this country who are willing to risk all that we have attained as a country over the past 125 years to pursue their own narrow political aims.

It is time we, as Canadians, started to work together to ensure we remain the envy of the rest of the world.

ALLAN CUP CHAMPIONS

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to bring to the attention of the House the victory of the Prince Edward Island Armour Fence Hockey Team in the Canadian Allan Cup Triple "A" Hockey Championships.

The Islanders dramatic 5 to 4 win over the Thunder Bay Twins 57 seconds into overtime brought the best of seven finals to a close in a four game sweep at the Charlottetown Civic Centre. This win has earned Prince Edward Island its first ever Allan Cup victory.

It is very admirable when provinces with such a small population as that of Prince Edward Island produces such a victorious team. Indeed, this is an occasion when the other provinces can take note and look with admiration towards the maritimes.

On behalf of all Islanders, I wish to congratulate the Armour Fence Islanders on their impressive championship win and express our most heartfelt pride in the example they have set through their tenacity, enthusiasm and outstanding sportsman–like conduct.

Congratulations team. You've earned the recognition and pride of all Canadians.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADA FITNESS WEEK

Mrs. Marie Gibeau (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is Sneaker Day, marking once again the kick–off of Canada's Fitweek.

Throughout the week and until June 2, a number of events are planned to promote healthy active living.

To highlight in a special way the first day of this week featuring physical activity, all Canadians including members of this House are invited to wear their sneakers tomorrow.

Canada's Fitweek is the largest celebration of physical activity in the world, Mr. Speaker, as no less than eight million people across the country will participate in over 14,000 events already scheduled.

Canada's Fitweek now has an enviable world–wide reputation that all Canadians have every reason to be proud of.

In closing, I would like to point out that the success of this celebration is due, to a large extent, to the 300,000 volunteers who have organized the various activities in most cities in the country. I take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to thank them for their dedication.

* * *

[*English*]

YUGOSLAVIA

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, last year the people of Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia experienced democracy for the first time in half a century.

More recently, Croatians and Slovenians, by way of referendum, have expressed their willingness to withdraw from the chaos that is Yugoslavia today.

The republics and provinces of Yugoslavia have failed to agree on a leader, and the collective presidency is mired in discord. The evolving democracy is now in danger of being ambushed by military rule and occupation.

I call upon the government to respect the democratic wishes of the people who live in Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia and to be prepared to recognize whatever form of government they choose.

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, after Switzerland and the United States, Canada is the oldest federal system in the world.

Great nations are not built on a foundation of common language or common territorial boundaries, but rather by people who have done great things together in the past and who intend to do great things together in the future.

In the past, working together, Canadians have explored and settled half a continent, created a nation from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic Oceans; built a transcontinental transportation and communications system and developed the seventh strongest economy, the second highest standard of living and a social safety network which is the envy of the world.

If we are to stay united in the future, Canadians need a new national agenda to work for, an agenda which includes a clean environment, a just resolution of aboriginal concerns and the elimination of illiteracy, hunger, homelessness and violence.

But whatever our new national agenda may be, it should certainly be more than just a desire to repeal the Official Languages Act.

* * *

UN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, the UN has just released its 1991 Human Development Report. This report shows that the gap between rich and poor countries continues to grow.

What is the Mulroney government doing about this deteriorating global situation? It is reneging on Canada's long held commitment to international development.

In the past three years alone, the government has cut billions of dollars from our international development funding commitments.

CIDA, along with hundreds of development NGOs and hundreds of thousands of Canadian volunteers, through their very hard work over the years, have given Canada a solid reputation as a world leader in the field of development assistance. Now this government wants to dismantle CIDA and undermine the work of our development NGOs.

The government should be working with development NGOs to increase the amount of Canadian aid going to those people who need it most and who need it urgently.

* * *

QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, as a result of my Point of Order yesterday, several comments were made in the House that private members on the government side should be restricted from asking questions.

In fact, we represent more Canadians than any other group in the House and in many cases Question Period is the only tool we have to get the attention to issues affecting our constituents. Often we will disagree with the position of the government or a minister, or a minister may not understand the urgency of a problem in a region like Atlantic Canada. Question Period is the most effective place to get our point across.

• (1410)

On the other hand, government members should not use Question Period for planted questions, and oppositions should stop using it for speech-making and grandstanding.

If we all are a little more responsible, we can have a lot more questions and a whole lot more answers. Instead of trying to gain points for our own benefit, maybe we should try to do more for the people who sent us here.

* * *

EDUCATION

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I bring to the attention of this House a serious problem both within my constituency, the federal constituency of St. Boniface, and throughout Canada; the teaching of English or French as a second language to new Canadians.

This is particularly important in view of the increased number of immigrants because of this government's decision.

In early March, 1991 I received a petition from over 225 constituents, mostly volunteers who were working with these people to help them learn the language and to integrate into society. They requested support for language instruction.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I have in my hand petitions signed by more than 225 constituents asking me to:

> —support their request that courses in English as a second language be given in St. Boniface for adult refugees who do not speak English, upon their arrival.

[*English*]

My constituents want these new Canadians to learn English now so they can integrate fully into Canadian society, find jobs and become active participants as soon as possible.

I wrote to the appropriate minister on March 11 and again on April 12. Why have my constituents not received an answer?

[*Translation*]

Are they not important enough? Surely the question requires an immediate answer.

* * *

[*English*]

FITWEEK

Mr. John E. Cole (York—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, May 24 is Sneaker Day, the day when all Canadians, including members of the House, are invited and encouraged to wear their sneakers in support of healthy, active living.

Sneaker Day is the kick-off event for Canada's Fitweek, running from tomorrow until June 2. This country can take great pride in knowing that Canada's Fitweek is now recognized internationally as the largest celebration of physical activity in the world.

This year, more than eight million Canadians are expected to participate in over 14,000 events taking place across Canada. Canada's Fitweek is co-ordinated by the Government of Canada through fitness and amateur sport, the provincial and territorial governments and 16 national organizations. At the community level, hundreds of thousands of volunteers contribute their time and energy to this annual celebration. The growth of Fitweek can only be described as phenomenal.

Canada's Fitweek is an excellent example of government and the corporate sector working together to promote the message of active living to Canadians and to maintain the momentum of the fitness movement.

During the next 10 days, I invite all members to join Canadians from coast to coast in promoting and participating in the many events planned in their own constituencies as part of Canada's Fit Week.

* * *

VIDEO GAMES

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, is the Solicitor General aware that video games, which puts the player in the role of concentration camp manager and which dehumanizes Jews and Turks, have been available in Germany and Austria for over a year. According to some news reports, it is possible that these racist video games, which amount to hate propaganda, originate in Canada.

Does the minister intend to investigate the possibility that these games originate here and take action to limit their distribution.

[*Translation*]

The German police has said that the demand for, and availability of, these racist games has increased over the past year. Does the minister intend to take action to ensure that these games are not distributed in Canada?

* * *

CYSTIC FIBROSIS

Mr. Marc Ferland (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation is completing its thirtieth year of service. Cystic fibrosis is a genetic disease affecting the lungs and digestive system of children and young adults.

Following the very recent discovery of the gene that causes cystic fibrosis, the Foundation is asking for everyone's help more than ever. Their theme this year, their thirtieth anniversary, is: "Thirty years of caring—Proof of the power of dreams".

I wish to thank the Foundation, the thousands of volunteers working with it and those who contributed the $6 million collected this year for research, services and public education. Congratulations and best wishes for success to the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

* * *

[*English*]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, a survey on personal safety in Ottawa was published today. While the results may be a surprise to some, for women it was a frightening reality. One-third of women feel unsafe in their own neighbourhoods. Almost 90 per cent of women feel they must limit their own activities. They believe they are at greater risk simply because they are female. I am not surprised by these statistics for they do reflect the views of the lives of women across Canada.

Women are also at risk in their own homes. The assaults and murders of women by their partners shows this reality. Because that danger is also outside the home, women have developed methods of coping with

this danger and fear. We walk home only in well-lit areas. We park our cars near the few lights in parking lots. We stay out of parks at night. We try to ignore the rude comments of strangers.

We need more than a blue ribbon panel on violence against women. We need programs and action. We need action from this government now to end violence against women.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I was horrified to learn recently that a wonderful and committed participant from Guatemala to the United Nations Conference in Geneva, Mr. Miguel Sucuqui, has had to go into hiding because of his work there.

On May 6, 1991, a government backed paramilitary group came to his home to arrest him. When they could not find him, they threatened the lives of his wife and family.

This is not the only incident of violence by Guatemalan authorities against participants at the Geneva meeting. Mr. Camilo Ajqui Jimon was assassinated on April 14. At least one other has suffered an attempted kidnapping.

There are others who are now living in mortal fear because of their work at the United Nations and for human rights generally.

Today, I am writing to the Guatemalan government to express my concern regarding these particular incidents. I call upon the government to do the same immediately.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The verdict on the GST is in. In the first three months, Canadian retailers have suffered the worst sales record since the history of record keeping. We find again today that sales are down. In Kingston alone in a survey by a national accounting firm, Ernst and Young, one in two Kingston families do their shopping south of the border.

Canadians are voting with their feet and they are voting by shopping south of the border. In that survey, Ernst and Young predicted that 500 jobs would be lost in Kingston alone as a result of that particular problem.

Given the failure of the GST to assist the Canadian economy, what is he going to do in the short term to provide relief to the thousands of retailers and wholesalers who are going bankrupt?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, statistics prove that the cross-border shopping phenomenon began well before the GST came into effect. In fact, if one compares the statistics from January, cross-border shopping in 1990, 1989 or prior to that, the increases were considerably higher than the increases in January of 1991 after the GST took effect.

However, we do admit as a government that there is a very serious problem with cross-border shopping which spans the responsibility of all three levels of government, the private sector, labour, consumers, as well as the Retail Council of Canada and retail organizations. It is why we have taken the leadership in beginning a nation-wide consultative process in dealing with the problem and trying to get it resolved in co-operation with the provinces, with the private sector and with labour. We are well on our way towards that objective and that goal.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Finance, because his GST policy is forcing Canadians to go to the United States to shop.

While retail sales in Canada are going down, American stores are booming. We know that clothing workers in Montreal, for example, are out of work because Canadians buy their clothes across the border. I therefore ask the Minister of Finance: When will he be ready to review his disastrous economic policies to give Canadians a chance to work here in our country?

• (1420)

[*English*]

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, obviously the hon. member was not listening to my answer when I pointed out what the statistics show very clearly. I will give her a specific. In January 1990 the increases of cross-border shopping was over 22 per cent.

The January increase of cross-border shopping in 1991 was only 15 per cent. That was the month after the GST came in.

I admit and repeat that there is a problem. There is a greater variety and selection of products in the United States. The volumes are greater, therefore the prices are lower. Labour costs are lower than in Canada. Transportation costs are lower in the United States than in Canada.

The bottom line is that Canadians, Canadian industry and governments have not allowed the Canadian economy to be as competitive as that of our counterparts in the United States. The Speech from the Throne addressed that problem and this government will be dealing with it.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Some salesperson for Canada, Mr. Speaker. This minister could not even convince his own brother to stay in the country.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: I have heard the exchange and I do not have to remind hon. members that one personal comment invites another. I know the hon. member would not want to do that again. The hon. member will put her question.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, to set the record straight, it is the business that did not stay in Canada, not any reflection on the individual.

My question is for the Minister of Finance, if he is prepared to do the job on a full-time basis. Given the devastating statistics of the first three months of the GST, the worst record of a retail sales drop in the history of record keeping for Canada, and given that the study released today by Ernst and Young shows that in Kingston alone, one city in Canada, 500 jobs are being lost to cross-border shopping, will the finance minister today introduce a new economic plan to help give some hope to Canadian businesses and Canadian workers who want to put jobs back in Canada not south of the border?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, in so far as Canadian businesses are concerned, and more specifically that which is run by one of my brothers, that business has prospered and stayed in Canada. It is because of the policies of the government that that business was able to expand into the United States and stay in Canada, headquartered in Oakville, Ontario, and we are very proud of that.

Second, I have already pointed out that the bottom line problem with cross-border shopping is a lack of competitiveness by Canadians as opposed to our American counterparts.

One of the elements that this government has taken in moving toward providing greater competitive opportunities for Canadian businesses was tax reform, scrapping the federal sales tax which was an albatross around the necks of Canadian producers, manufacturers and exporters, replacing it with a value-added tax like the GST which makes Canadian businesses more competitive as opposed to less. We are continuing on that track.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance who said during Question Period yesterday:

> It is going to take some time before all the benefits of the GST flow through ultimately to the consumer.

The Minister of Finance should know that the only benefit that his government ever promised to consumers from the GST was the elimination of the manufacturers' sales tax and that this should have occurred as early as January and February of this year. Given what the minister said in the House yesterday, is he now saying that the MST has not been removed from the price of products? Or is he admitting that the government was wrong in its projections that prices would fall?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that in many cases the movement to the GST and the scrapping of the federal sales tax does in fact reduce the cost of doing business. In most cases it reduces the cost of capital. The hon. member knows that. It takes some time for those benefits to flow through to benefit the consumer.

We are looking at a transitional period. We are looking at a start-up and it is very difficult to discern, with any degree of accuracy in a span of three months or less, the over-all impact.

What is important is that again today interest rates in this country have come down by eight basis points. Statistics Canada today says: "The worst of the recession is probably over and there is some clear evidence that the worst of the recession may be passed", indicating that more people are working in April. There are more housing starts and automobile sales are rebounding. That should be good news for the hon. member. It is for us.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, indeed, while this government is in office we will take good news wherever we can find it.

[*Translation*]

Although a United Nations report ranks Canada as the second best place to live in the world, the report also indicates that Canada has one of the widest gaps between rich and poor in the industrialized world.

Since the government has aggravated this problem by introducing the GST, cutting tax rates for the rich and triggering a made-in-Canada recession, what is the government going to do to narrow the gap between rich and poor?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad the hon. member raised the very important study conducted by the United Nations, where Canada ranked second among 160 nations as the best place in the world to live.

As Carol Goar reports in *The Toronto Star*: "Too often we forget how lucky we are. Canada ranked second of the 160 nations studied. By global standards we live in paradise".

Will the hon. member not join the chorus and praise what Canada stands for, rather than looking for all the negatives?

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of International Trade. The decision to fast track the trilateral trade agreement will be made this afternoon.

Carl Beigie, the former head of the C.D. Howe Institute said yesterday: "Canada just seems to be following the U.S. lead into continental discussions."

What I object to as a Canadian is that our trade policy is being dictated to us by Washington. The debate today will outline very specific trade and economic objectives of the United States. I cite the resolution by Gephardt and Rostenkowski. Will Canada and Canadians in the House of Commons have the same opportunity to debate their concerns?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Yes, Mr. Speaker, the House of Commons will have an opportunity to debate it. As I indicated yesterday, I expected this would be a subject of some consideration by the external affairs committee.

If the hon. member would like to put the views of the New Democratic Party forward, there are many opportunities with an Opposition Day motion.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, we will afford ourselves of that opportunity, but we realize that the government will not listen.

A supplemental to the same minister. Should the fast track negotiations result in the reopening of the present free trade agreement, with the U.S. desire to extract even more concessions from Canada, like the cultural industry, the auto pact and subsidy definition, will the minister, for once, stand up for Canadians and walk away from the table.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I think it goes without saying that if we had not done as good a job negotiating the free trade agreement, we would not be hearing these statements from the Americans in the lead up to the North American free trade agreement.

• (1430)

We have indicated and were prepared, as many members of this House know, to walk away from the free trade agreement in 1987 if we did not get the conditions in that agreement that we felt were appropriate for Canada.

We got those conditions. It is a good deal for Canada and I am convinced that the North American free trade agreement will also be a good deal for Canada.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, what scares me is I believe that he believes what he is saying.

I will go to the Minister of the Environment. Yesterday, the minister committed his government to subject the trilateral trade agreement to an environmental assessment.

Given this fact, will the minister table these guidelines before negotiations begin? Should these guidelines not be met in the agreement, will he recommend to cabinet and to this House that negotiations be suspended?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I can repeat for the benefit of the member and the House in what manner environmental concerns will be dealt with in the context of these negotiations.

First, trade related matters will be dealt with in the context of the agreement. Environmental concerns will be dealt with in the context of the agreement. Non-trade related matters should be dealt with in a parallel negotiation.

Third, as the member refers to, consistent with government policy, the agreement should be the subject of an environmental evaluation by the cabinet committee system.

We are in the process of working out the methodologies through these evaluations through different departments. I want to bring to the member's attention that this is new. To our knowledge, this is not done in many places in the world, if at all in the world. For that reason, we are working on the methodologies and I assure the hon. member that we will deal with them as rapidly as possible.

Finally, I think we can add to that, as my colleague from industry, science and technology has said, the committee system is there as a recourse for members of this House if they want to deal with the environmental concerns also.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pose my question to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

We learned this morning that the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. de Montigny Marchand, has been suddenly called back from a trip where he has been accompanying the Prime Minister in Asia. He will arrive back in Ottawa this weekend for meetings.

Considering that Mr. Marchand was one of the two signatories on the government's report on the Al-Mashat case, my question to the minister is this.

Was Mr. Marchand called back in relation to the government's mishandling of the Al-Mashat case? Is the government planning any further disclosures of information on this case in the very near future?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I will take notice of the question of the hon. member concerning—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Valcourt: I may be expected to answer for external affairs, but I am not there yet.

I can say to the hon. member that any information concerning this case will be looked at by the standing committee, as has been proposed.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): The Minister of Employment and Immigration does not know.

When is this going to stop?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the same minister.

Does the minister now maintain that every single word of the report that he and the Secretary of State for External Affairs published on the Al-Mashat case is true? Is he prepared to maintain that this report is complete, accurate and reflects the whole truth? Furthermore, does he intend to release all the documents relating to this case as promised by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and will he do so for the committee meets?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and all other members of this House will have a chance in the standing committee to respond to all the issues that were raised. We have already said that we prepared a report, and that report has been released.

If there are additional matters on which further details are requested, it will be the committee's job to take care of that and I trust it will.

[*English*]

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Yesterday, a member of the government caucus published a column which shed some light on the case of Mr. Al-Mashat. The member for Hamilton—Wentworth writes that it is very likely that the hotline burned from the White House to the Prime Minister's office. He suggests that the bureaucrats were overruled by either the CIA, George Bush, or even the Prime Minister.

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister why his own caucus members, who best know his ministers, do not believe their story on how Al-Mashat rode the Tory express into Canada?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, as was indicated last week, we are anxious that this matter be taken to committee and all of the facts be elucidated as soon as possible. That remains our position and that will happen just as soon as the committee can be brought together.

I believe Beauschene's will show that questions about comments of an ordinary member are out of order for Question Period.

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have to wonder if Al-Mashat was all that the Americans gave us in the free trade deal.

I have a supplementary for the Deputy Prime Minister. Mohamed Al-Mashat tells us he was not a defector, nor has he ever betrayed Saddam Hussein.

If Canadians were to accept this government's explanation of how a high-profile, enemy spokesman accidentally retired in Canada during a war, I ask the Deputy Prime Minister to explain simply why this government's war cabinet was not at the helm of Canada's intelligence network at a time of international crisis. Who was in command?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the premise of the question is probably based upon fiction and does not rate an answer.

ARMS TRADE

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister for International Trade.

Canadians were waiting for a gun control bill and instead we got a gun export bill today. This government never ceases to amaze me.

I want to ask the minister if he agrees with this statement that was made by the former Secretary of State for External Affairs in January. The statement is: "If there is one priority, one lesson which the world must learn from this war, it is that an unrestricted arms trade in this region, the Middle East, is no longer acceptable and constitutes a threat to the security of all members of the United Nations." Does the minister agree with that statement and, if he does, why is he making it easier for Canadian arms manufacturers to sell arms to the Middle East?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I do agree with that statement. I draw my colleague's attention to the use of the word that he quoted there, "unrestricted". What this legislation will do is it will provide very tight restrictions on the export of armaments from Canada. There will be tight constraints and strict criteria under this legislation as to what type of countries we would export any sorts of armaments. We would require a bilateral arrangement with the country involved so that we would know what those armaments are going to be used for.

For that reason, what this legislation does is tighten up a previous regime which was much looser.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the minister is not fooling anybody. This is about an $800 million contract for light-armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia. He should not try and tell the House otherwise. It is about some tough choices; either you are in favour of arms control or you are not. It is a real tough choice.

I want to ask the minister—

[*Translation*]

My supplementary is directed to the same minister. The purpose of this bill is to increase arms exports from Canada. The government wants to expedite this bill. My

question is this: Will the government take the time to consult parliamentarians and Canadians before the bill is passed?

• (1440)

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to put tighter controls on the exports of armaments from this country. That is the precise objective as set out in the legislation.

I want to draw the attention of my friend to the specific types of armaments that he is trying to work into the consideration of this question. Weapons of mass destruction were the weapons that were the subject of the comments of the Prime Minister and the previous Secretary of State for External Affairs. That type of weapon involves rockets, bombs, grenades, ammunition, chemical weapons, weapons that are considered to be weapons of mass destruction. That will not be the subject of this legislation. That type of export will be restricted.

The purpose of this bill is to put very tight restrictions on the type of armaments that will be restricted. The hon. member has referred to a couple of those in his question.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the minister of employment. In the throne speech, this government told Canadians that the most fundamental building block of our society was the family. However, under Bill C–21, leave for adoptive parents has been reduced from 15 weeks to 10 weeks, while at the same time, leave for biological parents has been increased to 25 weeks. Clearly, this is discrimination against adoptive parents.

Given this government's noble commitment to the family, I would like to ask the minister why he would not treat adoptive parents in the same way as biological parents are treated.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, this question was raised when Bill C–21 was discussed in this House. It has been discussed in committee. The situation is, simply, that the reasons for treating the biological parents in a different manner are clear to the hon. member. This bill, C–21 is not about trying to discriminate against any people. This bill, which you held up for a year, is trying to help people.

Do not try today to tell us that Bill C–21 was about discrimination when in fact it barred discrimination against women in this country. That is what Bill C–21 did.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, that is a disappointing answer that contradicts totally the spirit of the Speech from the Throne on the family. Is this government saying that an adoptive mother is less of a mother because she is an adoptive mother, or that a child is less of a child because he is an adopted child?

In the interests of fairness, equity and justice, is this minister prepared to tell the House that he will amend this law and eliminate this glaring and obvious discrimination against adoptive parents?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I do not consider this provision as being discriminatory and I do not intend to amend Bill C–21.

* * *

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Yesterday, truckers left Parliament Hill empty-handed, and today Canadians discovered that while there was no help for the trucking industry, the National Transportation Agency of Canada, headed by one Honourable E. Nielsen, has been renting luxury apartments a block away from the Montreal Forum because it was "more convenient" than hotel rooms.

I want to ask the government why there is no help for truckers and lots of dough for Erik Nielsen's transportation agency to rent fancy digs across the street from the Forum.

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, the truckers left the Hill yesterday knowing that this government was working with a task force to come up with answers to their problems. What they brought forward to us were problems that were identified last year when we originally started to meet with all

the stakeholders in the area. They know we will have answers to that shortly.

As far as the NTA in Montreal is concerned, as soon as I read the article which was brought to my attention, I immediately called the officials and asked them to contact the agency to ensure that they review this practise immediately as to the value of having this type of accommodation in Montreal.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Well, I am glad to know that there is a housing policy for someone in this country.

[*Translation*]

I have a supplementary for the Deputy Prime Minister. There is no money for the poor. There is none for the truckers. There is none for the unemployed and there is none for the homeless in the latest Speech from the Throne. How can the government let Mr. Nielsen and his friends rent apartments in Montreal across from the Forum, while hundreds of thousands of Canadians don't even have a roof over their heads?

[*English*]

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, as I brought to the attention of the member in my answer previous to this, we have asked the agency to review this policy. When they did it in 1989 and rented the apartment, they did a study at that time and felt that that was the most economical way of doing it. I am not sure it still is and I have asked them to prove it.

* * *

TOBACCO INDUSTRY

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of health. The Canadian tobacco industry, headed by William Neville, the former chief of staff to the Prime Minister, has launched a $2 million mail-back campaign that includes preprinted messages to the Prime Minister in cigarette packages. This is a direct violation of section 9 of the Tobacco Control Act.

The act states that "no distributor shall sell a tobacco product if the package in which it is contained displays any writing other than the name, the brand name, the trade mark and health warning messages".

Will the minister take whatever legal action that is necessary, including obtaining a court injunction, to stop the tobacco industry from launching this campaign and contravening section 9 of the Tobacco Control Act?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member ought to know what I told the press yesterday about the campaign launched by the Tobacco Growers Association. I utterly deplore the attitude of the companies, considering that any measure taken by the Department of Health and Welfare is taken to protect the health of Canadians, and I repeat, our sole objective is to pursue those policies. However, the hon. member tells us something is illegal. I have asked the department's legal advisers to give me a sound legal opinion, and if the law has been violated, the hon. member may rest assured that I will immediately take appropriate action.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister. The tobacco industry lobbyists appear to have delayed regulations aimed at requiring bold lettering for health warnings on tobacco products.

Will the minister assure this House that these regulations are immediately implemented so that the bold lettering for health warnings is required on June 1, which was the original scheduled date before their lobbyists got involved?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): My friend should know that the court is not a lobbyist. He should know, too, that the regulations are challenged by the association and they are before the court. As long as the Federal Court in Quebec has not made a decision, he will understand that I cannot apply the regulation.

I will agree with him on something. I find it strange that those companies that consider it impossible to put an insert in the packages because it is too expensive can do that for their own purpose. In that perspective I agree with him and I will do my best to see that the regulation is applied when the court makes its decision.

CONTAINER TRAFFIC

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Transport concerning the Port of Halifax and the potential loss of container shipping from Halifax.

I want to point out that the potential loss of container traffic from Halifax will also result in a dramatic loss in rail traffic from the Atlantic region, which again will jeopardize the viability of the entire rail system in Atlantic Canada.

I want to know from the minister if the federal government is playing an active key role in resolving this issue. Also, can the department empower the National Transportation Agency to intervene and insist that CN meet its obligations?

• (1450)

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his continued interest in the Port of Halifax. Indeed, he showed his interest when he brought members of the port to meet with me last week here in Ottawa.

Certainly the Port of Halifax, as ports on the west coast of this country as well, and all the transportation industry is having to come to grips with the global competitiveness that we have today.

I can assure the member that CN, the port authorities, both the federal and the provincial governments, are following this with a great deal of interest. There is work going on. I will certainly take into consideration the point that he made today and see what can be done on it.

* * *

CANADA POST

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for Canada Post. Retail postal outlets, RPOs, supposedly offer equal or better service to the public. However, when an RPO cannot be found, many rural communities like Avonmore, Ontario, will not receive equal or better service. The people of Avonmore are fighting to keep their post office. There has been a post office in Avonmore since the birth of Canada. The people in Avonmore who are in Ottawa today want an answer.

Will the minister instruct Canada Post to back off, to reverse its decision and allow Avonmore to keep its post office?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, when Canada Post was made a Crown corporation by actions of the previous Liberal government, it was for the purpose of restricting and eliminating possible political interference with the management of the post office. We have been adhering to that principle which we thought was quite properly elucidated by the Liberal government of the day.

In terms of the policy of having counter operations located in retail outlets rather than being run by the post office, since 1988 the post office has had independent surveyors survey the people affected where changes have been made. They found that the people affected approve of the changes to the extent of 90 per cent. In advance, people are afraid of change. After change there is 90 per cent approval.

I wonder if the hon. member thinks it is appropriate to change a policy which is approved of by 90 per cent of the people affected.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister. Avonmore joins more than 200 communities across Canada which have recently received their postal death sentences. One of these communities is Mabou in my riding where the Canada Post building with the flag and the cenotaph in front has been the one tangible symbol of the federal presence in this community.

Since the minister's government approved the corporate plan which is leading to the closure of all these post offices, will he at least instruct Canada Post to place a moratorium on these closures and to begin the process of reversing this wrong-headed policy?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that the hon. member's predecessor was

successful in getting post offices built everywhere in that riding. That of course is the reason why, when we assumed office, the post office was running a $400 million deficit and our children were paying for that.

Since then the post office, by practising good management practices, by introducing changes which have improved service, which the people affected have approved of, has in fact gone into a profit situation. Instead of borrowing money which our children have to repay to look after the post office today, it is actually paying back dividends.

The hon. member should join all Canadians in applauding Canada Post for the spectacular job it has done.

* * *

HOUSING

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Last year some 36,000 refugees came to Canada; 20,000 came to the province of Ontario alone.

Because of a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, the Government of Ontario has now decided to admit refugees to public housing in the province of Ontario, public housing that is 50 per cent funded by the federal government.

How does the minister propose to house refugees in this country, bearing in mind the fact that some 17,000 Canadian citizens and landed immigrants are now on waiting lists for public housing in Toronto alone, bearing in mind that the federal housing agency, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, has no funding for this, and bearing in mind as well that the minister is responsible for refugees? Does he intend to preempt constitutional negotiations and transfer all these things to the provincial governments?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, if I might answer my colleague, the distinguished former minister of housing. Although he was very young at the time, I remind him that back in 1979, under the leadership of my distinguished colleague who was then Prime Minister, CMHC was very helpful in assisting the Vietnamese boat people and taking quite extraordinary steps at that time.

We commend Ontario or any province that wishes to declare these people eligible for assisted housing programs and will be glad to meet with them and explore any possibilities that exist.

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for Grains and Oilseeds who knows about the concerns for the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. Some time ago this government removed oats from the jurisdiction of the wheat board. Now U.S. wheat is allowed into Canada. This is going to create tension between the wheat board and some Canadian farmers who live along the U.S. border who want to sell wheat directly into the U.S. market.

Will the minister reaffirm his commitment to the wheat board today and will he initiate a review of additional grains that could be sold by the wheat board?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)): Mr. Speaker, the producers who live along the border will always want to have direct access to the U.S. market. That is nothing new with the free trade agreement. The answer to that question is that we reaffirm our commitment. It is a Canadian decision as to how we are going to market our grain in this country and if producers choose to use the Canadian Wheat Board, that is their decision.

As far as other grains under the Canadian Wheat Board, we have just commissioned a major study on the canola industry. The report has been out about three weeks. There has been some discussion on that. People have approached me in the last six months asking for rye to be put under the Canadian Wheat Board. In all cases we have suggested that it is a producer decision and if producers so decide then the government will be perfectly willing to respond.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, I was looking for a commitment from this minister for a comprehensive review. The minister well knows that the prairie pools have proposed a process by which the wheat board may add, not take away, further grains to its jurisdiction. Given the view of prairie farmers, why will the minister not agree to that review today, right now?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure it is the view of producers on the prairies. If the member wants to talk to farmers in his own province, he will find that producers are very much of two minds when it comes to marketing canola. They are very much of two minds when it comes to marketing oats. The next time he drives through

Portage la Prairie, he will see the new facility going up there which has three-quarters of its production going to the U.S. The people building that plant will tell him one of the reasons they are building in Portage la Prairie, in his own province, is to have access with our high-quality product to the American market. One of the reasons they are there is they do not have to go through the Canadian Wheat Board to buy their oats.

The member should be very careful when he uses generalizations to talk about how farmers want to market their product in western Canada.

* * *

FINANCE

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, there is one region in Canada that has been singled out for special treatment by the chartered banks. From 1982 to 1990 total loans by the banks to businesses in the west dropped by 38 per cent, more than $12 billion. At the same time, bank business loans for the rest of Canada rose by more than 68 per cent.

My question is for the Minister of Finance, a western member. Will the government use its regulatory authority under section 315 of the Bank Act to compel the chartered banks to treat western businesses fairly, and not like a bunch of Third World pariahs?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows it is very difficult to make such comparisons. He is essentially singling out the banks as lending institutions and overlooking the fact that after 1982 there was a downturn in the oil sector. I know that his party has not been supportive of the diversification efforts in the province of Alberta, particularly in the pulp and paper industry. I want to tell the hon. member that mortgages and other loans under the other financial institutions have in fact increased by 78 per cent since 1982. It is very difficult to single out and make the comparison just using chartered banks.

• (1500)

If the hon. member is suggesting that we should, as a federal government, institute a quota allocation or regulations with respect to financial institutions in this country, I can tell the hon. member that we are not prepared to do that. We are prepared to remove barriers and regulations so that the financial institutions can indeed be more competitive across the country.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, the removal of barriers and the removal of regulations has resulted in the removal of $11 billion in business loans from Alberta, the removal of $1 billion in business loans from B.C., the removal of $252 million in business loans from Saskatchewan, and the removal of $48 million in business loans from Manitoba. Every western province has seen its business loan portfolio with the chartered banks reduced.

Will the minister talk to his government's buddies among the chartered banks and do something? I do not care what the minister does, work it out with them as best as he can, but he must do something to get the chartered banks to treat western businesses fairly.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is because the business groups in Alberta find it more appropriate to deal with other financial institutions. Loans and mortgages with those institutions have gone up by 78 per cent.

I am not sure whether he is suggesting that I should start a campaign out in Alberta to encourage more businesses to borrow money from the banks. That is not the role of the Minister of Finance. It may be his role, but it certainly is not mine.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BUREAU OF COMPETITION

Mr. Gabriel Fontaine (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Recently, considerations expressed by the Bureau of Competition Policy have made it practically impossible to integrate Canada Packers and John Labatt. This integration would have been a significant and desirable example of vertical integration in the agri-food industry. I think the criteria of the Bureau of Competition Policy contradict the intent of the Free Trade

Agreement, and I want to ask the minister whether it would not be appropriate to suggest that the Bureau should adjust its criteria to the global village context?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, the Bureau of Competition Policy and the Competition Act are responsible for ensuring that prices on our national markets are as competitive as possible, for the greater benefit of the consumer. I may add that in the Speech from the Throne, the Prime Minister made very clear that our businesses must be more competitive, both nationally and internationally. I believe that this is a challenge all of us must meet in this country, and in the months to come, we will have to ensure that being competitive means prosperity, and that prosperity will also mean lower prices for consumers. It is a challenge we must all meet together, and I am sure that we will be able to do so within our present structure and with the help of the Competition Act, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

[*English*]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the members' attention the presence in the gallery of the hon. Amana Mbabazi, member of the Ugandan Parliament, the National Resistance Council.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the government House leader. It is the traditional question on Business of the House.

Could he inform the House of the business for tomorrow, Monday, Tuesday and the remaining part of next week?

An hon. member: And the end of June.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): End of June. The member just got back and he is anxious to leave already. Today we will continue third reading debate on Bill C-8, the bill respecting Crown corporation dissolution. I would like to designate tomorrow an allotted day for Supply.

Monday will be the final day of debate on the throne speech. As for Tuesday, at this point in time I am not certain as to the business. However, there is a possibility—and hon. critics in the opposition parties might consider this—of calling Bill C-6, an act respecting exporting, importing, manufacturing, buying or selling of or dealing with certain weapons.

As for Wednesday and beyond, I would like to discuss with opposition House leaders an appropriate calendar so we can deal with the business of the House in an efficient and effective manner to enable not only the member for Saint-Denis, but all of us, to enjoy summer.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the government House leader.

The government has been promising a bill on gun control in Canada. He has designated next Tuesday as a day to discuss the bill for the exportation of guns. When are we going to get a day and a bill to deal with gun control in Canada?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member raised that question.

As he knows, in the previous session a bill was brought forward and its subject matter went to a committee of this House. It was dealt with extensively and recommendations were brought forward.

The Minister of Justice, who unfortunately is not here this week, has incorporated those recommendations into the redrafting of the bill. I am informed that the redrafting is nearly complete.

I would hope that, as a result of that pre-study, we will be able to deal with this matter expeditiously. Just as soon as it is available, I would hope to bring it in. I hope that this House can deal with it very rapidly, indeed.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to

correct what might possibly have been an error in the course of Question Period.

In response to a question on defining what we consider to be weapons of mass destruction, I believe I included some of the wrong weapons in that category.

They would include neutron bombs, nuclear bombs, other nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons and things of that order. They would not include, as I believe I said, weapons that would involve ammunition and hand grenades.

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. member rising on a point of order, or is he just rising?

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I was not quite sure what the minister's point of order was. I did not know whether he was withdrawing his other statement or adding to it.

I always thought that when someone was killed, it did not matter whether they were killed by a bullet or a nuclear—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. minister was doing what many members sometimes have to do, that is, make sure that the record correctly shows what was intended. That is what the minister rose to do.

If the hon. member wishes to raise the matter further, he will have to do it during Question Period or at another time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CROWN CORPORATIONS DISSOLUTION OR TRANSFER AUTHORIZATION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Lewis that Bill C-8, an act to provide for dissolution or transfer of certain Crown corporations and to amend certain acts in consequence thereof, be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River has 19 minutes remaining in his speech.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, before the break in the House just prior to Question Period and the lunch break, I was very close to wrapping up my remarks relating to the bill that would dispose of and sell Harbourfront land assets in the city of Toronto.

Of course, that is not the only asset involved in this bill but it is the major one. By rough calculations, the amount of money we are talking about regarding this particular Crown asset is estimated in one volume at approximately $400 million.

Lest anyone think this is a simple disposition, there are reports and reports, studies, appraisals, evaluations and commentary feet thick. That is because the interests involved are multi-jurisdictional and the assets involve many millions of dollars.

As I was completing my remarks, I was dealing with the issue of a confidentiality issue which had been imposed on aspects of the public discussions dealing with the disposition of these assets.

It is my view that the success or failure of such a disposition, when aspects of the process are not specifically detailed by legislation and when there is confidentiality involved, rests on the good faith, the honesty and the expertise of the individuals involved.

• (1510)

In this case they are individuals who are not government employees. They are not necessarily part of the federal infrastructure that we oversee here in this House.

I do not have to reiterate the many instances we have seen in the past of public maladministration. The taxpayer has suffered some very serious losses because of the lack of precision on the part of the government, corruption, dishonesty or a simple lack of expertise.

With respect to this bill, I want to state on behalf of my colleagues here and on behalf of the taxpayer that confidentiality should bear the scrutiny and oversight of Parliament. I believe that scrutiny and oversight will keep the system honest, effective, and will achieve the goals that we have put forward in this particular legislation.

Having said that, I will leave other issues to my colleagues in the House so that they may discuss these in debate in further detail.

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, while I have the floor, I believe it is the wish of the two colleagues who will speak following me to split a 20-minute period. If

that is acceptable to you, Mr. Speaker, and the House, we could proceed on that basis.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Davenport, followed by the hon. member for Scarborough West on two 10-minute speeches.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, on the point just made by my colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River, it is important to put on record the fact that what is happening here on Toronto's waterfront is a wholesale withdrawal of responsibility on the part of the federal government. This involves not only Toronto but other cities of Canada where there is a federal presence in the form of publicly owned lands.

What we see here today is the continuation of a Tory agenda whereby there is retreat from government. There is a belief that the public interest is better served by not providing certain services and by abandoning, in the case of Harbourfront, a very important investment made on behalf of the Canadian people 20 years ago in favour of some kind of sale of land, the outcome of which is still uncertain.

I refer to the plan whereby an endowment would be set up by way of the sale of Crown owned assets at Harbourfront. We do not know what the revenue will be from the sale. I can tell you that this fact alone casts a very large shadow on the credibility of the measure being proposed in this bill by the government.

We are told that what is required is an endowment of roughly $193 million that would permit the continuation of public programs, a variety of activities that take place at Harbourfront in Toronto. This city is represented by many colleagues of mine on this side of the House. The $193 million amount is not at all secure in the estimates being carried out by the city and metro. We understand the amount of the endowment that can be calculated at this stage and relied upon is roughly $80 million. In other words, what is required is 2.5 times the amount that seems to be predictable as the size of the endowment itself. Instead of $193 million, we are told we can count on an endowment resulting from the sale of these lands of some $80 million, which will result in a yearly deficit after revenue of some $8 million to $9 million.

It does not take a great accountant to realize what is happening here. Considerable cuts will have to be made to public programs which so far Torontonians have enjoyed year after year on their waterfront, at Harbourfront. The Tory government has decided they should be considerably reduced.

What is happening here in essence is that the federal government is threatening to walk away from Harbourfront. It is proposing with this bill an initiative that will leave the Harbourfront administration or its successor in a situation whereby it will not be able to support the present activities. The public will therefore suffer the consequences.

I cannot understand for the life of me why the minister in charge of this bill did not take the trouble today to put before us in the opposition and the public, through the media, the exact situation that has evolved over time. In other words, we are debating in a cloud of uncertainty. We do not know what are the exact figures. We can only make certain conclusions based on assumptions made by the city of Toronto property department and in a study that was prepared for metro some time ago.

I ask whether this is the way to run a government. Is this the way to manage the public interest? Is this the way to plan future recreational activities of a population of some 3.5 million people in the metro area? People of all ages and backgrounds of the entire metro region flock to Harbourfront on weekends in particular and during the week in order to enjoy the variety of programs.

This is politically an irresponsible way to proceed. I submit that this government is proceeding in a manner that will be remembered by the voters at the next election. Unless our assumptions are completely wrong—and this is why I am objecting strenuously to the fact that the minister did not take the trouble to put forward and define the situation—this will result, in the very near future, in a reduction of existing program activities and recreation at Harbourfront.

We have on this side of the House systematically said that these lands ought not to be sold, that these lands were bought for the public, and that they should remain in public ownership. They represent the only real estate or property that allows the citizens of metro Toronto direct access to their greatest and best ecological asset, namely their lake. As a result of this bill, this is no longer going to be the case for certain lands at Harbourfront.

We have here two losses. The first is the loss on the investment made. As I said, it was the result of a decision made in 1972 by a forward looking government. The second is the loss of a variety of culturally rich and much appreciated recreational programs on the waterfront which have attracted tens of thousands of people.

I have submitted these thoughts, Mr. Speaker, for your consideration in the hope that finally someone on behalf of the government will rise today and give a clear explanation of what exactly is going to be the situation in the city of Toronto and metro Toronto regarding the disposition of these lands, particularly in relation to the future of the programs at Harbourfront.

• (1520)

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. I wanted to do it before he got started. Mr. Speaker there have been discussions among the members and I believe that you will find there is unanimous consent to revert to presenting of committee reports.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

FIRST REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the first report of the Standing Committee on House Management and, with consent, I move concurrence in this report immediately.

[Editors Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings]

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CROWN CORPORATIONS DISSOLUTION OR TRANSFER AUTHORIZATION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Lewis that Bill C–8, an act to provide for dissolution or transfer of certain Crown corporations and to amend certain acts in consequence thereof, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have a few moments to speak on Bill C–8. I want particularly to address my remarks to four short sections, namely sections 40 through 44, because they deal with Harbourfront, which is in the municipality of metropolitan Toronto.

I represent the riding of Scarborough West and there are many in Scarborough West, as there are many throughout the municipality of metropolitan Toronto, who take great pleasure particularly on a Sunday afternoon to go down to Harbourfront and enjoy the many activities available. These are family times. People can take their families there and have a wonderful time.

In addition, tourists go there by the thousands and this has been nothing but a benefit to the community of metropolitan Toronto.

How might that be affected by this bill? I think it could very well be and the answer is simple: the bill is almost naked insofar as its provisions to the Harbourfront Corporation are concerned.

In section 40 the bill authorizes the Minister of Public Works to procure the dissolution of Harbourfront Corporation, period. No guidance; simply go ahead and dissolve Harbourfront Corporation. One looks a little bit further to see what kind of guidance there should be and what sorts of criteria there should be; should there be a bottom–line sale price, whatever. The next section talks about the minister directing the corporation "to sell or otherwise dispose of any or all of its assets".

No direction whatsoever. No indication at all of what the corporation should be doing or how the corporation should be dissolving its assets.

We look further. We continue to look for guidance. We look to subsection 3 of section 41. The Minister of Public Works is authorized to do what with the money from the sale? I quote:

> —to pay all or any part of the proceeds of any disposition of its assets—to such person and on such terms and conditions as are approved by the Governor in Council.

Who is the Governor in Council? It certainly is not the people of Canada, it is not the people of metropolitan Toronto. It is, in effect, the cabinet. The cabinet can make whatever decision it wants. There is no guidance in the legislation as to what that decision should be, could be or might be. No guidance whatsoever. There is guidance for the directors of Harbourfront Corporation because they are told that once receiving a direction from the minister, they are authorized to sell or dispose of the assets in accordance with the direction without any personal liability to the directors whatsoever.

Why might that be a problem? For one thing, let us talk about the people of the city of Toronto, the people of the municipality of metropolitan Toronto. We know that this issue has been considered by the municipality in its metropolitan council. We also know that metropolitan council believes that the lands which are currently in public ownership should not be sold for development.

One might wonder why. What is wrong with that? They address that issue and they indicate in their conclusion on page 5, which they have drawn to the attention of this government: "That the waterfront, in general, and Harbourfront specifically, is a regional resource, attracting not only residents of all six area municipalities, but residents from throughout the greater Toronto area, as well as a significant tourist population. It is therefore critical that the metropolitan interests in enhancing access to and along the waterfront be addressed".

Is there anything at all in Bill C–8 that addresses those issues? The answer is no. I have read sections 40 and 42. The other three sections are in effect legislative housekeeping. That is all. There is no guidance whatsoever.

We do know that the government has what I will call good intentions about an endowment fund, about the opportunity to protect this area for the citizens of metro Toronto and the surrounding region. What in heaven's name does that mean? What are good intentions? We have heard the phrase "the road to hell is paved with good intentions". Good intentions without legislation are meaningless. The phrase used to be "good intentions and 25 cents will buy you a cup of coffee". I guess today you could say "good intentions and 75 cents will buy you a cup of coffee". Good intentions are still worth nothing.

It must be in the legislation and it is not in the legislation. If it is not in the legislation, there is no guarantee that the people of metropolitan Toronto will have that area protected for them.

What is the future to be? We have absolutely no idea what the future is going to be. Citizens of metropolitan Toronto are left to wonder, as everyone in this House is left to wonder, as to precisely what is going to occur when this government in effect privatizes Harbourfront and gets out of the business. This is after years and years of investing the taxpayers' money to build up Harbourfront. The taxpayers have put money into it. Now it is going to be dissolved. Are we going to get any money? We do not know. It depends on the real estate prices. Are the developers going to benefit? We do not know, but it looks like it.

We certainly do not know what the people of metropolitan Toronto are going to get out of it which will be beneficial. At this point I see nothing and guarantees of nothing.

I have to oppose Bill C–8 because of the lack of provisions dealing with Harbourfront.

Mr. Mike Breaugh (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to get on the record some concerns that I have about the process that is before us in the form of Bill C–8. It is difficult for the public to follow all of this.

This afternoon we are debating a federal bill which has to do with the disposition of lands in metropolitan Toronto. That sounds like a fairly straightforward piece of business. The truth is that it is not. Those of us who have followed this for some time know that Harbourfront has been the subject of a number of inquiries by four or five different levels of government.

This has gone on in a strange way. Most of us in this Chamber would advocate that the public's business ought to be transacted in public; that is, that the public has a right to see how the transaction is put together, who benefits and what the consequences of that are. This process has gone on for some time.

I recall when Harbourfront was first proposed the first things that went up were the billboards announcing Harbourfront. This went through I think about three or four federal elections. I could never find Harbourfront, only the billboards were there. Then eventually there was a place that one could identify as Harbourfront. As it grew it became a very vibrant part of the metropolitan Toronto and I dare say many people would argue that it is an international attraction at this time, that there are people from all over the world who are attracted to the Harbourfront in Toronto and to all of the activities that go on around that space.

It does seem strange then that this successful operation is now being marketed rather on the sly. There are different levels of government, including the province of Ontario, the city of Toronto, metropolitan Toronto and the federal government negotiating the disposition of these lands and the subsequent settlements about who will continue to run the programming on those lands.

I for one would argue that this is fine if that is what governments want to do, but at the very least the public has a right to know. All of us who sat on municipal councils, for example, would know that we would be in deep trouble at this stage if we tried to take an asset of any municipality in Canada, sell it off behind closed doors and do some kind of a deal that might continue the operation. Anybody who is on a council can try that tonight. Go home and tell your people you want to sell off the rink and do not worry about the operation of the arena in future years, we will work out some deal on the side. The rest of the council would have your scalp, and it ought to. That is not the way that the public's business ought to be dealt with.

• (1530)

The concerns I have centre around the way that the process has evolved. It is not that I have anything against David Crombie or Darcy McKeough, two very fine people who have worked very hard to try to put together something. There are a number of civil servants who have tried to deal with the problem of Harbourfront and how to go through a transitional period.

My concerns are pretty straightforward. At this point I do not know what will happen with those lands. I do know that the city, Metro, and the province of Ontario have all encountered great difficulty with developing plans for Harbourfront. They have had great difficulty dealing with the development around there now. If you wanted to see the Harbourfront parklands in Toronto you really have to get a boat and and see it from the lake. You cannot see it from the city of Toronto. You can get there. You can walk along there but you certainly would never know that it is there from most of downtown Toronto.

It is liked by the people, it is actually a success and has become kind of a focal point for a great many cultural festivals and for artists who work there. A great many ordinary people go there on a Sunday afternoon and wander around. It is clearly something that the people like and want. It is generally acknowledged as being a good thing. Now, behind closed doors, a deal is being put together to get rid of these assets.

I think you need to know a little history of Harbourfront to understand that this is a place where parkland appears suddenly in the water; one of the few modern miracles. It is true that developers who dedicate parkland as part of a development project have found a new technique for creating parkland. They dump fill into the lake and that is proposed parkland agreed upon by three or four different levels of government. That is a strange phenomenon.

Now we are supposed to take this bill and say that we acknowledge that the development of the Harbourfront project in metro Toronto did not go exactly as people thought it would. The concept originally was to set all of the development back from the waterfront so that the public would continue to have access to the water and the parkland that were there. Subsequently there might be some high-rise development around it but it surely would not be set in place to block the view from the city of Toronto. That is what happened. We regret that.

I hope this will not be taken as a model. I am aware, as I am sure all members are, that all across the north shore of Lake Ontario there are harbours that used to be industrial harbours and are now controlled by federal agencies called harbour commissions. There is ongoing warfare in each and every one of those communities because the shipping industry is not what it used to be. Others are moving in and saying they would like to build some nice high-rise apartments on the harbour and sell them off as harbourfront property, just like in Toronto. It is precisely this scheme that is being looked at all across the north shore of Lake Ontario from Hamilton in my area right out to the town of Newcastle. That includes

projects already in the books, with plans proposed for places like Oshawa, Whitby, and Ajax.

The development industry is aware that this government is setting a pattern with this bill. I am concerned about that pattern. I would be much happier if we could follow the transactions which are taking place behind closed doors. I have a concern that the first phase of this project might look not too bad. It would not be hard for me to imagine that the Government of Canada would put together a deal with several private sector developers who provided a lot of money up front for the property.

The expectation is clear that the programming, the cultural activities, the access to the waterfront, and the use of the waterfront park will continue. It will not be interrupted. What is not clear is how that is going to be funded. Will the Government of Canada simply say as it has on a couple of other occasions: "Well, that's nice. We concluded our business. Somebody else pick it up and run with it from here"? I am sure that the city of Toronto is not quite prepared to accept this kind of international facility as being solely its responsibility, nor is metro, nor is the province of Ontario. I think the ongoing business dealings and the working out of details become more and more important as this bill nears the final stages. I think that part is important.

I want to sound, not a clarion call, but I want to sound a warning of danger here, as I see this as a model for harbourfront property all across Canada now in the possession of the federal government, if this process works at this one site in metropolitan Toronto. This is a government that has at least set its course fairly clearly. It loves to privatize things. The federal Government of Canada owns a lot of waterfront property all across this nation, at one time used very actively for harbour purposes, for ship-building purposes, but now not quite so active.

My concerns are very clear. If this turns out to be the way we do things in the future, if waterfront property owned by the federal government across Canada is dealt with in this way—that is to say a bill of this nature which says simply: "we want to privatize things, sell off some land", and then backroom deals on how the land is developed and how programming continues and what happens afterwards, and the rest is just left up in the air, if those deals are all private deals, struck with various civil servants or ministers of the Crown on what might happen, then I believe that the public has been gypped in this process.

The public initially paid a pretty hefty price for these lands. I think the public, as the property owners, have a right to know what the consequences of this bill and the subsequent transactions that are not a part of the bill will be, and what will happen in the future. They do not know that.

Any individual property owner who entered into this kind of negotiation would want to know all of the side bars. They would want to get their lawyers out and examine the fine print about what happens after the sale is concluded. People know that is important. The expectations of the public in Toronto, in metropolitan Toronto, in the province of Ontario, and indeed the taxpayers of Canada, who by and large funded this project initially, are to get something reasonable out of the sale.

Now there is no way for them to judge, because those negotiations are not a matter of public record yet, and probably will not be even after all the deals are concluded.

Those are my concerns. The initial problem of dealing with Harbourfront is hardly resolved by simply selling off the property. I do not think anybody would really advocate that.

However, there is a concern I have with the nature of going about that. Is it reasonable to say that all of the negotiations will be done virtually privately? That is quite wrong, it is a wrong way for a government to proceed. It is virtually immoral for any government to come forward with a bill of this nature which says, in very stark terms: "We want to privatize this particular harbourfront project", without full details accompanying it to explain to all of us just precisely how this thing is supposed to continue to operate. Is it the government's intent to turn it over to the private sector, lock, stock and barrel? That is, the physical assets of Harbourfront are sold now and somebody in the private sector is then supposed to arrange all of the cultural and artistic activities that will follow in years to come?

I understand that a developer would be very attracted to the notion of getting his or her hot little hands on this kind of prime waterfront property in downtown Toronto and operate some kind of programming on the side for a couple of years. I fail to see why they would have an interest in operating that for the next 20, 30, 40 or 50 years. The hard fact is that those developers, whatever their intentions might be today, are highly unlikely to be around and active in that project in 10 years. They will be long gone.

The nature of the development industry is to buy into a project like this, get something on the ground, get it sold, and get out of there. They do not see it as their responsibility—and I don't either—to run long-term cultural activities for metropolitan Toronto. I do not know of any developers around who have said: "It is our job as the private sector to run cultural activities for the next hundred years". I have never heard them say it and I doubt they would. I am sure many of them would say: "Well, if part of the condition of sale is that we do something for five years, we will be happy to do that because we can see where the end of that is".

I have many concerns about the specifics of this bill. I want to reiterate in closing my concerns about the pattern that is being set by this bill.

If this is the model that is to be used around Canada for disposing of waterfront property, this is the wrong model. I hope that it is not the model and that before this bill is concluded and dealt with by this House the minister would reply and give us the details of all the arrangements, all the little side bar agreements, concerning the continuing activities of Harbourfront.

• (1540)

I must admit that I know of a number of negotiations that are ongoing and of a number of people who have an interest. I do not know of any published accounts of the specifics of how it all will be handled, and I believe that to be crucial.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, we have some of the most magnificent land in North America, if not the world, in the harbourfront of Toronto. This is land which, through a public trust, has been developed into something which benefits not only the people of metropolitan Toronto, but Canadians as a whole. It has been converted to an asset the public can enjoy. It has enriched immeasurably our cultural life in Toronto through operations such as the artists' galleries, the theatres, the dance theatre, and events like the International Author's Festival, which has Harbourfront as its home and has put Canada on the map around the world as being a cultural centre, a country which nourishes its authors.

When we take the step of privatizing this land we must be assured that the public trust is looked after, that for the years to come the harbourfront will be a place for people, a place for enjoyment, a place for culture, not just a place for development. We have lots of places for development in this country. Does it have to be the choicest land in Toronto? Can we assure that, in perpetuity, the land will be devoted to these purposes? This is my question to the hon. member.

What assurance, with this bill before us, do we have that the activities commenced in such laudable fashion by Harbourfront will continue, that the people of Toronto and the people of Canada will continue to benefit in perpetuity the way they have in the past?

Mr. Breaugh: Mr. Speaker, that is precisely the nature of my concern. There is absolutely no guarantee from anyone on record that I could find ensuring that those kinds of activities will continue for anything but a very short period of time. That is my concern. We have developed something which is, to be honest about it, one of the few internationally recognized places that Canada has for arts and cultural activities, it is marketed that way and it functions that way. It is a real success. The whole deal is being done behind closed doors and may be long gone before anybody has a chance to examine it. I do not agree that Harbourfront should be privatized in the first instance. That is the first problem I have.

Even if I agreed that it was the proper route to go, then at least the Government of Canada has an obligation to conduct its public business publicly. That is not happening. By the time all of this is concluded, it may be literally impossible for anyone to do anything about it. That is wrong.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, I would like to compliment the member for his comments today. I certainly appreciate his sincerity and his concern about negotiations that are going on behind closed doors.

One of the key participants in the negotiations is the provincial NDP government. I know my friend has influence at Queen's Park these days. His comments are a criticism of Bob Rae and the NDP government as he is accusing his cousins at Queen's Park of being surreptitious in dealing with public affairs and public matters behind closed doors.

It is so unlike the NDP to be doing what they are doing at Queen's Park. Is my friend at all pleased with the way the provincial NDP government is handling this particular issue? Will the hon. member use his influence and the influence of the federal New Democratic Party to convince Bob Rae and the NDP, who have ultimate control over land development in the province of Ontario, that there should be no other development at the waterfront, that the waterfront should remain a place for people and that the privatization should not continue. At the very least, can the hon. member influence Bob Rae to send out a very clear message that his government will not allow any further development at the waterfront.

Mr. Breaugh: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is accusing me of criticizing Bob Rae, he is only about five years too late. I suppose that is consistent with him. If he is accusing me of saying that the Government of Ontario should not be the prime mover in all this, he is right. Unfortunately it is not. It is not setting the pattern for how this is handled. This is essentially being done by the federal government.

If he is accusing members of the province of Ontario of being supreme controllers of how this kind of land is developed in Ontario, he is wrong because they are not. I bet at this moment they wish they were.

I wish that the powers of the provincial government superseded the powers of the federal government. If that were the case then we could certainly put a stop to this. If we could get agreement here this afternoon to make that the case, if everybody in the House was quite happy to say "listen, the feds have botched this one up too; let us turn this over to the province of Ontario", I think we might actually get it all straightened out.

I would certainly use all the pitiful amount of influence I have with anybody to see that this process gets opened up just a bit more.

Just to conclude, one of the problems with this Harbourfront project and its history over the last little while is that no one level of government has clear responsibility over anything. I had a conversation with David Crombie, for example, on this matter. One of the things that he discovered is that there are some 50-odd agencies of different levels of government which have some measure of control over what happens in the Toronto harbour. That has been a major problem for everybody, because any time anyone wants to take some initiative, good or bad, the best that one can hope for is a stalemate, and that is wrong.

If the member wants to turn this over to the province of Ontario, I would be happy to do it. I am not sure the government would be prepared to do so, but, to tell you the truth, it would be a real good move on its part.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, my friend makes a point about the different levels of government and different agencies having jurisdiction. We know now that the federal government owns land at Habourfront. We know as well that the province of Ontario has jurisdiction over planning, which is delegated to municipalities, in this case the city of Toronto.

The federal government has control because it does not have to sell the land. The provincial government can simply say: "Pursuant to the authority that we have *vis-à-vis* development and land use at this particular site, we are not going to allow any more development". Bob Rae does have the opportunity here. I accept my friend's point that he has been in some disagreement with the premier for some time. His criticism is well taken.

With regard to the federal government, it would be my view that this bill should not proceed, that we ought not to privatize Harbourfront. This entity provides the cultural activities which include an art gallery, the dance theatre, a children's summer camp, outdoor festivals, book readings and park and waterfront activities. We should not be privatizing Harbourfront. As well, the federal government should not be selling land to private interest, especially when that land happens to be parkland and when that land happens to be at the waterfront in metropolitan Toronto.

We know that the politicians and the bureaucrats have really goofed when it comes to metropolitan Toronto. I do not know when you last visited Toronto, Mr. Speaker, but you know that a number of very ugly buildings have been built over the last number of years at the water's edge in metropolitan Toronto. I do not know how the provincial government, the municipal government or the federal government allowed that to happen. The fact

that it has happened leads us to question very seriously what is going on with this particular bill.

• (1550)

My friend raised the concern about private dealings behind closed doors. There is a lot of private dealing going on and this government should put a stop to it.

This bill does not clearly indicate what is to happen. It simply gives authority under section 40 to the minister:

> 40. (1) The Minister of Public Works is hereby authorized to procure, on behalf of Her Majesty in right of Canada, the dissolution of Harbourfront Corporation.
>
> (2) The Minister of Public Works may do all things and perform all acts necessary for or incidental to closing out the affairs of Harbourfront Corporation.

And section 41:

> 41. (1) Before Harbourfront Corporation is dissolved pursuant to section 40, the Minister of Public Works may direct the Corporation to sell or otherwise dispose of any or all of its assets, including shares of any other corporation—

One of the main assets that Harbourfront has is land. What is proposed—I cannot understand it for the life of me—is that public land owned by the Government of Canada is to be sold to private interests to put up expensive, luxury condominiums so developers can make a lot of money and so that rich people can have a coined with a balcony looking out over the beautiful water of Lake Ontario.

Mr. Langlois: What is wrong with that?

Mr. Nunziata: The Conservative member opposite says there is nothing wrong with the federal government selling public parkland in order to benefit the rich and wealthy.

There are a lot of poor people and not so poor people in metropolitan Toronto who cannot escape to Roscoe Lake on the hot summer weekends in order to boat at their cottages.

A lot of residents of metropolitan Toronto have the waterfront for their recreation during the summer months.

This government is proposing to sell that very valuable asset. Why? Not to reduce the deficit. We know that the government has gone to extremes in order to reduce the national deficit, but it says it wants to sell part of the land in order to create a trust fund so that Harbourfront can be financed in perpetuity.

In other words, sell public parkland to developers. Let them make hundreds of millions of dollars building luxury condominiums or luxury hotels on the waterfront. The revenue from the sale of this land will go into a little trust fund and the interest, whether 10, 11 or 12 per cent a year, will be used to carry on these very worth-while activities, including children's summer camp, summer festivals and book reading.

The responsibility to provide those programs is the responsibility of government, whether it is the federal government, the provincial government or the two municipal governments; the city of Toronto and metropolitan Toronto.

It is penny wise and pound foolish for the government to be selling assets in order to create trust funds in order to carry on certain activities.

If one were to advance this type of philosophy or logic on the part of the Government of Canada, then why does it not sell the House of Commons? Why does it not sell the lawn in front of the Peace Tower to private interests? One would have all kinds of private business interested in securing the rights to the lawn in front of the House of Commons.

We can still have the right to debate in the Chamber, but the money could be used in order to pay for MP's salaries or expenses. It is nonsense and it ought not to be done. We should not be selling public land or parkland in order to finance programs. I would hope that this government will realize the terrible mistake it is making. It may think that it has a short-term solution to the problems at Harbourfront. It does not want to continue funding the activities at Harbourfront.

Future generations, our children and our grandchildren, will look back to the decision of this particular Conservative government and say: "What absolute and utter nonsense, what stupidity for the government 20 or 30 years ago to sell public land on the waterfront in metropolitan Toronto to private interests". It just does not make any sense at all. That land should be developed

as parkland. It should remain in public hands. The waterfront is for the people of metropolitan Toronto, the people of Ontario and the people of Canada and it should be developed as such.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt): Mr. Speaker, we rise today to talk about friends of the Conservative government at the trough. This has been done constantly since 1984. We remember what the Prime Minister said during the campaign of 1984: "No other appointments will be done until every breathing and living Tory has been appointed".

Who the Tories do not appoint through different agencies they tend to take care of themselves. We have clearly seen Huang Danczkay at the airport in Toronto. The name Huang Danczkay comes up again when we talk about the waterfront.

This government wants to do away with a beautiful small property that is left in downtown Toronto. It wants to sell it like it has sold other things to its rich friends, people who come to the trough. What are we going to see? We are going to see condominiums 20 and 30 storeys high blocking the view of the average person in Toronto going to the lake, even though it is polluted.

I notice that my friends from the NDP are not here to listen to this. During the provincial campaign all sorts of promises were made about how this was going to be taken care of. It has not happened.

I want to go back in history and talk about Route Canada. I notice that the Minister of State for Multiculturalism and Citizenship is here and he is taking a great interest and taking notes. I also will try to tell him that what this government has done is an injustice to the Canadian public. It is an injustice to all of us and to our children.

CN Express was sold for roughly $29 million in 1985–86. It was turned into Route Canada. The person who bought CN Express could not even get a credit card and yet we gave him part of Canada. He went running to the bank. He said: "Mr. friendly banker, I've got this white elephant that the government is giving me. How much money will you give me?" The bank looks at the deal and says: "Oh, it's a good deal. We're going to give you $50 million". He used that money. He bought Jaguars and he financed telephones and fax machines in its cars in the middle eighties. That was unheard of.

There was a deal struck between Route Canada buyers and the Canadian government which said that the employees of Route Canada should be kept on for three years. Eighteen months later that agreement was no longer valid. When the government was asked to open all the books and show what it has done, it found all kinds of excuses. One minister said: "I was not in power then. It was this minister". Like usual, we shuffle the deck, we have musical chairs of cabinet ministers and there is no responsibility as we clearly saw a couple of days ago in the Al-Mashat case.

Then came Air Canada. The Minister for International Trade said: "It's going to be a great deal to privatize this. It is going to be a great deal". The Canadian public was saying no. Did the government across the way listen? It was deaf. There was nothing there for it. It had ear plugs on and it was not even paying attention. The results: just a couple of months after this was taking place, 2,900 jobs were lost; VIA cutbacks and the list goes on and on and on. Now Harbourfront. Where will it end?

• (1600)

Some people say the Liberal Party is not for privatization. If it is a fair value market, if we are going to put what this land is worth on the table and if we are going to get a fair market value, then everybody in this House will support privatization. The government across the way is doing a gross injustice to the Canadian public. Time after time the Canadian public is raped, by either careless mistakes or intentional doings of this government.

I would not doubt for a single minute that we are going to have a fire sale in the next couple of months and this government is going to put right outside this House: "Fire sale. Our national parks are up for sale".

Do you know what is going to happen? When we go to visit our national parks there will be somebody at the toll booth and he is going to say: "It is $30 or $40 for you to get in. Canadian public, we are going to take you to the cleaners".

"People of Canada, we want to please our friends. We want to please the people who put us here. We want to please big businesses". It was those big businesses that during the elections bought the ads and in 1988 sank millions of dollars to turn the voting public. They sank millions of dollars to tell the Canadian people that free trade was going to be good for them. We have clearly

seen that the free trade legislation, since its implementation has cost Ontario, my home province, 200,000 jobs. Where will it stop?

I want to return to the Harbourfront issue because it is very important for me, my children and the children of the three million Canadians who call the greater metropolitan Toronto area their home. Some of the members across the way might be from other parts, but when they have the opportunity to visit Toronto, one landmark they always come to see is Ontario Place, the Canadian National Exhibition, and then they see this beautiful park.

Mr. Weiner: In your riding?

Mr. Karygiannis: That is not my riding. The minister across the way says "in my riding". I welcome him any time to come to my riding, because the lesson that the Canadian people gave to the Conservative member of my riding before is the same lesson that this government will receive in 1992 or 1993. If it has the guts it will call an election today. I notice there are some ministers in this House today. Maybe they can take that message back to the Prime Minister. Maybe when he comes back from Hong Kong they can say: "Why don't you call an election?"

Mr. Speaker, I notice you are telling me to stay on the subject. It is a gross indecency when we say to the Canadian public that we are going to sell this small property, this stamp of a land, for $36 million, when we fully well know that it is worth ten times as much.

Petro-Canada, which the minister wants to put on the block, has a value figure of roughly $.8 billion. In my riding alone there are something like 15 Petro-Canada stations. They are located at the most prominent corners. Every corner is worth at least $2 million to $3 million; $45 million in one riding alone. What if you multiply that by 295 ridings across this country? How much is Petro-Canada worth? What is the real market value of everything that this governments wants to put on the block?

Just recently and today we have seen the minister rise up and say that the Canada Post Corporation is making money. It is only making money on paper. Why? I have a gut feeling that it is going to be next on the chopping block.

As we continue discussions, it turns my stomach upside down, on a daily basis, to listen to the average Canadians, to listen to the unemployed Canadians, to listen to Canadians who say enough with this country and move down south because of the carelessness of this government.

The Toronto harbourfront is verging on disaster. We cannot swim in the lakes any more. Don River is a disaster. Instead of using some of that money to clean these places up, we are going to sell them and give them to our rich friends.

When landing on Toronto island, coming across from Oshawa there are the Scarborough Bluffs. Thank God they are not owned by this government because it would probably put them on the block. Then there is downtown. The only thing to see is a wall of high-rises. There is a little stamp of land there called Harbourfront. We are going to see high-rises there very soon because this government will probably have its way. This government will probably turn around and rape the people of Canada in a gross indecency, but the people of Canada in 1992 will take care of this government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—employment; the hon. member for Ottawa West—Public Service; the hon. member for Saint-Léonard—economy.

Adjournment Debate

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, on May 14—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am sorry. I would just like to remind the hon. member that we are under new rules of four minutes plus two minutes from the government.

Mr. Allmand: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I read the rules from cover to cover.

On May 14, I put a question to the Prime Minister regarding the unemployment situation in Montreal. I referred to a recent report indicating that 25 per cent of Montrealers were on unemployment insurance or welfare.

According to the recent statistics, Montreal has the highest urban unemployment rate in Canada and the highest urban poverty rate in Canada. Despite these shocking statistics, the government, in the Speech from the Throne, promised a number of new jobs by the year 2000.

If the government is really interested in the unemployment problem, why is it setting targets for the year 2000 when the needs are in 1991?

The question I put on May 14 was why do we not have a target, an agenda or a program for creating jobs this year, in 1991, to deal with the situation in Montreal and other places in Canada where there are high unemployment rates.

Well, the Prime Minister did not answer my question, and the minister who did answer my questions gave me no answer whatsoever. He referred to a few marginal programs that the government set up in Montreal and said they were working well. How can anyone believe that sort of bumph? He says they are working well, yet there is nearly a 25 per cent combined unemployment and welfare rate in Montreal. Montreal has the highest unemployment figures in Canada and the minister says they are working well.

Just three days later, three days after I asked that initial question, Pascal's, a business that has been a successful business in Montreal for 87 years, went bankrupt. Twenty-one stores closed and 1,600 employees lost their jobs.

This government is a government of rhetoric, of overstatement and of exaggeration. It makes such outlandish statements that nobody believes anything it says any more.

When the economy was improving in 1984, the government took full credit for all the jobs that were being created. If the government had the recipe for job creation in 1985 and 1986, if it had the formula to create jobs then, why is it not producing that recipe today?

Why is it not laying down targets and programs for job creation in 1991 when the unemployment rate is over 10 per cent in Canada and when there are more than 1 million Canadians without work? In Montreal, we have a disaster zone.

If the government was really responsible and if it really had the answers and formulas for job creation, it would carry them out. The government would put them forward.

I will repeat my question. It is a simple one. Instead of a timetable for jobs for the year 2000—and I am not opposed to a timetable for jobs for the year 2000—why does it not give us a timetable for jobs for the year 1991?

I do not want an answer to some question that I have not asked at all. I will warn the public observing this debate that I will probably get some parliamentary secretary giving me an answer that was prepared by some civil servant somewhere that will have nothing to do with my question, confirming my point that this is a government of nonsense.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce said, he is indeed being answered by a parliamentary secretary, but I will try to give him as logical an answer as possible that will deal with his concerns.

Mr. Speaker, our government has set up and implemented many medium- and long-term strategies to stimulate Montreal's economy and thus the economy of Quebec. Further to the CRESSOM report, Employment and Immigration Canada will contribute $32.5 million over the next five years to help community groups and municipal bodies find long-term solutions for the problems of restructuring Montreal's disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

In the field of training, Mr. Speaker, Employment and Immigration Canada spent $2 million in November 1990 to set up a petrochemical training centre in eastern Montreal. We are answering the call of the petrochemical industry, which needs skilled workers.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce that Montreal will receive its fair share of a new labour force development strategy that increases by $800 million the funds to train the unemployed, welfare recipients, older workers and young people. Furthermore, the jobs strategy programs help nearly 8,000 individuals. In 1990-91, $32 million was spent on training programs in Montreal.

I would also like to remind the hon. member that from September 1984 to April 1991, net employment increased by 96,000 in the Montreal area. Under the previous government, from 1980 to 1984, Montreal lost 4,000 jobs.

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak further on the question I posed in the House yesterday concerning the unequal treatment of women in the Public Service of Canada.

I want to repeat the basic fact that nearly half the people working for the Public Service of Canada are women. In the management category of the Public Service of Canada, they number less than 16 per cent.

Clearly, consistent discrimination is at work to recognize people for promotion based not on what they can do but what the shape of their body is. The same barriers apply to people of visible minorities, aboriginal Canadians and people with disabilities.

I am not going to focus on them. I have spoken on them often in the House, and I will again. Today, I want to focus particularly on the status of women.

The Public Service Commission's annual report is merely the latest proof that simply setting targets to eliminate barriers to hiring advancement and promotion has failed to bring about real change.

The task force on barriers to women in the Public Service, which reported just a year ago last month, made it absolutely clear that the reason women do not advance in the Public Service of Canada is a cultural bias against women. It is not something that employers consciously do. It is just that, particularly at the senior levels, for all their working lives they have been surrounded by managers who happened to be male. Their whole image of successful managers is seen in male terms.

The government has talked about the few women it has appointed—and I am pleased to see the improvements—through Order in Council appointments, but these are small and insignificant measures. It is what happens to women in their everyday working lives for the Government of Canada that determines whether or not they are going to be able to support their families to the same measure, whether they are going to be able to progress and succeed, using the brains and talent they have in the best interests of their country.

Others have said it better than I, but a woman pays as much for a loaf of bread as a man does. A women pays as much for her children's shoes as a man does. She does not deserve to earn only 55 cents for every dollar a man does. It is not that women in the Public Service are less educated. They happen to be better educated than males in the Public Service.

The government talks about women in the management category. Some progress has been made. It went from a little over 14 per cent last year to a little over 15 per cent this year. Out of a management category of over 4,000 people, less than 1,000 are women. That is not right and that is not just. Examining who gets promoted, who gets hired, who gets appointed, who gets the opportunity for lateral transfers to broaden their experience, clearly explains why. Less than 25 per cent of promotions were women. Less than 25 per cent of appointments from outside into the management category were women. Barely over 20 per cent of appointments within the management category were women. Less than 20 per cent of lateral transfers, which are an opportunity to broaden experience, were women.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret the hon. member's time has expired. The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address briefly the question raised by the hon. member concerning the so-called barrier to women in the Public Service. She certainly realizes that great efforts and progress have been made in the last few years in that respect, especially by our government.

We too realize that much progress is yet to be made. The Prime Minister has repeatedly said in the House that this government will continue to make every effort possible in order to change and improve the situation.

I commend the hon. member for raising this matter again today. I would like to give my assurance that every effort will be made by the government to continue to improve that situation.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Therefore this House now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 o'clock a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 4.20 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 24, 1991

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni) moved:

That in the opinion of this House, the government should take into full account the budgetary reality of the provinces and municipalities involved in Royal Canadian Mounted Police contract negotiations and therefore be prepared to negotiate a contract for RCMP services which does not unfairly transfer policing costs from the federal government to provincial and municipal governments.

He said: Madam Speaker, for the benefit of members and people watching this debate, we in the NDP are calling on the government to renegotiate in good faith fair policing contracts for those provinces which use the RCMP as their provincial and municipal police forces.

We believe this is an extremely urgent issue for Canadians because it touches on some of the most important issues that Canadians are debating today.

First and foremost is the national unity debate. As a result of Tory ideology, which has undermined or destroyed many of the national institutions and symbols that Canadians hold dear, such as the national passenger rail service, Canada Post, the privatization of Air Canada and Petro-Canada and the continuing attack on the CBC, many Canadians feel that the symbols and the structures underlying Canadian unity have been undermined almost to the point of destruction by implementation of Tory policy.

The Tories have justified their attack on Canadian institutions by saying that these institutions cost too much in this day and age. As many political observers have said, Tories seem to know the cost of everything and the value of nothing. As a result, this country is facing its worst and possibly its last unity crisis.

The second issue in terms of the debate on the RCMP police contracts is the way that the Tories have handled the crisis in budgets and programs of the federal government. The recent Tory budget has cut back on transfers to the provinces, transfers which support cost-shared programs such as hospitals, post-secondary education, social services and other programs in the provinces in order to maintain a decent and level standard of equality services all across this country. As a result of those federal cutbacks, Canadians in various parts of the country are going to be receiving different qualities of service based on the ability of the provinces to support.

• (1010)

The Tories have also cut back income support programs such as family allowance and old age pensions, which are also seen as the basis of national unity in this country and which give every Canadian in every part of this country a fair shake regardless of place of residence. The criterion for eligibility for these programs is simply being Canadian. Now the federal Tories, based on their ideology, have begun to tinker with these programs so that Canadians cannot access them equally, depending on where they live in the country, on income, and other things.

All of these national institutions, whether based on social programs or on national institutions and symbols such as the CBC, the communications system, the rail transportation system, or the Canada Post system, are being undermined. Canadians are losing a fundamental understanding of what really underlies this nation, something we have treasured over the last 125 years.

There is one national symbol of Canada that is recognized all across this country and all around the world. That symbol is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police which was established as the North-West Mounted Police in the 1870s. That police force was a federal police force which was designed to bring law and order and orderly development to the west at a time when Canadians were viewing the chaos taking place in the United States. Canadians felt that a police force was necessary to bring good government, law and order, and good policing to western Canada. The North-West Mounted Police later became the national police of

Canada and the police force in many of the provinces and municipalities of Canada; a great deal of respect has accrued to that police force both in the country and around the world.

It is very difficult to identify any other symbol which might be more representative of Canada than the red serge uniform of the RCMP. When somebody comes to the Canadian capital they have their picture taken with an RCMP officer in the dress uniform.

In provincial capitals they do the same thing. In citizenship court one of the symbols of Canada that is evident along with the flag and the coats of arms is the red serge uniform of the RCMP. It is seen as a symbol of Canada both nationally and internationally.

In renegotiating the terms of the contracts with the provinces which use the RCMP in their municipalities, the Solicitor General and the Government of Canada are taking an intransigent position in demanding that the municipalities and provinces pay a higher share of the cost. In doing so, the federal government is putting even the institution of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in jeopardy.

What it is telling the provinces and municipalities which contract for those RCMP services is that it is going to raise the price so high and make policing such a burden on the taxpayers that there is now an option. They can create their own municipal police force or provincial police force and the federal government will get out of that area of policing entirely.

There are going to be serious repercussions across Canada in terms of national unity and in terms of recognition of the symbols and institutions of this country if the government proceeds in its hard-nosed intransigent stance in dealing with the Canadian provinces and municipalities which contract for RCMP services.

One of the major contractors for the services of the RCMP is the province of British Columbia, the province from which I come. According to the Union of B.C. Municipalities, which has put together substantial research on this issue, 27 per cent of the RCMP force in Canada is in B.C.; out of 15,000 RCMP members 4,000 are posted to British Columbia.

The province of British Columbia is also a major contractor for Royal Canadian Mounted Police services. Out of 8,000 contracting RCMP members, 3,100 of those are posted in British Columbia. Thirty-nine per cent of all the contracted provincial police services through the RCMP are contracted within that province. That same thing applies to members of the RCMP who are contracted at the provincial level.

This is a very important issue for municipalities within the province of British Columbia because they employ 1,900 out of the 3,000 RCMP members contracted to municipalities across Canada. That is, 63 per cent of all the members of the force who are contracted to municipalities work in the municipalities of British Columbia, serving close to a million and a half British Columbians.

This is a very important issue in British Columbia. I do not want to understate how important it is in western Canada as well. The RCMP has been the traditional police force in western Canada since the North-West Mounted Police originated in the 1870s.

We are concerned about the effect on British Columbia. Municipalities have advised us that if the federal government persists with its intransigent position in RCMP contract negotiations, it is going to cost the municipalities of that province an additional $12.5 million annually to support the RCMP. That translates over the 10-year term of the contract into an additional $125 million being bled out of those municipalities to support police services.

In the case of the government of the province of British Columbia which contracts to the RCMP for its provincial police, it means an additional $27 million a year to a government which has just budgeted a $395 million deficit.

We are talking about a province unable to pay those kinds of increases and municipalities within that province which are unable to pass on those kinds of increases to their taxpayers without creating a serious burden. It will be a burden on taxpayers which in addition to other federal taxes such as excise taxes, fuel taxes, goods and services taxes, increased income taxes, increased charges for all federal services, and another tax increase passed on to municipal property owners and residents as a result of the policing contracts with the federal government is going to be absolutely impossible to bear. These costs run so high for municipalities in British Columbia right now—some municipalities pay up to 37 per cent of their revenues for policing costs—that there may be no legal avenue for them to pass those costs on to property taxes.

What we are talking about here is another element of Conservative policy that is involved in this debate: the aspect of constantly increasing taxes on the lower and middle classes in this country which are being expected to support these kinds of services when the federal government is fully capable of providing services at the current cost-sharing level.

• (1020)

I just wanted to mention some of the impacts on municipalities within my riding, and I will quote from some of the mayors in the riding of Comox—Alberni. For example, Mayor Ron Webber of Courtenay, British Columbia, has said that over the past years the presence of the RCMP has provided a cost effective and efficient method of providing total policing for federal and municipal responsibilities.

It is also an important factor in maintaining a federal presence in our community and contributes greatly to preserving a sense of national identity in these threatened times.

The increase proposed by the federal government represents a 17.35 per cent increase in a single year and would result in a 5.4 per cent increase in municipal property tax rates.

It should also be pointed out that this analysis is based on the city's fiscal year, which is the calendar year, and that the impact of the federal proposal for a full fiscal year at the new tax rates would result in a 25 per cent increase in the cost of policing services for that small municipality and a 7.8 per cent increase in tax rates.

For communities like Courtenay, British Columbia, a 25 per cent increase in policing costs and a 7.8 per cent increase in taxing based on those costs and on the federal contract proposal are simply far too much for those municipalities and those taxpayers to bear.

As a result, they are going to be forced into a position either of cutting back on police services at a time when we are reading in *The Ottawa Citizen* that women in communities such as Ottawa are fearful of going out at night in their own neighbourhoods because of danger to their physical well-being.

Now is not the time to start cutting back on RCMP services or on the fairness of cost distribution among the federal government, the provinces and the municipalities.

Now is the time for the federal, provincial, and municipal governments to be maintaining and improving services. It is time for the federal government to accept its share of the responsibility so that men and women in our communities across Canada can feel safe going out at night in their neighbourhoods.

Now is not the time to start pushing this kind of contract proposal on to the provinces and municipalities in western Canada. Now is the time when they can least afford to bear it.

I would also like to quote the mayor of Port Alberni, the city where I live. He says: "A prime example of the federal benefit of municipal policing is their front line enforcement against drug offences. This is an area of federal policing responsibility which is handled on a more cost effective basis by contract police forces. If it were not for municipal contracts, the cost to the federal government would most assuredly be increased".

The mayor of Port Alberni and I do not always agree, but in this case we are absolutely in agreement.

If the federal government persists in its intransigent position with respect to increasing costs to the province and the municipalities within the province of British Columbia, it is going to persuade some of those municipalities to go to municipal police forces.

It may persuade the province to go to a provincial police force, and we are going to end up with the kind of balkanized police jurisdiction where the transfer of information either slows down or does not exist.

We are going to have a situation similar to that in the United States where they have local police, county police, state police and the national police force, the FBI. Information transfer between those police agencies is often extremely difficult, if it exists at all.

There is often a confusion over jurisdiction on issues which are seen to be federal, state, local or county. As a result, police services in the United States often break down and do not perform as effectively as they should.

I do not think that there is anyone in Canada or around the world who is not aware of the effectiveness of the RCMP as a national police force, a provincial police force, and as a municipal police force.

Part of the reason for the effectiveness of that force is that it is able to integrate its services at all three levels of government. Its communications systems operate between the three levels of government and for that reason it is far more effective.

I hope that members in this House will support the resolution that I have put forward, will do their best to persuade the Solicitor General and the Government of Canada that the cost base of the RCMP contract in western Canada is appropriate, that we should not be trying to force increases in the provincial or the municipalities' share, and that the federal government should be accepting its full responsibility. If not, the result, as I have pointed out, is to jeopardize national unity. The result will further increase the tax burden on the provinces and the municipalities, while at the same time reduce the effectiveness of policing at the very time in Canada when we would like to increase the security and the safety of our citizens, at the very time in Canada when people are beginning to be afraid to go out in their own neighbourhoods.

I urge members to support this resolution. I also urge the Solicitor General to support this resolution and get down to the business of negotiating, in good faith, with the western provinces and the municipalities that contract with the federal government for RCMP services.

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Madam Speaker, I am absolutely astounded that the member from lotus land wants other Canadian taxpayers to subsidize policing services in British Columbia.

British Columbia has an economy that is doing better than any other province in the country. Right now, for example, in Ontario we are having a very difficult time. I find it very odd that the member should be demanding that we pay for his province's policing services.

The RCMP can certainly stay there, but British Columbia should pay the cost of its own policing. Local control means that we have local funding for the level of policing that we want in our community. That should not be paid for by other Canadian taxpayers.

Certainly national unity is not dependent on subsidies.

Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Madam Speaker, I think if the member had any understanding or experience of British Columbia at all, instead of insulting it by calling it lotus land, she would know that in communities like mine we have just lost over 400 jobs in the plywood industry. There is some question as to whether some of those communities in western Canada are going to survive. Much of the losses are a result of Tory trade policy.

Perhaps the hon. member should spend a little more time in British Columbia to learn exactly how much British Columbia contributes, not simply to its own economy, but to the economy of Canada as a whole.

We are very proud, as British Columbians, that we have never stinted in providing the revenue from our resources and the income taxes and other taxes that hard-working British Columbians pay. We pay our share, and more.

What we are asking in terms of police services is that we get a little bit of that back. We are not asking for the whole amount back. We are asking that we get a little bit of the revenues that we pay to the federal government back in order to provide a decent standard of police services in the province of British Columbia.

I can tell the hon. member that British Columbians are not going to receive very well the insult of that Tory member calling British Columbia lotus land.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Madam Speaker, I could hardly believe my ears when I heard the member for Don Valley North insult the three million Canadians who live in British Columbia by calling it lotus land. The member should visit the province.

• (1030)

I finally discovered this morning what those opposite are trying to do. The Prime Minister is trying to get the Republican nomination for vice-president in the next election. How is he trying to do it? He is trying to turn Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa and every city within driving distance of the border into shopping suburbs of New York, Buffalo and places like that. In the case of the member's constituency, he is trying to turn Toronto into a shopping suburb of Buffalo.

Where has the hon. member been. Does she not realize that 400,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in Ontario in the last 18 months? Where has she been for the last 18 months?

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member is an experienced member and he knows that his comments should be addressed to the hon. member for Comox—Alberni's speech and not from a comment from another member.

Mr. Kilgour: Madam Speaker, I was about to get to the question for the member from British Columbia.

How many young British Columbians joined the RCMP? Is it not one of the few federal agencies with which they have a chance to take positions and have careers? Does he have the figures on that, and perhaps for western Canada as a whole?

Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his questions. I also thank him for his comments on the previous questioner. I feel that they should not have gone without a response because they were so far off the mark.

No, unfortunately I do not have the numbers of British Columbians joining the RCMP and so I cannot provide that information.

As aboriginal affairs critic for the New Democratic Party in the House of Commons I am concerned, for example, about the number of aboriginal people who enter the RCMP. The department of indian affairs pays a substantial amount to the RCMP for native auxiliary RCMP. The RCMP does not even meet the quota that the department of indian affairs funds. The RCMP is subsidized by the department of indian affairs but does not deliver the number of aboriginal police officers they should be delivering.

I cannot provide the hon. member with the number of British Columbians who join the RCMP on an annual basis, but I will definitely look it up. There are some problems with recruitment which have been identified in a number of the justice studies across Canada.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, I do have one quick question for the member from Vancouver Island.

In my area the proposed cutbacks in RCMP funding by the federal government have resulted in what can charitably be described as ill will toward the current government from people across Alberta. This is a major factor contributing to the growing unlikelihood of the re-election of Conservative members in Alberta. I was wondering if the same holds true in British Columbia.

Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Madam Speaker, the likelihood of a Conservative member being elected in British Columbia is very remote at this point. It is about as remote as the possibility of a federal election. In fact, I am told that 14 per cent of the population believe that the Conservative government is doing a good job and 15 per cent believe they saw Elvis Presley in the 7-Eleven last week. What is really scary is that some of those are the same people.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Madam Speaker, yesterday the Royal Canadian Mounted Police celebrated its birthday. In 1873, the North-West Mounted Police was founded. It was later to become known as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The RCMP, as was indicated, is an important national symbol for Canadians. It is one of the most important national symbols that we have in Canada.

People world wide know about the RCMP. In fact, they make movies in Hollywood about the RCMP and the work of the RCMP. It is well known that the RCMP always gets their person.

The federal government is now bent on wiping out the RCMP in western Canada and in Atlantic Canada. At present, the RCMP acts as the provincial police force in eight of the 10 provinces and in the two territories. The federal government also contracts the RCMP to municipalities in those eight provinces.

In the provinces of Quebec and Ontario, there are provincial police forces. In the province of Ontario we have the OPP and in Quebec the *Sûreté du Québec*. Those of us who reside and have our constituencies in Ontario and Quebec do not realize how important the RCMP is to western Canada and to western Canadians.

Over the last number of months, in fact over the last year, the government has been negotiating a new contract, and has acted in bad faith. The old contract expired on March 31 of this year. The present Solicitor General is sitting in the House today. He is responsible for negotiating this new contract with the provinces to ensure that the RCMP continue to provide the important and essential services it provides in western and Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Kilgour: He is also an Ontario member.

Mr. Nunziata: That previous contract expired and the government, in advance of the expiration of that previous contract, said it was not prepared to bend at all regarding the proposal it had put forward to renegotiate the contract. This is a new 10-year contract that will see the relationship continue from this year until the year 2001.

The contract expired and the contract services continue, but under no contract. The government has been totally intransigent in terms of negotiating in good faith.

At present the federal government pays 30 per cent of the cost of those services in western Canada. The member for North York should know that the provinces and municipalities in western Canada pay the lion's share, 70 per cent, of the cost of RCMP services in western Canada and in Atlantic Canada.

The government is proposing to cut the federal share to 25 per cent. As well, the Government of Canada, through the Solicitor General, wants to impose additional administrative costs on the municipalities and the provincial governments. That will mean an additional cut of $79 million from the federal government. At present the federal government's share is some $251 million.

It is my view that these cuts are part of a systematic and deliberate program to dismember and destroy our country and the national symbols that exist in Canada that promote national identity and Canadianism. In seven short years—long years to a lot of us on this side of the House—this government has systematically cut institutions right across the board. It started by dismantling FIRA, the Foreign Investment Review Agency. It is privatizing Petro-Canada. It has privatized Air Canada. It is in the process of privatizing Harbourfront in metropolitan Toronto. It has cut the CBC. It is cutting Canada Post. It has destroyed VIA Rail and now is bent on destroying the RCMP in western Canada.

What is the agenda? I believe that is a fair question to ask.

Mr. Kilgour: Brian wants to run as vice-president in the U.S.

Mr. Nunziata: My friend from Alberta says that the Prime Minister wants to run for vice-president of the United States.

• (1040)

The cynics among us would tend to agree that the government's agenda includes the gradual disintegration of our country and integration into the United States.

Municipalities will be hard hit by these proposals of the federal government. In effect, what the federal government is trying to do is reduce the deficit on the backs of municipalities in western Canada and in Atlantic Canada. They are trying to off-load expenses, in this case $79 million this year.

When you consider the importance and the benefit of the RCMP in western Canada, it really makes you wonder about the government's priorities. It seems to be able to find money, left and right, to accommodate the friends of the Tory government, friends of the Prime Minister, and friends of cabinet ministers, giving them all kinds of untendered contracts. The government is paying legal fees for Sinclair Stevens, $500,000, and $5 million to conduct a royal commission of inquiry into the conduct of a former Conservative cabinet minister who was found to be in breach 17 or 18 times over of the conflict of interest guidelines.

The government seems to be able to find money when it comes to accommodating its own interests. But when it comes to dealing with some important matters that face Canadians, it does not seem to be able to find the necessary resources. Is it any wonder that western Canadians sense this growing alienation when people from central Canada, the Conservative Party, and Conservative members like the hon. member for North York speak the way they do, showing a total lack of understanding and a total ignorance of what is happening in western Canada?

Here we have the Solicitor General from Ontario, Orillia of all places, acting in bad faith in negotiating this new contract. What will the federal cuts actually mean to the various provinces that are affected? In the province of British Columbia the extra cost will be $120 million over the 10-year period of this contract. In the province of Alberta the extra cost will be $15 million. In fact, municipalities within the province of Alberta are considering establishing their own police forces. In the city of Red Deer, for example, the additional cost has led municipal leaders there to seriously consider establishing their own police force, thereby eliminating the presence of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

In the province of Saskatchewan, in the town of Rosthern, they are considering establishing their own police force in view of the proposals of the federal government.

In the province of Manitoba the federal proposal will mean an additional $90 million over the life of the contract.

In Nova Scotia the federal proposal will mean that the municipalities in the province will have to pay 23 per cent more in the first year of the new contract, $9 million more annually.

The province of New Brunswick, which became fed up with federal irresponsibility in this area some time ago, established its own highway patrol, thereby taking that responsibility away from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. There, too, the province suffered substantially.

It has gone back to the RCMP because it believes the force provides an excellent service. The RCMP is highly respected right across the country. It is one of the most respected police forces anywhere in the world and, if this government has its way, it will systematically slash and cut and destroy the RCMP in western Canada.

We know that this arrangement, negotiated by the previous government, in which the RCMP contracts its services to the provinces in western Canada and to municipalities, results in a significant cost saving for taxpayers. For example, in the province of Quebec the per capita cost for policing is $170. In Ontario that cost is $155. That includes, of course, all the various police forces that exist in the two provinces. In the municipality that I represent we have the Metropolitan Toronto Police, the Ontario Provincial Police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, all providing police services.

The cost in B.C. to provide police services is $127 per capita. From $170 in Quebec, $155 in Ontario, to $127 in British Columbia, you can see, Madam Speaker, the significant cost saving for this arrangement.

The member for North York would have people believe, or is suggesting that the benefit is only to the provinces in question, that the provinces and municipalities which contract for these services are benefiting, and that the fat cats in Ontario and Quebec are in effect footing the bill or paying the cost of policing in those particular provinces and municipalities.

The member forgets that there is significant benefit to the federal government and to the federal taxpayer with this particular arrangement, remembering of course that the federal government is only paying 30 per cent of the cost and that there are federal taxpayers in the western provinces who pay their taxes to Ottawa every April and from every pay.

What are the benefits to the federal government, to the national government? We have spoken about the visible national symbol. We cannot attach a price tag to that in terms of the benefit to Canadians. We have a national police force, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The men and women who serve Canada well are seen as an international symbol.

When you are in western Canada and you see the RCMP, you see Canada. You see security. You see a highly respected police officer who works hard and diligently on the part of Canadians. Wherever you travel in western Canada, you see that national presence.

The RCMP is one of the few institutions in Canada that provides that national presence. We have Petro-Canada stations across the country. We have Air Canada across the country. But the RCMP comes into contact day in and day out with people, providing that service.

If the federal government had its way, as you travelled through western Canada you would see a separate police force in Calgary, a separate police force in Lethbridge, a separate police force in Red Deer, a separate police force in Vancouver and another police force in North Vancouver. There would be all kinds of separate police forces in the municipalities, separate provincial police forces in the four western provinces and the provinces in Atlantic Canada, the Northwest Territories and Yukon.

An hon. member: That is nation building.

Mr. Nunziata: My friend and colleague says "nation building". He is absolutely right, because from 1873 to the present moment the RCMP and its predecessor, the North-West Mounted Police, helped build this nation, helped provide the symbols of importance to our country.

That is a significant benefit to the federal government. For a mere $270-odd million a year the cost is well worth it. As well, there is one single police structure in western Canada as opposed to having a separate RCMP detachment, a separate OPP detachment, and a separate office for the Metropolitan Toronto Police for example. There is one single structure that allows the government to save significantly in terms of its responsibilities in enforcing federal laws. The RCMP, the federal police, whether or not we like it, will still have a role to play if the provinces in western Canada provincialize their police forces and the municipalities go with their own police forces. We still need the RCMP to enforce federal drug laws, for example.

If we have that duplication of service, we will not have the uniformed RCMP any longer. We will have the undercover RCMP officers as we have in Quebec and Ontario investigating drug deals and drug trafficking, for example.

• (1050)

There are significant savings to the federal taxpayers when we have a single policing structure. Let us make sure that the wrong impression is not left with Canadians that somehow central Canadians are paying for policing in western Canada and are not receiving any benefit in return.

Western Canadians are Canadians. They are federal taxpayers and they are contributing to the federal coffers distributed from here. You do not see western Canadians or Atlantic Canadians complaining when federal funds are used for massive expenditures in the province of Ontario or in the province of Quebec.

It really surprises me that a Conservative member would begrudge giving western Canadians the moneys necessary to ensure the continuation of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in western Canada.

It is clear that this government simply does not care about the continuation of the RCMP. It is attempting to shift the tax burden in an irresponsible fashion on to the municipalities.

We know that the federal government is seriously affecting the universality of health care throughout the country by trying to off-load some of the federal costs on to the provinces. In effect, health services are already suffering because of the massive cutbacks of this government.

In education as well, the government has severely cut back in terms of federal transfer payments to the municipalities. Education is suffering and now policing will suffer in a very significant way.

What is encouraging is that the eight provinces and the territories which are affected are standing together shoulder to shoulder and they are fighting this. They are fed up with it and they are not going to put up with it. They are not prepared to bend over and die as the federal Solicitor General hopes they will. They are adamant that they will not be forced into paying the substantial additional costs.

The provincial solicitors general have met over the last number of months and their position remains firm. They will not send the additional moneys to the federal government. The ball will then be in the federal court.

Will the Solicitor General, perhaps when he gets up in a few minutes, indicate his intentions in so far as this particular matter is concerned? Does he intend to unilaterally pull the RCMP from western Canada or Atlantic Canada? Is he prepared to negotiate in good faith?

The deal that was struck 10 years ago was a good deal. It was a fair deal. Why then would the government now want to change that relationship which has worked so well over the last 10 years and in the many years before that?

One can understand that both levels of government will have to pay the additional cost in terms of inflation and other associated costs of providing policing, but why, pray tell, does the federal government want to off-load or renegotiate this particular agreement in such an unfair fashion?

The provincial governments are sticking together. They do not appreciate the federal government's take-it-or-leave-it attitude. They are prepared to call the Solicitor General's bluff and say: "We will continue to pay our fair share when we write the check every month or every two months. We will write a check according to the old formula".

Then it will be up to the federal government and the Solicitor General to decide what the next step is in terms of trying to further their unfair proposal. I have indicated in my submissions the reasons why I believe the federal government should continue to pay its fair share.

Has my time expired, Madam Speaker?

Madam Deputy Speaker: It has expired.

Mr. Nunziata: My time has expired.

In closing, let me say that the Liberal opposition endorses fully the positions taken by the provincial governments other than Quebec and Ontario.

The Liberal Party fully, completely and unequivocally supports the continuation of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in western Canada, in Atlantic Canada and in the territories. When we get on the other side of the House we will ensure the presence of the RCMP in western Canada.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): First of all I want to thank my colleague for his comprehensive analysis of this particular problem. I particularly appreciated the comments with respect to our proud force, the RCMP, in its efficiency as a policing unit and its importance as a national symbol, particularly for western and northern Canadians.

There are two questions which I would like to raise. I want to make certain that all members recognize that when we say this is another attack on a bond, a national symbol that contributes to the unification of Canada, it is understood that this is not only being said by Liberals and other members on this side of the House. I have a quote here from Minister McCrae from the province of Manitoba who is a member of the Conservative government there: "At a time of great stress on our country it would be a tragedy if short-sighted federal fiscal policies snapped another bond that unifies this country".

Does my colleague know of any other individuals who have made similar observations?

The other question is with respect to the cost that would be off-loaded to provinces. He did mention those. I think they are particularly important and assuming that he can reach them without a whole lot of difficulty I would like to have those repeated for Canadians who are listening because they do represent an additional major burden on provinces and municipalities. That is one of the ways the federal government is able to say it is controlling its expenditures at 3.7 per cent. Obviously it is. It is dumping it on to the provinces and the municipalities.

Mr. Nunziata: At present the federal government's share of RCMP contract policing is $251.7 million. The proposal put forward by the federal government would see that particular share cut by $79 million.

You simply cannot cut $79 million and hope that the cost disappears somehow. That cost will have to be borne by provinces and municipalities. Municipal taxpayers will bear the brunt of this increase. That is a significant amount of money for municipalities when you break it down on a city-by-city, town-by-town basis across western and northern Canada and in Atlantic Canada.

As far as the question relating to the other people who have commented about the disintegration of Canada and the destruction of national symbols, particularly the destruction and dismembering of the RCMP, many Canadians right across Canada revere and highly respect the RCMP and have been shocked to learn of the hidden agenda of this government: to destroy the RCMP throughout Canada.

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): I find it extremely interesting that the member for York South—Weston is suggesting that his taxpayers, who are paying not just the $155 Ontario average cost for policing but a substantially higher figure because it is metropolitan Toronto, should in fact be subsidizing communities in provinces such as British Columbia which have policing costs of $127 per capita, on which they are getting a further subsidy of 30 per cent. It seems to me that they are paying in some areas of British Columbia around $89 for policing.

In metropolitan Toronto many people have great difficulty paying their very high property taxes and living in one of the most expensive cities in North America. It seems to me that while hon. members are trying to turn this into an issue by suggesting that the RCMP should disappear, it really is an issue of fiscal fairness. Nobody is suggesting the RCMP disappear. We are suggesting that communities pay their own costs of policing and determine the level of policing services they require.

• (1100)

For the information of some of the other members, I have visited all parts—

Madam Deputy Speaker: If I may interrupt the hon. member, she has the possibility of pursuing her question after Question Period.

[*Translation*]

It being eleven o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Members' Statements, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Madam Speaker, the removal of interprovincial trade barriers as a means to stimulate economic growth from within Canada was one of the central themes in the government's Speech from the Throne.

New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island moved one step closer to that goal yesterday when the Council of Maritime Premiers released their discussion paper calling for the removal of a number of interprovincial trade barriers over the next 18 months. Citing the fact that the three provinces are too small to put up walls, the premiers outline a number of areas in which economic integration can begin, including the free movement between provinces for professionals and trades people and the elimination of costly bidding wars used to attract businesses into a particular province.

It is high time the rest of the country took the lead from the three maritime premiers and began working to remove the over 500 interprovincial trade barriers that are currently choking economic growth in Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADA FITNESS WEEK

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Madam Speaker, today, on Sneaker Day, all Canadians are invited and urged to wear their running shoes and show their support for a healthy and active life style. Sneaker Day kicks off Canada Fitness Week which starts today and will continue until June 2. Canada Fitness Week has now been recognized internationally as the biggest celebration of physical fitness in the world. This year, more than 8 million Canadians are expected to take part in some 14,000 activities that will take place across this country. In our communities, hundred of thousands of volunteers will donate their time and energy to this annual celebration.

During the next nine days, I invite all members to join Canadians from coast to coast in promoting and taking part in the many activities scheduled during Canada Fitness Week.

* * *

[*English*]

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Madam Speaker, the Self-Employment Incentive Program of Canada Employment and Immigration has proven to be the best economic development tool available in my area.

Under SEI, unemployed people are provided incentives to start their own small businesses and get off unemployment insurance benefits. To date there are over 150 participants who are operating their own small businesses and in some cases already employing others.

Not only is SEI successful in helping people get off UIC, but it is providing a foundation of new business experience and fostering a new entrepreneurial spirit.

Cumberland county enjoys perhaps the very best success rate in Canada under the SEI program. It is so successful, in fact, that funding for 1991 is now exhausted. If Cumberland county is to continue their success rate, we need the budget to continue this program. I know of no other government program which provides better value and I strongly urge the minister to reassess this situation and provide the additional funding required.

* * *

SMALL CRAFT HARBOURS

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Madam Speaker, last week the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced $7 million in funding for small craft harbours. I stand in this House today and ask that some of that money be spent in the Cardigan riding.

Since the 1988 election I have written countless letters asking that repairs be done to the wharfs in eastern Prince Edward Island. I know of two wharfs in eastern Prince Edward Island that needed approximately $50,000 in repairs last spring. Because these repairs were not done, the cost to the taxpayer today is about $1.5 million.

However, the government commitment is only to minor harbour maintenance. Cardigan riding could probably use the $7 million itself, because the government did not perform the minor harbour maintenance in the past.

The minister should act today and help the fishermen of Cardigan riding.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Madam Speaker, six months ago I wrote the then Minister of Employment and Immigration about discriminatory hiring practices on the international bridge between Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and Michigan. This bridge is a jointly owned and operated bridge with supposed equal interest between the United States and Canada.

A 30–year old agreement between the two countries designating a 50–50 worker ratio is being denied by the American government. Presently 25 Americans and 18 Canadians are working at various tasks on the bridge. Why the discrepancy you ask? Why, after six months, is there no answer? Why is the prepared answer being reconsidered by the new minister?

It would appear that not only the playing field is tilted in favour of the Americans, but also the working field.

I have not received a written response to my letter, but I have been told that once again the infamous FTA, free trade agreement, has struck down Canadian workers. Chapter 15, which appears totally irrelevant, impedes Canadians from an equal employment opportunity on this bridge.

We are meeting this summer to resolve this inequity. Let us hope this government will be strong in its resolve to correct this obvious inequity.

* * *

MULTICULTURALISM

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Madam Speaker, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms enshrines in our Constitution the principle of multiculturalism which promotes respect for cultural and linguistic origins of all Canadians, encourages Canadians to get to know and understand each other, and ensures that all Canadians of whatever origin can and must participate equally and fully in the wider Canadian society.

Multiculturalism has come under fire from two different sources. The Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future says that many Canadians reject government funding for multicultural programs and believe that new Canadians should embrace our symbols, our culture, and our definition of what it means to be a Canadian.

On the other hand, the Quebec Bélanger–Campeau report says that multiculturalism implies the equality of all cultures and cultural origins in Canada and thus conflicts with the concept of two founding nations.

Surely we can find a way to reconcile all of these views and principles without disregarding any of them. In the past, we have emphasized our differences. Now it is time to emphasize the things that make us all Canadians. Certainly we have more—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Unfortunately, the hon. member's time has expired.

* * *

[*Translation*]

VALUE OF CANADIAN DOLLAR

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, the news media report that IVACO of Marieville, Quebec, which operates steel mills in several Canadian towns and cities, including L'Orignal, Ontario, in my riding, is preparing to relocate part of its operations to the United States.

Why? Because, according to IVACO's president, Paul Ivanier, the Canadian dollar is now artificially high. Mr. Ivanier says that he thinks the Canadian dollar should be worth 80 cents U.S.

Madam Speaker, we in the Liberal Party have told the government for a long time that its monetary and fiscal policies were driving away investors and encouraging business operators to transfer jobs to the United States.

The Hon. Leader of the Opposition has asked the Canadian government several times to lower the value of our dollar so that we can keep our jobs in Canada. Why does the government opposite refuse to act? Why does it refuse to protect these jobs?

* * *

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Madam Speaker, the Reform Party uses the words "phased reduction and elimination of all agricultural subsidies and support programs".

There are no countries in the western democratic world which do not support its agricultural producers. The farmers of Canada have contributed to the growth and prosperity of this great land. The minimum support which our government has contributed during drought, flood, and low world prices has kept in excess of 100,000 farmers from abandoning their livelihood, production, and contribution to Canada.

This Conservative government will continue support programs to ensure the survival of farmers, while the Reform Party will eliminate programs and farmers. Preston Manning is now saying that by eliminating farm program assistance and elimination of the Crow benefit, the government can reduce the national debt.

This Conservative government has no intention of reducing the national debt on the back of farmers. That hare-brained idea we will leave to the Reform Party and Preston Manning.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Madam Speaker, the RCMP recently reported that there are almost one million restricted weapons in Canada. Last year, more than 45,000 new restricted weapons were registered. Only four were refused. We have no idea how many guns there are in Canada because non-restricted weapons, such as the semi-automatic that killed 14 young women in Montreal, are not registered anywhere. Children have shot each other and themselves with legal weapons. In my community of Burnaby we have seen the horror of a random, drive-by shooting.

• (1110)

I have called on this government to bring in effective gun control legislation. They have ignored this and with Bill C-6 they have gone right off the deep end. It encourages the manufacture and export of automatic weapons.

The empty rhetoric of this government in damning the gun trade during the Persian Gulf crisis rings very hollow. When it delayed gun control legislation before, Canadians thought it was weak-kneed and ignorant of the issue. Now the government has proved it.

* * *

EMERGENCY RESPONSE SYSTEM

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the creation of a computerized national emergency response information system which will enable firefighters and other authorities to obtain accurate instant information at the scene of a hazardous materials incident.

Technologically advanced systems are available which not only aid in identifying what hazardous materials are present but offer detailed information on appropriate emergency response techniques.

I join the International Association of Firefighters and urge this government to consider seriously the implementation of such a national emergency system.

* * *

[*Translation*]

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Madam Speaker, more than 50 years ago, a group of men and women in the Montreal area founded the first Optimist Club of Quebec. Today, with more than 40,000 members organized in 760 clubs, Quebec has the highest concentration of Optimists in North America. This enthusiasm is even more remarkable when we consider that the sole purpose of the world's 4,000 Optimist Clubs is community service.

Last year, 4 million young people were able to take advantage of programs offered by Optimist International. The wide range of programs offered by the Optimists includes drug awareness programs for young people and programs designed to help children who are disadvantaged or disabled. This kind of involvement in our communities, Madam Speaker, is essential to our well-being, and I urge all Canadians to support the efforts of Optimist International.

Madam Speaker, in concluding I want to congratulate the Chairman of Optimist International, Dr. Tate Thigpen of Jackson, Mississipi, and his colleagues, all of whom are here today, as they are having their annual meeting here in Ottawa.

* * *

[*English*]

BANGLADESH

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Madam Speaker, the people of Bangladesh continue to suffer from the devastating effects of a cyclone that has ravaged their country. Already there are over 125,000 confirmed deaths and estimates that the number may increase to as many as 500,000.

As is too often the case, the poorest portion of the population is suffering the most. The Canadian government, through its development agency, has contributed emergency aid to help relieve this suffering and it is undoubtedly helping in the short term.

My concern lies in what happens in the long term. Lack of equitable land distribution in a country dependent on agriculture is the root cause of the increasing poverty level in Bangladesh. It is this problem which is forcing people to migrate to the coastal areas, the first and most severely affected regions when the cyclone winds start to blow.

In a country where 10 per cent of the population owns 50 per cent of the land, the poorest farmers are left with little choice and less opportunity. They can either rent land from absentee landlords or they can move to the coastal areas where they might have a chance to own land. It is these coastal areas which become danger zones when the winds arrive. It is these poor migrant farmers who—

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

The hon. member for Chambly.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADA POST

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Madam Speaker, I rise to urge this government to stop the post office closures that are occurring all over Canada, including in my riding of Chambly. To date over 950 federally owned and operated post offices have been closed or privatized. By July over 150 more post offices are scheduled to be closed.

How can this government justify taking away reliable postal services from Canadians? The government takes great pride in offering a Decima poll which says 91 per cent of the people who have privatized service are satisfied.

If this is such a reliable poll, why will the corporation not allow the municipalities to decide if their post offices should be closed. The hundreds of letters I have from residents of Mabou, Nova Scotia, the rally staged by residents of Avonmore, Ontario, yesterday on the steps of Parliament, and the court challenge launched against Canada Post by Réjean Lémare of La Rédemption, Quebec, on Wednesday do not suggest a 91 per cent approval rating.

I urge this government to stop talking down to Canadians. This government must stop—

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sorry, but time is up. The hon. member for Lotbinière.

* * *

CENTRE D'INITIATIVE D'EMPLOI DE LOTBINIÈRE–OUEST

Mr. Maurice Tremblay (Lotbinière): Madam Speaker, I would like to talk about an organization in my riding called the *Centre d'initiative d'emploi de Lotbinière–Ouest* (CIEL), which was created in 1985 further to a job development program for ten municipalities in the riding that have a total population of about 15,000.

This organization makes up for the deficiencies in the banking system and reaches those who are often unreached. It is non–profit and depends on its 270 member subscribers who deposit from $30 to $2,000 in a fund. In addition, the local Caisses Populaires contribute substantially to this fund.

Since it was founded, the organization has helped more than 31 local businesses with interest–free loans totaling some $46,325 and has managed to maintain and often to create jobs.

Madam Speaker, that is an example of people who have taken charge of their affairs and have confidence in one another.

I congratulate Rolland Paradis and his team on having set up such an organization for the greater good of our community.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Finance or the Acting Minister of Finance.

Yesterday in the House the minister admitted that the economy had hit rock bottom. Today numbers released by the government confirm that for many people there is no hope for an early recovery because they have gone bankrupt. Over–all bankruptcies are up by 77 per cent.

When will the government admit that the policies of the previous Minister of Finance are bankrupt. And when will the new Minister of Finance take his responsibility and introduce the new budget, something that Canada needs very badly at this time.

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, I think all Canadians know that Canada has been going through a recession.

I would like to remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition that in our 1989 and 1990 budgets, we warned Canadians that demand was far too high, that they were overspending and putting themselves at risk. We are now in the midst of a recession, but fortunately—these are numbers from last month—there are many signs that we are beginning to extricate ourselves from this. One of them is the bank rate which went down again yesterday.

Interest rates have gone down 5 per cent in a few months. This is quite an achievement compared to the Liberal record of high interest rates in the 1980s.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, this government jacked up the interest rates four or five points above the Americans; now, rates go down a bit, and it takes credit. If it had not made mistakes some years ago it would not be able to take credit for anything at this moment. The results are there. This budget was the wrong budget at the wrong time. I can see the former Minister of Finance regretting now what he has done. What are the results today?

[*Translation*]

The results are that in Ontario, personal bankruptcies have risen 123 per cent; in British Columbia, 109 per cent; in Alberta, the present finance minister's province, 96 per cent.

So when will the government realize that its economic policies have been tragic for very many Canadians and when will it act to stimulate the economy and not impose policies that just slow down the economy and create more bankruptcies every day?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition just said that we had forced interest rates up artificially, according to him.

I would say to him that interest rates were so high because of the disastrous debt that the Liberal administration left us. When we showed in our budget that we were determined to solve the government's financial problem, interest rates started to go down. It is precisely by creating such conditions without backing away or letting interest rates rise to 22 per cent, as the Liberals did, that we are bringing them down to their lowest level in three years.

Everywhere we see signs of the new R-word, "recovery"; we see indications that at last Canada is getting ready to enjoy several years of great prosperity, as we did before under this Conservative government.

• (1120)

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, in this morning's papers, the president of IVACO said that what was hurting the economy was the fact that interest rates were higher than in the United States and that the government maintained the dollar at artificially high levels which made it hard for Canadian products to be competitive. When will the government realize its mistakes, ensure interest rates are more competitive than they have been during the past four years, and bring the Canadian dollar back to levels that will help our exports since our economy depends to a very considerable extent on exports? Why not let the dollar go down so that manufacturers can stay in business and not go bankrupt?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, I hope God will protect us from Liberal solutions which have proved extremely costly for Canada. We cannot run away from our problems. Canada must meet these problems head on. And that is what we are doing. If we consider one particular sector or group that has been severely affected, the manufacturing sector for instance—I suggest we listen to what was said by the chairman of this group yesterday in committee in response to the Liberal industrial critic, Mr. Peterson, the hon. member for Willowdale. Mr. Thibault said the following and I will quote him in English:

[*English*]

"Many of the policies touted by Peterson would force the federal government to increase its spending and that would only make the current economic mess worse. The result would be higher taxes, a larger deficit, and higher taxes".

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, I must say that the only proposal we have had from the other side of the House regarding every single policy we have adopted is this: spend more. That is not the answer, Madam Speaker.

* * *

CROSS-BORDER SHOPPING

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State (Finance). What will the minister do to help Canadian retailers who are threatened with bankruptcy as a result of losing $100 million annually to American stores across the border?

[*English*]

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, as I pointed out yesterday, we have embarked on a nation-wide consultative process with the hope of taking some immediate steps to alleviate this very complex problem which spans all three levels of government and includes problems associated with the private sector, labour, as well as consumer organizations. We are well on our way to making some definitive suggestions to what all of these stakeholders together should and must take.

As far as the customs operations are concerned, we have begun to put into place more efficient and effective ways of collecting applicable duties and taxes. Although border crossings have increased by some 20 per cent, 23 per cent last month for example, our customs collections have increased by well over 150 per cent. Action is being taken at the border, but this is a much broader problem which comes down to the fact that Canadians are not as competitive as their American counterparts.

I think that the Speech from the Throne addressed that in a very positive manner. This government has taken and will continue to take action to make it possible for Canadian businesses to become more competitive.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of National Revenue who clearly has not implemented any new policies.

Thirty-three tax increases in seven years have driven Canadians south to shop. Mobs of Canadians at our customs offices have slowed the entry of American residents to this country to a trickle.

Will the minister take immediate steps to designate a special line for Americans at our border crossings so that Canadians can profit from American visits to Canada to help offset the government's persistent inaction and blundering?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is totally misinformed when he says that we have not taken any action at the border. Through our Customs 2000 program we have initiated a variety of proposals too numerous to mention today: automated cash registers and use of new technology including electronic data interchange and pre-clearance of commercial traffic, more efficient use of staff, special express lanes, PACE project and so on.

At customs operations, we have to perform a fine balancing act from, on the one side, collecting duties and taxes more effectively and efficiently while at the same time relieving congestion at the border which would allow tourism and commercial traffic to come in. We are trying to perform that balancing act.

I have made a commitment to each community that we will develop tailor-made projects for those communities, which we have put in in many places. We are willing and anxious to co-operate with each community and we are meeting with the mayors in the communities involved.

I know where this government is going and what this government is doing. I would like to know if the Liberal Party wants the borders to be wide open or wants the borders to be totally closed? Let us know where the Liberal Party stands because we know where we stand.

* * *

BANKRUPTCIES

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Madam Speaker, my question is on the record increase in bankruptcies which has hit this country.

Yesterday, there was brave talk from the government about the fact that we were into a recovery. Today the harsh reality is there of this 77 per cent increase in bankruptcies.

[*Translation*]

There were nearly 7,000 bankruptcies in April, 77 per cent more than last April. Will the minister keep pretending that all is well? Or is this government finally prepared to do something for Canadians and take steps to end this recession?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member may wish to check what he said. In quoting a figure he referred to millions which is not correct. It was probably an oversight.

That being said, I do not deny we have been through difficult times. However, we are talking about figures that are now behind us and we have good reason to look to the future.

The hon. member asked when we would start doing something for Canadians. There are several ways of doing things for people. We can intervene artificially—and I would say this was more or less the approach taken by the government of Ontario—by borrowing and passing the bill on to our children, meanwhile giving the impression that we did something. The important thing is to provide a climate in which Canadians can take care of their own development under the best possible conditions.

That is what we have done since 1984, and we were very successful if you consider the 1.5 million jobs that were created. After this recession we intend to let Canada launch its recovery on a solid basis.

[*English*]

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Madam Speaker, there are often victims of bankruptcy who do not appear even in these numbers; those are the workers in these companies.

Other countries have political disappearances, we have economic disappearances. For instance, Brant Castings in Windsor went bankrupt a year ago and 100 workers have still not received any severance pay. The company failed to pay its pension contributions and half the workers are still unemployed.

What does this government have to say to Russ Jackson, Jim Leblanc and the other workers of Brant Castings? Why is there not a bankruptcy law reform in front of this House as was promised by the minister responsible many months ago?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, I would like to tell the hon. member that he has a very good question about the bankruptcy law. I can tell him that he will soon have news from my colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

The hon. member says that our policies are causing economic disappearance. I have views from people here who are business people and manufacturing people. They say that the NDP is killing factories and that their policies add to business costs. There is no easy way out of a recession. You can buy your way out once.

• (1130)

I would like to remind the House that when we came in, the government was spending $1.33 for every dollar it was bringing in. This makes people happy for a little while, but eventually it catches up with us. It has now, and we are getting Canada out of this mess.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Madam Speaker, such hypocrisy from a government which spends 34 cents of every dollar which it receives—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. member will want to put his question. There have been long preambles to both previous questions.

Mr. Langdon: Let me repeat for the Speaker the key point I want to put across.

The yearly Carleton University study, *How Canada Spends*, is coming out this week. It concludes that this government has no positive economic strategy.

I want to ask the minister if he will recognize that these growing bankruptcies call for a change in strategy. Will he recognize that he cannot talk about economic recovery in the face of these kinds of bankruptcies taking place?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Whenever one particular manufacturer closes it is always very sad and it has, in some instances, a very dramatic impact, and I recognize that.

The hon. gentlemen, like most members from his party, thinks that he has a monopoly on caring. I can tell him that coming from a family of 21 children—and I am the 18th of the 21 children—from northwestern Quebec, born in 1929, raised during the depression, I do not need lessons from him.

There are right ways of solving problems and there are wrong ways. His way has been tried in eastern Europe and it has proven a failure.

* * *

ARMS TRADE

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

During the Iraq war, the Prime Minister condemned the international arms trade which helped Saddam Hussein build his aggressive military force and said Canada would not take part in this trade.

On February 20 the former Secretary of State said, and I quote: "It is imperative that the world declare that there be no Middle East arms bazaar; 95 per cent of the weapons in the hands of Saddam Hussein came from the five permanent members of the Security Council".

In light of these statements, how does the government justify Bill C-6?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, Bill C-6 is designed to tighten up the restrictions on export of arms. We are providing for transparency. There will be a report to this Parliament on all the exports of arms made. There will be consultation with countries to which we propose to make arms sales. There will also be a need for Canada to have an arrangement with countries with which we have arms sales.

I want to stress to my hon. friend that what Bill C-6 does is provide additional controls on the sale of automatic weapons in excess of the existing controls that are there for higher powered weapons. So we are increasing the controls, not decreasing the controls.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Madam Speaker, for many years it has been Canada's policy not to sell arms to areas of conflict. The Middle East has had 26 wars since 1945, more than any other region, and except for Egypt there are no peace agreements between Israel and the Arab countries.

Why then is the government facilitating sales to this region? Who will be on the list of eligible countries for arms sales under the bill, and what controls will there be to prevent another aggression, such as we saw last summer?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, under this legislation each export permit will be decided on a case-by-case basis. There will be decisions taken that will judge whether the export will destabilize the region. If there has been an excessive buildup in arms in the region that will be taken into account in any decision as to whether or not a permit should be provided. I repeat, there will have to be an intergovernmental arrangement on defence, research and development production of any use of arms. That is the protection that we are providing to Canadians.

I would stress to my hon. friend that there will be additional controls on the export of automatic weapons as provided for under this Bill C-6 legislation. There will be additional controls over and above what is now provided for other exports of arms. This is a tightening up and an additional set of controls over and above what we have today.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, my question is for the acting minister responsible for small business.

The government's high interest rate policy, its increased unemployment insurance premiums, its GST, have all diminished the ability of small business to lead the badly needed economic recovery in Canada and get us out of this recession.

I want to ask the minister when this government will provide relief to small business from the damage inflicted by this government's policies.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): In the last eleven and a half months there has been a drop of about five percentage points in interest rates and that translates directly into relief for small businesses. I would say that is probably the greatest area of relief that we can provide.

I also point out to my hon. friend that there are many small businesses that are involved in the construction industry and, if she noticed, in the month of April there was a significant increase in housing starts. That is supported by the drop in interest rates. It is also supported by the increase in the number of housing sales which is a reinforcement to the increase in housing starts.

One final point: My hon. friend mentioned the goods and services tax. We agree that the goods and services tax, when it is applied alongside the provincial sales tax, is an extra burden. We are working with the provinces and we encourage the provinces to harmonize their provincial sales taxes with the goods and services tax and in that way make a major contribution to lessening the burden of taxation on small businesses.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): My supplementary is for the same minister.

Is the minister not aware that retail sales declined 3 per cent in the first four months of this year? That is the largest decline since the Diefenbaker government. It is the biggest drop in 30 years.

If the minister believes that this is grounds for optimism, that his government's policies are working, then this minister is badly out of touch with the needs of small business.

Will the minister admit that his government's policies have harmed the small business sector of this country and thus put at risk our ability to recover quickly from this recession?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): I am sorry, I missed the final part of the question. Would the hon. member just repeat the last part of the question?

Ms. Callbeck: I will repeat the question, Madam Speaker.

Will the minister admit that the government policies have harmed the small business sector in this country and thus put at risk our ability to recover quickly from this recession?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, one of the concerns that small businesses have expressed to me is that the levels of debt they have incurred in recent years have become quite large. One of the policies that we have followed in recent years was to discourage the increase in debt by keeping interest rates high during the period when that debt was growing very quickly, 15 to 20 per cent per annum.

If we had followed the policies that my hon. friend would have us follow of keeping those interest rates down, debt would have been just that much higher and the burden on small businesses today would have been just that much higher.

Madam Speaker, the only thing that I conclude here is that the Liberals have no understanding, no alternative policies, no idea whatsoever as to how they would manage economic affairs in this country.

* * *

• (1140)

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister. CIDA's secret and internal corporate review is causing alarm and confusion within CIDA and within the international development community in general. By awarding the lucrative management contract to a friend of the Prime Minister and the minister responsible for CIDA, the government has created a controversy which swirls about it.

To help clear up the confusion caused by the conflicting statements made by the Minister for External Relations on the one hand and her senior officials on the other, will the government today table the terms of reference of the CIDA strategic management review, as well as other reviews of the patronage award to Secor Incorporated?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, this is just another one of those examples where the New Democratic Party desires to draw things through the mud. Secor is one of the top consulting firms in the country. Secor was offered this business because of the quality of its work, its understanding of CIDA, its understanding its of the international development process, and its capability of helping CIDA go through the strategic review process. It is on that basis that Secor has received that bid.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): My friend over there is making some other scurrilous remarks about the award. He is the expert in slime.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Given the government's sorry record in patronage, we understand its sensitivity in that area. These things tend to happen when the Prime Minister is in the Orient.

Since the Canadian Council of International Cooperation and other development organizations are asking for a review of sharing our future, the policy under which we are supposed to be operating in CIDA, will the Acting Prime Minister undertake to refer the report of CIDA's strategic management review to the standing committee on external affairs in September when it is completed?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, I would imagine that that is a matter for the business of that committee. If it requests ministers to appear before that committee to provide information on this strategic review that is certainly a power that is quite in keeping with what the committee is capable of doing.

I want to remind my hon. friend that before he draws conclusions he should also reflect on the fact that other experts have been hired by this government, including Peter O'Malley, the former press secretary of Ed Broadbent, the former leader of the party. Why have we not had a question on that? Why have we not had a question on the capabilities of Mr. O'Malley? Why is it just these other people?

* * *

CANADA POST

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for Canada Post. The corporation has just rented a box at Toronto SkyDome, not a mail box, but a corporate box, a penthouse box for its corporate friends.

The question is simply this: At a time of recession and restraint, how can it possibly justify renting a corporate box, a suite at the SkyDome?

Also, Madam Speaker, I want to know this: Why does the minister not instruct Canada Post to take its financial resources and use them to reduce postal rates? I do not

think the Canadian people will stand for the rental of a suite at the SkyDome.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Clearly a set-up question.

Madam Speaker, in 1981 when Canada Post was made a Crown corporation, it was on the basis there would be no political interference. I am sure the hon. member would not want me to interfere politically.

May I also say that 80 per cent of Canada Post's revenues come from business, and 45 per cent or thereabouts of its total business is fully competitive. Like everybody else in business, it has means for promoting the corporate image and entertaining business clients and so on.

Canada Post does a lot of promotion. For example, it participates in events like Winterlude in Ottawa, the Quebec Winter Carnival, the 1988 Olympics, the Games for the Disabled, the Canada Winter Games in Prince Edward Island, Literacy Organization, the Terry Fox Run for Charity and a lot of others.

I think it is a tremendous corporate citizen and should be applauded.

* * *

SECOR

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Acting Deputy Prime Minister who, of course, is responsible for the conflict of interest code.

It is in relation to the issue that was asked about a moment ago on the contract given to Secor Company after Mr. Marcel Coté was working for the government. Of course, Mr. Coté went back to work for Secor with his interest immediately upon terminating employment.

Has the Acting Deputy Prime Minister sought the advice of the Assistant Deputy Registrar General who is responsible for the administration of the code? What advice did the ADRG give him? If he has not done that, why not?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, the question was asked to me as acting for the Deputy Prime Minister.

I am not the Deputy Prime Minister. I will ask him the question that my hon. friend has just put.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, my questions to the government are very specific.

[*Translation*]

I would like to ask a supplementary question. Surely someone opposite is in charge. Someone must be the Acting Prime Minister today.

An hon. member: No one!

Mr. Boudria: Not getting an answer is unsatisfactory. I want to know from the government opposite what advice this government received from the Assitant Deputy Registrar General concerning this contract. Is the government assured that the conflict of interest guidelines were not violated? Yes or no.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Madam Speaker, the hon. member has enough experience here in the House to know that the questions he just asked will be answered. The minister who is responsible under the law is not here today. He is here most of the time. He is not here today. The Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade, on an important but technical question, told the hon. member and the House that he would take note of this question and give an answer as soon as possible. That is quite normal. It has been the parliamentary practice for decades.

* * *

[*English*]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, the government has waxed eloquent in its Speech from the Throne. However, its pretty words do not camouflage its lack of an action plan.

If this government is serious about cutting illiteracy by the year 2000 and if it is serious about cutting down the very high school drop-out rate, will it take its first step in

a plan of action and withdraw that insensitive and stupid tax on books, magazines, and newspapers?

Will it do that today?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, time and time again in this House I have explained to the hon. member the intent of the GST.

I would like to remind her that the difficulty of that particular industry, together with a lot of other industries, is not necessarily or at all linked to the GST.

We are in a period of recession. We are slowly coming out of it, and I suppose that that industry feels the pain.

The government has said that if, over a period of time, there is some evidence that the GST has some impact, the proper departments in due time will look at ways of helping them along.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, I find that answer perfectly unbelievable.

If you need proof, just read both the English and the French press today. Go and listen to the coalition that has a problem.

[*Translation*]

The government cannot both tax books and reduce illiteracy. While a third of the bookstores in Quebec are closing and book sales have dropped 35 per cent in Quebec, how can the Minister still justify the GST on books? Why does the Minister not avoid disaster by immediately eliminating this absolutely unacceptable and disastrous tax? Why not?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, I have the feeling that the members opposite forgot to do their homework on the GST. On the one hand, it is very easy. Parts of this tax reform give Canadians who may be less able to afford books more income than they had before the reform. Therefore, I would say that they could use it to buy books.

Madam Speaker, I just said that the present recession and business slowdown affects all industries. I do not see in what way that industry would be particularly hurt. However, I also said, as the government has said before, that if as time goes by we see that this industry, the Canadian book industry—and we should clearly define what we mean by that—was adversely affected, we would try to find ways to help that industry. It is very dangerous to think of removing a very broadly based tax that applies to all goods and starting to make exceptions, because on the other hand, we would have to raise the rates on the rest, so that the taxpayer would end up with the same amount in his pocket.

* * *

• (1150)

[*English*]

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport and concerns a different but equally and perhaps even more serious form of cross-border shopping. It has to do with the fact that the CPR is now shopping for different rail lines in the United States.

Is the Minister of Transport aware that CP has requested the federal regulatory agency in the United States to provide a waiver of compliance which would enable it to move unit trains of coal and potash from North Portal, Saskatchewan, to Thunder Bay through the United States instead of through Canada. This move, if successful, would result in the elimination of at least 200 trains a year going through Manitoba and have a serious economic impact on such places as Brandon and Winnipeg.

Is the government aware of this and if it is, what is it going to do about it? If it is not aware of it, will it please look into it and do something about the effect of deregulation, something we predicted a long time ago.

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Madam Speaker, CPR as a private business has to compete in the world as far as transportation of goods is concerned. The decisions that the hon. member speaks about are ones I am not aware of because it is not up to the government to make business decisions. It it up to business to make business decisions. If this decision is being made to try to make it more competitive in the world in the shipping of goods, then this is its right as a business to make that decision.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Madam Speaker, I would have thought it would be the business of the government to know the effect of its own regulations. The effect of its own regulations, which is to say its own deregulation, is to have this precedent being set for the diversion of rail traffic through the United States that would otherwise have gone through western Canada.

Will the minister make it her business to be concerned about the future of Winnipeg, Brandon, and a lot of other communities that depend on rail traffic for their subsistence? Will the government finally start to listen to those of us who have analysed the effects of these things?

The free trade agreement with Mexico is about to be fast-tracked through negotiations and the government is not going to listen. It was not willing to listen before and now some of the horrible predictions—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member has put his question. The hon. minister.

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Madam Speaker, the government listened before. It is listening now. It listens to the shippers in this country and to the businesses. In order to keep the jobs in western Canada in the potash industry for instance, they have to be able to ship their goods economically. The reason for deregulation was—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mrs. Martin (Lincoln): Madam Speaker, our concern is to make Canada competitive. We are working at that as a government. Companies are working at that and working people are working at making us competitive. They are attacking it where it needs to be done, and that is making Canada competitive around the world in all areas and not just standing in this House and blaring out as the opposition did.

* * *

WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Communications.

Four weekly newspapers in my riding are facing dramatic postal increases as of June 1. For months and months they have been demanding an extension to the deadline just to survive. June is now upon us. Will there be relief for these weekly newspapers or not?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, like many members of Parliament in this House, I come from a rural community and I am very much aware of the fact that rural community newspapers are part of the very heart of rural communities.

As a consequence, in response to representations from community newspapers and rural MPs across Canada, I am pleased to be able to tell the hon. member and the House that the government has agreed to extend until next March 1 current rates for rate code 2 newspapers in order to enable them to make the transition.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

I wrote to the minister of employment last week and, indeed, I sent a notice today of my question regarding the severe ice conditions that currently prevail around the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, specifically the northeast coast and the northwest coast of the province.

The minister knows that fishermen's benefits ceased on May 15, that fishermen and their families have had no incomes since that time, and he knows that because of the severe ice conditions fishermen and their families have no means now of acquiring an income.

I want to ask the minister of employment who, indeed, as a former minister of fisheries, is aware of the severity of this problem, whether or not the government is going to extend unemployment insurance benefits for people who, through no fault of their own, have no income at this time of the year.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I can inform the hon. member and the House that my colleague, the minister of fisheries, and I are monitoring the situation closely. We are surveying these ice conditions on a daily basis along the west coast and the northeast coast of Newfoundland-Labrador, and we will establish how ice conditions may be preventing fishermen from starting their regular season. We know that they have not started yet, as the member rightly points out.

The member also knows full well that this government has not hesitated in the past to meet and to assist the fishermen who are affected by severe ice conditions. We are monitoring the situation and we will respond accordingly.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his answer. Unfortunately, in past years, and this is not to look for an argument, the monitoring process has sometimes gone on so long that the suffering that results from a lack of income has been severe.

What fishermen and their families want, and I hope what the minister will give the House and through the House, fishermen and their families today, is an assurance of quick action. If it becomes clear, as it appears to be the case, that these are the worst ice conditions in some regions since 1974, that the minister will, as he is able to do, move quickly to restore those unemployment insurance benefits.

We are simply talking here of a case of fishermen and their families needing the dollars to prepare for the spring season to gear up for the fishery and, indeed, to keep their families and their children in clothing with bread and butter on the table.

Will the minister give us an assurance of quick action? We would appreciate that if he could.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I want to make it absolutely clear that there has never been an extension of UI benefits in Newfoundland-Labrador for fishermen. We cannot go into the UI fund to extend benefits because we would have to do that throughout the country.

We have DFO and the ACOA and my department is, as I stated, closely monitoring this. We are on the case and I can give assurance to the hon. member that we will be attempting to move as quickly as we can when these benefits expire around June 2 or 3.

• (1200)

We are standing ready. The last payments were May 15. They go for two weeks. We are monitoring the situation and hopefully will be able to act as quickly as possible.

* * *

TOBACCO INDUSTRY

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Madam Speaker, yesterday I sent the minister an urgent letter out of concern over the plan of the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers' Council to launch its campaign against tobacco taxes using tax protest forms which will soon appear on the side of cigarette packages.

Point of Order

Yesterday the minister said in this House that he has asked his department's legal advisers for some legal opinion on this campaign, announced four days ago, and which likely will start Monday. Has the minister received the legal opinion and if not, why does it take so long to obtain such an opinion?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, I do not know why it takes so long for the lawyers to provide an opinion, but I believe many people in this House have faced the problem many, many times.

Actually, I have not yet received the advice. It should be received today. I hope it will be this afternoon. As soon as I have the information from the department, I will act on the recommendation.

I repeat what I said yesterday: I fully share the concern of my colleague about this campaign. I repeat that what we do at the Department of National Health and Welfare is advise Canadians of the fact that smoking is unhealthy. Every time we increase taxes by 10 cents, some 14 per cent of young Canadians do not start smoking because of that increase. That is why we support the policy. If there is any way that we can prevent the campaign, we will do that.

My friend will understand that I have to act within the advice I receive today from the advisers.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

QUESTION PERIOD

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Madam Speaker, I wish to bring to your attention that I was on the list for questions today. My constituents sent me here to Parliament to speak for them and to represent their concerns, and I am trying my best to do that.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for his words. I think the hon. member knows as well that the Speaker has given the House his opinion on this type of point of order and remarks. I do share Speaker Fraser's opinion on the subject.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Madam Speaker, following my question to the minister responsible for Canada Post, I wanted to ask a supplementary, but we on this side of the House very seldom get a supplementary on a hard hitting question. I wanted a further explanation from the minister and no supplementary—

Point of Order

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have listened carefully to the hon. member's question. What could have been a supplementary was also added to his original question, which is why no supplementary was allowed.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): On the same point of order, Madam Speaker.

I am on the same point of order because I see a trend. This week and last week government members have been rising in this place, coming to the Chair and pleading about the fact that they are not getting questions during Question Period.

If there is going to be a continued harassment of the Chair on this question, I think the whole matter must be referred to a committee. We must get our act together. There is no way the government members can continue to harass some of us on this side by maintaining that they cannot ask questions of the government. If they cannot ask the question, they should write to their minister about the darned thing and get their answer like we do.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I think it is totally out of order for the hon. member to accuse members on the government side of harassing the Speaker. What hon. members are doing is standing up for their legitimate rights as members of this House who are not members of the executive and not members of the government but members who happen to be supporters of the government. They should have the same rights and privileges as any backbench member in this House of Commons.

Mr. Gauthier Madam Speaker, I object strongly to the government representative, the parliamentary secretary to the House leader, coming up here and preaching, being so sanctimonious about this whole thing. He knows and I know how we operate around this place. He knows darned right that there is absolutely no fact to what he is saying. It is an organized, orchestrated fact that the government members want to make the front bench of their group, the ministers, understand there is division on that side. They even want to take our places. We will give them up in the next election and they can sit here and get in all the questions they can once in a while, but ask their ministers and get the answers from them. Do not come to me and complain.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): On this point, I would just suggest that the—

Madam Deputy Speaker: If I may, just one moment. I will not be shouted at by members screaming "point of order". The hon. member will sit down when the speaker is standing, please. The Chair cannot give the floor to more than one person at a time. I will listen, but not that much longer.

The subject was discussed earlier this week when Speaker Fraser was in the chair. He gave the House his opinion on the subject. He gave what I think was very wise advice to all members of this House and I do not think that using a Friday when the Deputy Speaker is in the chair to start again will get anybody any further and I want the House to know this.

I have listened to some comments from the government side. I have listened to some comments from the Official Opposition. I will listen to one member from the New Democratic Party and the hon. member for Edmonton East had sought the floor and had been recognized.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, there is nothing I could add to those wise remarks.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I see the hon. parliamentary secretary seeking the floor. Is this on the same point of order again?

An hon. member: He wants to pursue it.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I think it is important both in terms of tone and in terms of any reflection that may have been cast upon the chair. I want to express to the chair very clearly that members on this side did not particularly pick a Friday to raise this question. They did not pick it because of the occupant of the chair.

I think the reason for the interventions today is that there was a question put that was obviously not a set up question to the government. The member wanted to raise the question of supplements. It has nothing to do with the fact that it is Friday but everything to do with the fact that it is current.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his remarks.

I think we may conclude this in saying that the Standing Committee on House Management has the mandate to look at such matters. I think that hon. members who are on this committee should get together on this. That is the right place to have such discussions. A report from this committee would be quite useful to the Chair and I think would avoid these types of discussions, which do no good for this institution and for its members.

Tabling of documents, the hon. Minister for Constitutional Affairs.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD OF CANADA

TABLING OF ANNUAL REPORT

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Madam Speaker, pursuant to section 13(3) of the Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board Act, I have the honour to table a bilingual copy of the annual report of the Transportation Safety Board of Canada.

* * *

• (1210)

CANADA PENSION PLAN

REPORT OF ADVISORY BOARD

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 32(2), I wish to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada Pension Plan Advisory Board: Recency and Retroactive Rules affecting Disability Benefits.

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

TABLING OF SIXTEENTH REPORT OF CANADIAN BRANCH OF AIPLF

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to table the Sixteenth Report of the Canadian Branch of the International Assembly of French-Speaking Parliamentarians, which covers the meeting of the Policy and General Administration Commission, held in Paris from April 14 to 18, and the meeting of the Parliamentary Affairs Commission, which I have the honour to chair.

* * *

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

TABLING OF SECOND REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Minister of State (Youth) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Chairman of the Standing Committee on House Management, I have the honour to table the second report of the committee. With leave of the House, I intend to move for concurrence in this report later this day. Considering the length of the report, I suggest that we dispense with the reading of the report. Copies are available at the Table.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the request of the parliamentary secretary. Is there consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

* * *

PENITENTIARY ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-207, an Act to amend the Penitentiary Act (visit to penitentiaries).

He said: Madam Speaker, I have the honour to introduce a bill concerning the Penitentiary Act.

[*English*]

The purpose of the bill is to ensure that both members of Parliament and members of the other place may visit a federal penitentiary at any time and have free access for the purpose of visiting any person in such penitentiary.

[*Translation*]

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

* * *

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

CONCURRENCE IN SECOND REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Minister of State (Youth) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, with leave of the House, I move that the second report of the Standing Committee on House Management, tabled earlier today, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Madam Speaker, I would like to present a petition signed by a number of my constituents living at 890 James Street, 55 Outlook, on Jasper Avenue, on Corbett Avenue and throughout my constituency.

The constituents are calling on the Government of Canada to rescind the regressive and unfair goods and services tax.

CANADIAN FLAG

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present another petition in the House today, which is signed by numerous residents of Kingston and the Islands.

The petitioners, in an effort to protect the Canadian flag from destruction or desecration, urge that this House pass a law making it an offence to destroy or desecrate the flag of Canada.

[*Translation*]

CANADA POST

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to table today in the House. They concern a decision by Canada Post Corporation to close Branch No. 23 at 580 Rideau Street in my riding in Ottawa.

The petitioners would like this decision to be reviewed so that they and their neighbours, who are mainly seniors, can continue to receive services from this excellent postal location.

* * *

[*English*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Shall the questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni) (p. 499)

Madam Deputy Speaker: When the House proceeded with Statements by Members and Question Period, the hon. member for Don Valley North was concluding her comments. Had she concluded?

Ms. Greene: Yes.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Madam Speaker, the Conservative member for North York, in her question, suggested that the taxpayers of her municipality, her constituency, the taxpayers of Ontario, were subsidizing western Canadians for RCMP services in western Canada.

The hon. member, in putting her question, is reflecting her total misunderstanding of the issue. It does not appear that the member knows anything at all about the role of the RCMP in western Canada. In fact, the provincial governments in western Canada are now

paying 70 per cent of the cost of providing RCMP services there under a contract that expired at the beginning of April.

As I indicated in my submissions, the Government of Canada is bent on destroying the RCMP in western Canada and, in fact, in Atlantic Canada and in the north. The RCMP is an important and essential national institution and the Conservative member for North York, speaking on behalf of the government, is saying to the people of western Canada, Atlantic Canada and the north that the federal government wants to get out of the business of providing RCMP services.

As I indicated in my comments, yesterday was the 118th birthday of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It was founded in 1873 as the North-West Mounted Police and it is a shame, a tragedy, that this government is now bent on destroying the RCMP by withdrawing its fair share of funding. The RCMP provides an essential service to communities in the western Canadian provinces.

If the RCMP were withdrawn, it would be a serious blow to national unity. As I indicated earlier, the RCMP is a highly respected police force. It is one of the finest police forces anywhere in the world. Indeed, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is recognized world-wide for its thoroughness and its efficiency. Indeed, the motto of the RCMP is that it always gets its person.

On behalf of the Official Opposition, we would like to send a very definite and clear message to the Solicitor General who is here in the House today. That message is to negotiate in good faith. The provinces that contract for RCMP services, the provinces that do not have their own provincial police forces, are not asking for anything more. All they are asking is that the federal government negotiate in good faith to continue paying its share, that is 30 per cent of police services in western Canada and in Atlantic Canada. They want to continue the contract that expired on April 1. They believe it was a good contract.

Unfortunately, the government has not been acting in good faith. Hopefully, as a result of the debate here today, the Solicitor General, who I note is listening very attentively, will instruct his officials immediately to consummate and negotiate a new contract on the basis of fairness and equity.

• (1220)

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, I would just like to ask if the hon. member concurs with the following evaluation that I made of his speech.

The first point is the government's determination to cut the budget for policing in western Canada. This is having a really devastating affect on policing services in many of the smaller communities. There are communities in my riding that are discussing putting together *ad hoc* police forces and doing vigilante work. As a result of the recession and some of the cutbacks, crime is rampant in those communities. At the same time, we have cutbacks to the police force.

There was a woman in the emergency ward of the Sechelt Hospital who phoned for police and could not get a police officer. She had to phone Vancouver. There is one police officer on the peninsula. There are 1,600 individuals working on a mine construction project and another 200 people working on a pulp mill project in an area of 15,000 population and only one police officer, no additional funding, and the potential for chaos.

One of those communities is talking about private police forces and vigilantes. In another community there is a group meeting to do this as well. As a result of this *ad hoc* police work, somebody is going to get hurt and people are going to get killed.

The second point is the Prime Minister's appeal for national unity. On northern Vancouver Island the government has cut out the fishing, the unemployment insurance, the police force and recently cut the number of ports where people could land fish which harmed processors there. The government shut down coast guard radio stations. Everything in those communities costs more and is far more limited. The Prime Minister now increases the cost of policing 10 per cent to 30 per cent in those communities.

The Prime Minister is saying: "Hey, we have got a commitment to this country. We want to get national unity rolling." It is not working. Those folks are saying that what we can expect from Ottawa and from this government is nothing better than a poke in the eye with a sharp stick. They are asking: "What do we get?" The answer is absolutely nothing but more hardship and more heartache.

Mr. Nunziata: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is from British Columbia and he knows that B.C. will be the hardest hit province as a result of the cutbacks. It will cost British Columbia residents $120 million over the life of the new contract. He points out that his province and the province of Manitoba are considering their own provincial police forces, that communities like Red Deer in Alberta and a number of other small communities right across the west are considering establishing their own police forces which will mean the removal of the RCMP. It is all because of the federal government's irresponsibility.

The federal government is shirking its responsibility to provide the necessary funding to ensure that the RCMP continues to provide the very excellent service it is providing to Canadians from one end of the country to the other.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend's motion reads:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should take into full account the budgetary reality of the provinces and municipalities involved in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police contract negotiations and therefore be prepared to negotiate a contract for RCMP services which does not unfairly transfer policing costs from the federal government to provincial and municipal governments.

This motion could not have been presented at a more opportune time. I was appointed Solicitor General just over a month ago. I have had an opportunity to brief myself on the RCMP contract file. I took the occasion to fly to Vancouver and meet with my colleagues, the solicitor general of British Columbia and the attorney General of Manitoba. In fact, I discussed this file with the solicitor general of British Columbia as recently as this week. The file is very current.

In the short time that I have been the Solicitor General, I have also had an opportunity to discuss this file with my cabinet colleagues, particularly those who serve as members of the Treasury Board.

I met the Treasury Board ministers concerning this issue at nine o'clock this morning.

I am grateful to the hon. member for Comox—Alberni for the timeliness of his motion and the way in which it is worded. The motion is not derogatory, it is not inflammatory, and it allows us to have a fair and frank exposure of the issue without a great deal of political posturing.

I am also very grateful for the opportunity that this motion presents me, as the Solicitor General of Canada and as the minister responsible for the RCMP contract negotiations, to share with the House and with the public the federal government's position in these negotiations.

At the outset there should be an appreciation of the scale of the contract policing program. There are approximately 10,000 RCMP officers, almost one-half of the entire force, engaged in contract policing. The RCMP are providing the policing services under contract to all provinces, except Ontario and Quebec, and to the two territories and some 191 municipalities within the provinces and territories. The federal government shares the cost of providing RCMP policing services with the provinces, territories, and municipalities that use the RCMP, on terms that were last negotiated in 1981.

It is also important at the outset that there be an appreciation that the federal government remains committed to the RCMP and the RCMP policing program. There has been no suggestion in these negotiations that it has been any part of the federal government's agenda to remove the RCMP from its contract policing responsibilities. Notwithstanding the expiration of the present contract on March 31, 1991, the RCMP has remained on site and remained on duty providing the same high level of policing duties after March 31 that it was providing before March 31, 1991.

As all members of the House will know, the 1981 agreements expired on March 31, 1991. The negotiations for a new contract have been stalled for some time as a result of a disagreement over the allocation of costs, particularly over the question of the proposed increase from 70 to 75 per cent of the provincial share of the cost of provincial policing services.

The federal government has been seeking in these negotiations to achieve a more appropriate apportionment of the costs of provincial, territorial and municipal policing. For their part the contract jurisdictions have acknowledged, without specifically committing themselves, that the cost base should be adjusted to ensure that it more fairly and fully reflects the costs of delivering RCMP policing service to the provinces, the territories, and the municipalities that are receiving that service.

I want to digress for just a minute, if I may, to emphasize that we are not talking about the costs associated with the federal law enforcement responsibilities of the RCMP. In addition to its contract responsibilities, the RCMP also has significant federal law enforcement responsibilities. I am referring here to the RCMP's responsibilities for the enforcement of federal legislation relating to drugs, customs, immigration and the like, as well as to its responsibilities for protective policing and the enforcement of executive orders.

Those responsibilities are exclusively federal responsibilities and the costs associated with those responsibilities are therefore borne exclusively by the federal government. The costs of federal law enforcement therefore are not an issue in these negotiations.

What is at issue in these negotiations is the share of the provincial, territorial and municipal policing costs that should be borne by the contract jurisdictions. The provinces, and this is fair, are questioning the federal government's proposal that a more appropriate sharing of the costs would be 75 per cent provincial, 25 per cent federal. Their suggestion is that the 1981 agreement was definitive and permanent in establishing a 70–30 split of costs.

• (1230)

I want to make two points that I think are relevant to that. First of all, I would point out to the House that the provincial share of costs has been moving up over the years as the provinces grew in size and became more capable of paying for the service.

The provincial share in 1928 was 40 per cent. In 1971 it was increased to 56 per cent, and between 1981 and 1991 the provincial share went from 56 per cent to 70 per cent.

I imagine that the 70–30 compromise was taken with the realization that the increase was substantial and therefore should be tempered.

However, the historical trend is clear. I think it is really a question of the provinces assuming a greater portion of their financial responsibility consistent with their constitutional responsibility for the administration of justice, including provincial and municipal policing.

Second, by contrast with the 1981 agreements, I think it is fair to say the present federal offer is a very modest one. Apart from some adjustments to the base to ensure that the costs of delivering the service are more fairly reflected, we are only asking that the provinces pay an additional 5 per cent of the costs of RCMP provincial policing, an increase that we are prepared to phase in over time.

What we have here, then, is a gradual movement toward a more accurate matching of costs and benefits. In fact, we believe that we are suggesting a fairer rather than an unfair treatment of policing costs.

We acknowledge that there is a federal benefit in RCMP contract policing. It has been suggested that the 1985 Neilsen report established the federal benefit at 30 per cent.

I understand that the 1985 Neilsen report concluded that it was impossible to quantify the federal benefit with any precision. It went on to suggest that the real provincial and municipal burdens were lighter than the cost share ratios would indicate since the cost base only partly reflected the cost of delivering the service.

I suggest that the cost share ratios established in 1981 represented an incremental assumption by the contract provinces of a greater measure of their financial responsibility consistent, as I say once again, with their constitutional responsibility for the administration of justice, including provincial and municipal policing.

It would be consistent with the entire history of the RCMP contract policing which has been characterized by graduated increases in the provincial shares of the costs of the policing service.

It also has to be appreciated that over the last 10 years the cost share ratios have been applied to a negotiated cost base. For example, for some reason the cost base excludes the employer's contribution to unemployment insurance premiums. The Auditor General of Canada has noted this anomaly several times, specifically in his audit of Saskatchewan, and said that that should be included.

Second, only a portion of the employer's contribution to RCMP pensions is included in the cost base.

Third, concerning accommodation charges, when the federal government rents to the provinces it is one-third of comparable market rates. We find that when the provinces rent to us, however, we are paying market rates. There has to be an adjustment there.

In my preliminary discussions with Ivan Messmer of British Columbia and Jim McCrae of Manitoba, I sensed that there was a willingness to reach a fair cost base structure, and I am sure we can make progress on that particular issue.

What is at issue is the value to the provinces and contracting municipalities that they receive from contract policing. Speaking as a chartered accountant, I would suggest that this is not quantifiable in terms of dollars and cents as we can quantify some of the things in the cost base.

I think one has to look at what it would cost the province or municipality if it were doing it on its own. Rather than pontificating on this from a lofty federal viewpoint, I want to refer the House to an opinion recently expressed by Dennis Moffatt, an alderman from Red Deer, Alberta, the same municipality which was referred to by my hon. friend opposite in his remarks. This exchange took place on *Alberta News Hour* on April 26, 1991.

The reporter says:

> Dennis Moffatt sat on the local council for 15 years and has heard the complaint before, that the RCMP are too expensive. He says: "Even if the city has to pay 100 per cent of the bill, it is still a good buy".

Mr. Moffatt:

> When we buy a constable, he comes equipped with uniform, training out of Regina and Ottawa, a car, radio back-up, access to laboratories right across the country, access to Interpol, the FBI, the CIA, the MI-5 right across the board. We would have to pay for that at the municipalities if we did it by ourselves.

What Mr. Moffatt was talking about were the benefits of the economies of scale that the provinces and the municipalities receive from the RCMP contract policing. Duplication is eliminated in areas such as communications, computer systems, management structure, recruiting, training, personnel services and in a number of operational support areas, including fingerprint identification services, dog services and air and marine services.

When I was in B.C. I had occasion to discuss this matter with some officers out there. It occurred to me as a layman that there are some benefits I have not mentioned.

If the RCMP has a constable who has reached his or her level of excellence in one province and is looking for a greater challenge, an opportunity to further his or her career and if there is a need in a larger province or another opportunity for that particular individual, then there is so much more flexibility in the RCMP and the provinces, be they large or small, to get a better constable. That is another benefit which I would say accrues to the provinces.

It may be difficult to assign dollar values to these benefits, but I believe they represent significant benefits to the contract provinces and the territories.

I mention these benefits because I am concerned that they are not always given the prominence I think they deserve.

In addition to the direct benefits that I have described above, there are also a number of significant indirect and intangible benefits which are enjoyed by the provinces, the territories and the municipalities that contract for RCMP policing services. Some of these are as follows.

First, law enforcement services: These include the Canadian Police Information Centre, a large computer centre that police can use via terminals to check on stolen vehicles, criminal records and missing persons, the Canadian Police College and the forensic lab. These services are available to the entire Canadian police community at no charge. Again it is the federal government that covers these costs.

Second, non-police duties: The RCMP, particularly in remote regions, performs a number of duties that are strictly speaking not police duties. I am talking about issuing lottery licences, inspecting vehicles on behalf of the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, et cetera. There have been some recent RCMP estimates that the RCMP dedicates as much as 30 person-years to serving as prosecutors on behalf of the Attorney General of Newfoundland. It is the federal government that covers these costs on behalf of the provinces and the territories.

Third, the Corps of Commissionaires at division and subdivision levels: Although the facilities at the division and subdivision levels are often being used by three levels of government, all security costs are charged to the federal government.

Fourth, divisional staff relations representatives program and labour challenges through the Federal Court: All of the labour related costs of the RCMP, from association to litigation, are carried by the federal government. The contract jurisdictions are receiving their policing free of the labour related charges. Put more directly, the contract divisions are receiving a strike free policing service and again the federal government covers the cost of this benefit.

• (1240)

Five, civil actions, compensation claims and *ex gratia* payments: The contract jurisdictions are receiving their policing free of all the legal liabilities that ordinarily are attached to a police force. The federal government pays 100 per cent of these costs.

Six, centralized audit and program evaluation: There are a number of smaller items, which are impossible to quantify with any precision, which come into this. I am speaking of centralized audit programs, bulk buying, et cetera. The federal government carries the entire burden of these costs.

Most important perhaps, the federal government makes a considerable contribution over and above the contracts to building and maintaining high national policing standards and the contract jurisdictions get the benefit of that contribution at no additional cost.

In the short time that I have had the privilege to serve as Solicitor General I have developed a very real concern that perhaps the contract jurisdictions do not fully appreciate the cost advantages of the RCMP on the street, as it were. As a recent report of the British Columbia police services branch acknowledged, the RCMP provides what is probably the most frugal policing service in the country.

This conclusion is borne out by data produced by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, a division of Statistics Canada. These data tell us that on a per capita basis, that is per capita of provincial residents, each resident of Ontario is paying $245.14 for the provincial policing service. Similarly, each resident of Quebec is paying $247.04 for the provincial policing service.

By contrast, each resident of British Columbia is paying $136.26 for the provincial policing service. That is quite a saving compared to Ontario and Quebec. In Nova Scotia each provincial resident is paying only $80.68 for the RCMP provincial policing service.

Put another way, using Ontario and Quebec as reference points, policing services would cost the contract provinces on average more than twice as much as they are now paying if they were to establish their own police forces. The cost sharing formula in the RCMP contract policing is in need of review in order that—to paraphrase the words of my hon. colleague, the member for Comox—Alberni—the policing costs fairly reflect the RCMP services which the provinces and the municipalities receive.

In conclusion I say we, the federal government, seek a fair apportionment of the policing costs in the provinces and the municipalities in which the RCMP provides services. We are conscious of their fiscal realities. We are sure that they are conscious of ours.

We are both conscious of the fact that the RCMP, through its national service, serves as an effective national operation which benefits federal, provincial and municipal jurisdictions.

We do not seek to put at risk this national institution because of a need to budget. Effectiveness and essentials can often transcend dollars and cents. That is what we seek to do. I am confident that we can do it.

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, in response to the Solicitor General, I find him very interesting. Having dealt with the Solicitor General in the past, I feel that the new contract arrangements will be fair. I trust also that the Solicitor General would know though that when we hear "fairness" from the other side, it is a strange word when we see what has happened in the past dealing with the economy and dealing with other social programs.

I think we have to give the benefit of the doubt to the Solicitor General. I am very hopeful that he will carry out these contracts in a very fair way.

As a Quebecer, and we have our own police force, I would be willing to bet that most Quebecers would say that we have with the national police force, the RCMP, a very fine force. If we are talking about one of the threads

that unify this country, we are looking at the RCMP as most definitely one of those.

I have come here to not only praise the RCMP but also to criticize it as a Quebecer. No matter which contract is agreed upon with the provinces, I would like to request a response from the Solicitor General that his attention be paid to the most recent tendency of politicians to put their cotton picking hands into the RCMP's business.

As a Quebecer I can speak to you about barn burning, I can speak to you about raids on political parties' membership lists and, most recently, I can speak to you from my own riding about a former member of Parliament. While he was under investigation the search warrant being carried out was delayed deliberately. It was a political decision because that former member of Parliament was a candidate in that election. I was a candidate at the same time in the same riding. Only after that member of Parliament won was a search warrant carried out.

What happens to the RCMP is that when we get it politically involved, it loses its fine reputation temporarily, but it takes a chink out of the armour. I would request that the gentleman on the other side, the Solicitor General, be very, very careful that does not occur again.

There is just one more recent case which has always been bothering me since I have been here in this House. It deals with a political decision with the RCMP on bilingual bonuses. Bilingual bonuses are approximately in the amount of $800. They were supposed to be paid since 1976 to RCMP members. They have not been paid. There was a judgment of the Federal Court of Canada in March, 1990, which said that the $800 bilingual bonuses should be paid. In the same judgment, Gingras *v.* Her Majesty the Queen, Judge Dubé said: "The question, therefore, is whether the board enjoys a discretion"—I am talking about the Treasury Board which has refused to pay these bilingual bonuses—"and it can, with impunity, ignore its own policies and impose an unofficial exclusion which was never stated in the policy". In other words, the Treasury Board abused its powers and therefore acted illegally.

Judge Dubé said that the Treasury Board acted illegally and abused its powers.

I have a paper here from the RCMP Association. RCMP members are not allowed to have a union as such. They have a French and English association. They were talking about this court case as a possibility where they could obtain a bonus which was legitimately theirs since 1976, a bonus which generally reaffirms our commitment to two official languages. At the time of the writing of this internal document from the RCMP Association, there was great hope that they would be able to get the bilingual bonus because the case had just been won.

There was a political decision to be made. Do we appeal this decision or do we give these RCMP members their money?

According to this document, and I just want to quote it briefly and then I will listen to the Solicitor General's response, the members of the RCMP say:

[*Translation*]

"According to the uncontradicted testimony of Mr. Gaston Guénette, an official language policy officer at the Treasury Board Secretariat, no ministerial order has excluded non-civilian members of the RCMP from the bonus. The decision came from Cabinet and was communicated to the RCMP by the Board. The Board's decision was influenced by the opinions, fears and pressures of the RCMP Commissioner. Given Mr. Guénette's testimony, there is reason to fear that the Commissioner was certainly involved in the decision in question."

• (1250)

[*English*]

Finally, they add that this matter was brought up with one of the predecessors of the Solicitor General, the Hon. Pierre Blais, and they mentioned that he was in agreement that this bilingual bonus be paid and he was bringing that before Treasury Board.

Before concluding, I would like to add that this problem of a bilingualism bonus is presently having an incredible deteriorating effect on morale at the RCMP. It is becoming a language issue between English and French and it is not conducive to the proper, efficient functioning of the RCMP. I would like to ask the minister if he would look into this, as he has looked into other things which I have presented and has done a very good job, and get back to me on the possibility of doing something about this sore which is festering between English and French speaking officers in the RCMP.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his remarks. I think it is fair to say that there is appreciation on the part of all residents of Ontario and Quebec as to the value of the RCMP to the country and the contribution it makes to national unity. I have every confidence in the fairness of the RCMP and its ability to police in any province.

With respect to the suggestion of political interference, I can tell my hon. friend that I have no intention of interfering with the RCMP in the conduct of its duties. I am sure that no other Solicitor General would have done so either. To do so would have been to breach the oath of office and I do not think the RCMP would go for it.

Let me now turn my attention to the Gingras case. I would say that in my previous capacity as Attorney General for Canada that appeals are not taken on a political basis. In my experience as Attorney General there were some decisions of the Federal Court which were not appealed because we agreed with the decision. In other cases there were decisions of the Federal Court which we felt in order to get a definitive answer should be appealed to the Federal Court of Appeal and then move on that as a government having received the benefit of the wisdom of the Federal Court of Appeal as opposed to a single judge. It is not a question of political interference or will; it is a question of trying to get the best decision possible for the country.

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, since we are dealing with the matter of RCMP policing, costs and procedures, I wonder if the Solicitor General might take a moment to tell this House whether he intends to present amendments to the RCMP act to deal with the RCMP public complaints procedure. It is an extremely fine service to the public in that grievances have been quickly resolved by this institution. There are about 40 amendments in this book that need some serious attention to make this police force better.

Mr. Lewis: I appreciate my hon. friend's comments. I have had a briefing on that particular institution. I want an opportunity to discuss this with the force and the ministry and I will come to my conclusions after I have had the benefit of that advice. It is not something I am ignoring. It is just in the flow of things I have to deal with and I have not had an opportunity to fully apprise myself of the facts.

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, there is a great deal of debate today.

It is very useful that there is an opportunity to debate the question of policing and the cost of policing in Canada. I am pleased that the Solicitor General, the minister responsible for the RCMP, is in the House to hear the concerns of members of the House.

The cost of policing and the level of policing is an extremely important issue today. The level of policing in the community of Campbell River, British Columbia has created concerns that more police officers are required. It is like many other communities.

We have a recession going on. During the recession crime has continued to rise pretty dramatically. The crime that is happening is unusual. There is the standard form of break and enter in which a professional individual breaks into an establishment.

It is hard to tell that the individual has entered. The most valuable material is removed. There is very little damage, and indeed, there is very little indication of the entry and theft.

Then there is the other kind of situation, of which there is apparently an enormous increase in communities, in which an individual breaks into a home, restaurant, or another operation and removes things like cigarettes, food, and small amounts of money. It is almost subsistence stealing. This is occurring during a period of recession and high unemployment.

The kind of action that will deter that type of activity is more attention by government to support of social services and, as well, more policing. This is absolutely not the time to create a situation where we are going to see a reduction in policing.

An increase of 27 to 30 per cent in the operating budget of a small community because of increased policing costs is certainly going to be a deterrent to any expansion in policing. Indeed, we are going to see cuts in policing.

At a time when crime is rising in many areas this is absolutely critical. This must be put on the back burner. The minister and the government should begin to negotiate and be willing to go to the table with the provinces involved and make some accommodation during this very difficult time.

In one area that I represent on the Sechelt peninsula there are two communities, the town of Gibsons and the district of Sechelt. They recently underwent an enormous expansion of population which is growing very rapidly. Unfortunately, there has been no expansion in police services in that community.

The other thing that happened in that community was a major expansion to the pulp mill. In my recollection, the pulp mill took on about 1,600 people, mainly single men who arrived in the community to work on the mill construction. They lived in bunk houses creating considerable stress in the community.

In addition, we had at one point 200 pipeline workers from the province of Alberta who arrived on the Sechelt peninsula to put in a gas pipeline. They were there for a few months, and then they were gone. Again, that created enormous stress.

On many occasions, there was a single police officer to deal with the entire area. Something on the order of 1,800 single men, or men who were by themselves, in the community created a substantial strain.

In one altercation in the emergency ward of the St. Mary's Hospital a nurse was unable to get police assistance. There just was not a police officer to be had. They wound up having to phone Vancouver to see if they could dispatch somebody.

News of the concern eventually reached my office and the local RCMP and the RCMP said: "Look, we are using all the people we have to the maximum extent they can be used". Ultimately the conclusions of the municipalities, the regional board, and everyone on that peninsula is that they needed more policing and that no consideration was being given to the natural growth of a community which is a bedroom community of Vancouver and is growing extremely rapidly.

There was no consideration given to the quick 1,600 or 1,800 increase in the population because of the pipeline and mill constructions. That cannot be allowed to continue in an area as it could create a very unsafe situation for people.

• (1300)

It is incumbent upon the Solicitor General and the Government of Canada to ensure they do not make these cuts in funding at this time and cut policing in the municipalities even further. The federal government has a responsibility to assist the provinces in providing adequate levels of policing in those communities and in determining how to solve those problems, rather than to create problems and make them more intense.

In the community of Sechelt there has been talk of hiring private police. Break and entry of businesses is rising at a rapid rate and business people in the community are now taking a look at how they might hire people to take on police and security work. There is talk of vigilantes. This, of course, is absolutely not an acceptable direction to go.

It is ironic that the scepticism expressed by many of the people is that this is what the federal government wants. It wants privatization of services. This is the direction it will move in. So the people will hire their own police force. That is the direction they see. There is a lack of care and concern on the part of the federal government.

I would suspect that there are groups meeting. There have been discussions in Campbell River on Vancouver Island. This is going to happen. There are very serious concerns about the number of break-ins of homes and businesses and the people are very, very concerned about the level of policing.

There are discussions now on how people in the business community and the core of the community can create their own private operations to try and give them a little more security and a little more safety. This has to happen.

The federal government has to fight the increase of police forces in the hands of a number of individuals and look at providing better levels of trained, professional peace officers in those communities. This is moving in a very dangerous direction. I see a population out there that is very sceptical about this government's concern for their well-being.

The costs that are going to fall on small communities of 5,000 or more people are enormous. Their operating budgets have been hammered very badly.

I would like to use the example of the community of Alert Bay on northern Vancouver Island. Alert Bay has had an interesting encounter with this federal government. It has a Coast Guard radio station which provides about 13 jobs for this very small community of about 1,000 and a native community of about 900 people. The Conservative government decided that it was time to remove those 13 jobs from a community that can ill afford to lose them. They were terminated in spite of some very constructive cost-saving proposals which were totally ignored. The government has now adopted the Prime Minister's slogan: "I do not care how unpopular it is. I know best". So it did not listen to Alert Bay. It did not listen to northern Vancouver Island and the people's suggestions on how it could be made more efficient and how some of the economic benefits could be retained. Out it went.

Seven federal government jobs in the RCMP marine division were moved out of Alert Bay. They are gone. Again the Prime Minister knows best and the community is damaged.

There are cuts to the postal service, and the Prime Minister knows best.

Johnstone Strait communities are based on fishing. It was decided to drastically cut the Johnstone Strait fisheries. This fishery is absolutely critical to Alert Bay. It provides seasonal jobs for the Indian community and the non-Indian community. No, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans knows best. It is going to cut down on fishing in Johnstone Strait and limit the ability of these people to earn an income.

They are up in arms over this. Ottawa does not care. It does not care about the jobs provided by the RCMP marine division. It does not care about the Coast Guard radio station. It does not care about the hundreds and hundreds of jobs related to the Johnstone Strait fisheries. It is going to get rid of them.

To add insult to injury it was decided to make it harder to get unemployment insurance. Now, these people cannot get work. They want to work in traditional jobs as they have always done but they cannot do it. They hope they can feed their families by qualifying for more than 10 weeks of unemployment insurance. But no, fisheries and oceans and the Government of Canada will not do it. Many of those people are now collecting welfare because of this federal government.

Another insult added to injury is that fisheries and oceans—again the Conservative government knows best—decided it was going to eliminate Alert Bay as a port of landing for halibut, for sable fish. Even though there are two producers in that community, they are gone.

Turning to policing costs, Alert Bay will get less policing out of the northern Vancouver Island thing because of what is going on with the federal government today. In the middle of a recession the community is being devastated by this government. Policing services, which are desperately needed there, are going to be cut back as well.

It is ironic that this is being done at a time when the Prime Minister of Canada is asking the people of Alert Bay to become concerned about national unity, to become concerned about all of us as Canadians with the federal government as a focal point. Those people are saying: "The best thing I can expect from the federal government is another poke in the eye with a sharp stick."

When we talk about national unity, there are still some very strong Canadians there who totally blame the Prime Minister and the government for the misfortune that has befallen them. Every individual, every business, every person in the fishing industry in that community cannot wait to vote against the government.

Just a stone's throw across the water from Alert Bay is the community of Port Hardy. Port Hardy has suffered under the lash of this uncaring government. Port Hardy is a community of close to 5,000 people. It was a growing, healthy and a vibrant place to be and in the 1981 census it went over 5,000. As a result of having a population over 5,000, they wound up having to pay policing costs which were a substantial part of their operating budget. All of a sudden, the recession came on the next year, in 1982, and their population base collapsed. It went down to 4,000. They should not have had to pay policing costs, but unfortunately there is no mechanism in the agreement to relieve them of the policing costs once they hit 4,000 or fewer.

Unfortunately there is Port Hardy, with barely 5,000 people, paying policing costs for almost 10 years. There is some real evidence that it should not have been doing that.

About one-third of the people in that community work in Island Copper Mine which used to belong to Utah. Now it belongs to Broken Hills of Australia. The jobs of those 650 people are projected to be gone by 1996. It should turn Port Hardy into an economic distress area of serious proportions. At the same time, the Government of Canada wants to load greater policing costs on them. This community needs those policing services.

Again, the federal government does not stop there. Port Hardy is also suffering because it is dependent on seasonal industries such as fishing and forestry. Unfortunately those industries suffer because of the federal government: the 15 per cent softwood lumber tax on lumber going into the United States; the cutbacks in Johnstone Strait fisheries; the eliminating of certain points for landing fish. Then the federal government decides to close the military base at Holberg. There was no money or real assistance for these people to try to find an alternate activity for that particular asset. The government by and large just said: "Close the operation, eliminate those jobs", putting more economic hardship on the community of Port Hardy which is adjacent to Holberg.

The government closed the military base. It cut back access to unemployment insurance. It cut back the Johnstone Strait fisheries, and Port Hardy is looking at the closure of a mine in 1996 that employs about one-third of its population. That mine is going on strike at eight o'clock or being locked out at eight o'clock tonight. In fact, the worst case scenario is if the company says: "We are going to close it earlier". There is a real fear that that is going to happen.

How do those people in Port Hardy see this federal government that will not even come and talk to them about the problems, that will not accept their suggestions for alternatives? They do not.

It is ironic that the problem is not just policing costs. It is the Conservative government saying to the people of Alert Bay: "I don't care"; saying to the people of Port Hardy: "I don't care"; and saying to the people of Gibsons and Sechelt: "I don't care about you". That is the message being communicated. Then we have the gall of the Prime Minister who turns around and says: "Be concerned about central Canada, be concerned about all of Canada. We are leading the charge for national unity". And they say: "Well, if you re leading this charge for national unity, we don't want anything to do with it. We want an election because we want to get rid of you".

• (1310)

If you go into that community and ask them about the GST and all the money that is going to Ottawa, about the trade agreement with the United States, about being involved in a trade agreement with Mexico, about whether we should have higher policing costs, they say: "You don't care about us. You are going to destroy the economy of our community. There is nothing there. We know that you think you know better".

One of the things that is absolutely painful is that that community is desperately trying to build up an economic sector around tourism. It needs a customs officer in order to make Port Hardy a point of landing in Canada.

For three years they tried an experiment. They put in a customs officer and at the end of that period they said: "We don't like the numbers that came up there; therefore we are pulling the customs officer out. Besides, we are kind of into privatizing our services so if you want one you should look at paying for one yourself".

The Mount Waddington Regional Board, under which Port Hardy finds itself, came up with a solution in which a customs enforcement officer would be paid a stipend of 20 hours a month and they would make up the difference. They would pay for four hours a day for a customs officer. They were prepared to go along with this user-pay, privatization of the services, and pay the federal government in order to pay the customs officer.

The customs people came back and said: "No, no, we don't want to do that. We don't want any part-time customs officers. We want a full-time customs officer in there at $27 an hour for 52 weeks of the year or you can't have it".

Unfortunately these people do not have the money. They are paying for policing costs and for a certain number of social service costs to their communities because of the economic hardship that is going on. These people are burdened to death with charges that have fallen on them because of the Conservative government. This is a devastating policy.

The Reform Party is growing like wildfire and it is growing at the expense of the Conservative Party. They cannot wait to get rid of this government. Their tongues are hanging out for an election.

I have never seen an organization like it. In 1984 they just swept the country and in every other area they were the second choice. They have absolutely devastated themselves. It will be a surprise to see the Conservatives get their deposits back in many of the ridings in British Columbia. I sat with a prominent member of your party who said they have not got a safe seat in the entire province. Does that not say that the Prime Minister really does not know what is going on, that he really does not know what is best? What about the chopping out of Johnstone Strait fisheries, getting rid of the customs officer, jacking up the price for the RCMP, cutting off people from unemployment insurance, cutting out ports of landing, closing the base at Holberg, getting rid of services that are absolutely critical such as harbour services for marine transport, fishing harbour services, aeronautical services in those areas, skyrocketing transportation costs? Does that not tell him that he is doing something wrong?

It is ironic. A comedian stood up in Victoria one day and said: "We have a government in this country that is proposing to change the Constitution, that is proposing to change the relationship between Canada and Mexico and the United States and create a situation where our economy is going to be devastated in transition and may never recover—we may be Puerto Rico—and the Prime Minister enjoys the confidence of 14 per cent of Canadians". Then he said: "To get that into perspective, 15 per cent of Canadians think Elvis Presley is still alive".

This government is so far out of touch with what Canadians need and want it is wrecking the country piece by piece. It is wrecking Port Hardy. It is wrecking Alert Bay. It is wrecking many, many other communities and regions in this country. This situation has got to be turned around.

What does this government want? Does it want to wreck this country?

As we approach 1993 the Prime Minister turns around and leaves office because he cannot be re-elected and the party cannot be re-elected with him as Prime Minister; he walks out and says: "I achieved everything I set out to do. I wrecked Canada".

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the speech of the hon. member and would like to comment.

Port Hardy is familiar to me because my daughter and son-in-law worked as physicians there, and I can confirm what he is saying. They said this community was devastated by the policies of this government. So I perfectly agree with what he was saying.

I would like to point out as well that the principle of the contract we are negotiating with the eight provinces and two territories was established in 1981. One of the principles was that 70 per cent of the services provided by the RCMP in those provinces and territories were under the Criminal Code and provincial statutes. This is why the provinces agreed to pay 70 per cent of the costs. Thirty per cent of the services were federal statutes and laws like immigration, drug enforcement, migratory birds, wildlife, and white collar crime.

Therefore, a principle was established that 30 per cent of the activities of the RCMP in a given province were of federal jurisdiction. Now the Solicitor General tells them: "We want to pay only 25 per cent, and you pay 75 per cent". Naturally, you are shifting the burden on the taxpayer of that province.

As far as the municipalities are concerned, they were paying 90 per cent for the services of the RCMP and the federal government only 10 per cent. This was logical; they accepted that.

Therefore, I think what the government does is put the burden on the taxpayers of that province. I listened before to another member here, I think she was a Conservative, who said: "But you know, Quebec and Ontario are subsidizing the RCMP to do the policing duties in the other provinces". I think one thing they forget is that the RCMP performs duties in the province of Quebec and Ontario. There are about 2,000 officers in those provinces that are being paid by the federal government. Quebec and Ontario do not contribute a cent to those services. Therefore it is a false argument.

Another principle that was established is that if you have a national police force like the RCMP it is an efficiency factor. It is better to have one police force than to have three or four. The cost is lower. This is what is happening in those provinces where the RCMP provides services. So it is extremely important that you maintain efficiency and cut the costs, and one of the ways of cutting costs is by having a national police force.

The third principle that was established in 1981 when those negotiations were taking place is that the RCMP was a symbol of national unity. This government talks continuously about national unity, of the symbolism of our institutions, but it is trying to destroy the most important symbol of Canada that everybody around the world knows, namely, the RCMP. Canadians all over the world are known as having a national police force that is extremely efficient.

• (1320)

Why does this Solicitor General, who has just recently been appointed, not follow the advice of the eight provinces and two territories and accept the principle that was so well established after so many negotiations in 1981? I hope that he listens to Canadians and he accepts the 30–70 ratio. I think this is the way to go. I hope he has the courage to override the decision of the former solicitor general who said: "Take it or leave it". At the present time there is no contract between the eight provinces and two territories and the federal Solicitor General's department.

I would like to ask the hon. member whether he agrees with me that this government has not given due respect to the feelings of western Canadians as far as the RCMP is concerned?

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Calgary summarized, in a succinct, intelligent, clear-sighted way, the problems of the way a national symbol is being downgraded.

There is a commitment to federal policing responsibilities in areas with very high native or Indian population. The RCMP do an awful lot of work in those communities that relate to federal responsibilities. The hon. member was very clear and insightful. I would recommend that some of the members review his comments.

I do not know, in reality, the way the question sits, but I know how westerners respond to what is going on. Westerners believe that they have been slapped in the face by this government. When I went through Alert Bay and Port Hardy I witnessed the economic disasters one after another that they have experienced. The government will not even talk to them or even come to the Johnson Strait Fishing Community group. They could never get the minister in there. He said: "Oh sure, I will come along and do it", but he never did and he let those communities go down the drain. They are going down the drain even further on policing and the post office and everything else.

What the hon. member for Calgary says is not about whether the government has paid attention or contributed enough to the west, but maybe the government should ask if what it is doing is good for the people. The Prime Minister says he knows what is good for them. How do people interpret it, because the government sure does not interpret it that way.

I came to this House of Commons 12 years ago with the hon. member who is the new Solicitor General. I wish him well in a very difficult portfolio. I have nothing but respect for him. I have seen him work in this House for 12 years. I know he will do a good job. I know he is a committed, hard-working member of Parliament, beyond a shadow of a doubt, and so are many of the other people who sit on those benches. They are strong, well-intentioned Canadians, but something has gone amok. I do not know what it is. What they are doing is turning people against them in droves in this country and I have never seen or experienced that before. The only thing I can say is, for God's sake, not only are you wrong in what you are doing, but you are creating absolute havoc in the countryside.

I have three questions: Will the Solicitor General take a look at the recommendations of the RCMP Public Complaints Commission Annual Report? It is a chance to give people an opportunity to express their grievances and have them properly adjudicated. It is absolutely critical. It will make one of the best police forces in the world better by giving people more confidence in it.

Will the Solicitor General look, in these serious times, at the level of policing in the communities? Harmful reactions are occurring because of it. The confidence in the police force is eroding and we are moving toward private operations and private security.

The last thing is that the communities in the riding I represent cannot afford to pay these increases at these times. Please, go to the table and get some alternate arrangement.

Mr. Rob Nicholson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I find it significant that the motion before this House today should encourage the government to conclude contract policing agreements which do not "unfairly transfer policing costs" to the contracting jurisdictions. The motion is, in my view, an indication of the general lack of understanding and appreciation which exists within the NDP for the size and importance of the role of the RCMP in providing federal, protective policing and law enforcement services to all Canadians.

In view of the present circumstances surrounding the ongoing contract negotiations, it is understandable that much of the public's attention has been focused on the contract policing role of the RCMP. While contract policing is a major part of the RCMP's function, it should be emphasized that a large percentage of RCMP personnel and resources are engaged in non-contract activities paid for in their entirety by the federal government. You would never know that after listening to the NDP here today.

These activities such as federal law enforcement, protective policing, and law enforcement services, provide substantial benefits to communities across Canada regardless of whether or not they are served by RCMP contract policing detachments.

It is important that during these ongoing federal-provincial negotiations for renewal of the policing contracts the parties directly involved and, indeed, all Canadians should remind themselves of the important services provided by the RCMP to all levels of government and to all citizens.

When considering the motion which is before the House it is important that hon. members be fully informed of the extent to which the Royal Canadian Mounted Police provides law enforcement and police services to all Canadians and of the extent to which those services are provided without cost to the provinces and municipalities.

Most Canadians, especially those outside Ontario and Quebec, are aware that the RCMP provides contract policing to a number of provincial and territorial jurisdictions. This fact is perhaps one of the most evident aspects of RCMP activities because it is probably the force's most visible program. The presence of the Mounties in eight of the 10 provinces, the two territories, and close to 200 municipalities in a contract policing role is as visible and apparent as that of city or provincial police in Ontario and Quebec. Citizens recognize the force and rightly so as a symbol of trust, authority, law and order. Members from both political parties referred to the RCMP as one of the best police forces in the world. I wish they could give me their list of who they think is better or who tops this list if the RCMP is only one of the best.

Notwithstanding the importance of this role, the RCMP performs a number of other vital functions to ensure the safety and security of all Canadians.

Members will appreciate that the RCMP maintains a federal policing complement in each of the 10 provinces and two territories. The RCMP federal policing complements attend to such federal responsibilities as policing at international and domestic airports, commercial crime investigations, protective policing of visiting dignitaries and other VIPs, as well as providing support to customs operations and drug law enforcement, something that is of particular importance coming as I do from the Niagara peninsula which is a border area.

Since federal policing units are dedicated solely to the enforcement of federal legislation and executive orders, the costs associated with these activities are paid for entirely by the federal government. You may have missed that if you followed, as I am sure you have, Madam Speaker, the debate here this morning. You would not be able to guess by listening to the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands that these services are paid for in total by the federal government—

An hon. member: He was referring to the NDP.

Mr. Nicholson: Oh, he was referring to the NDP. Then I withdraw that comment about him and direct it to where it should properly go which is of course the socialists at the end of the Chamber.

In addition to its specific federal law enforcement function, the RCMP provides law enforcement support services to all Canadian law enforcement agencies.

• (1330)

These services provide technical and operational support to provincial and municipal police forces and ensure that the latest police technology and techniques are available to provincial and municipal police forces across Canada.

Law enforcement services are provided to local police forces regardless of their size or ability to pay and help to assist in maintaining a high national standard of criminal investigations. These services are funded by the federal government in the interest of maintaining the safety and security of all Canadians.

The combination of federal law enforcement activities and the provision of law enforcement services to Canadian police forces constitutes an important part of RCMP program activities. They are important not only to the federal government and to the RCMP but of course to the communities and local police forces that benefit from these services.

Federal expenditures on RCMP activities constitute a significant portion of RCMP resource levels. Indeed, revenues from all services rendered, including contract policing services, amount to only 30 per cent of the cost of the RCMP's law enforcement program.

For instance, in the 1988–89 fiscal year, the RCMP spent over $400 million on the enforcement of federal statutes and executive orders and over $125 million on the provision of law enforcement services. Expenditures on these program activities have increased in the last two years, to a combined total of $546 million in 1989–90 and $639 million in 1990–91. These combined activities thus represent program expenditures which are over three–quarters of the size of contract policing expenditures over the same period.

I would like to take this opportunity to give hon. members a wider appreciation of the variety and quality of services which are provided to Canadians by the RCMP and which are funded by the federal government. I do that, of course, because as I indicated earlier we might wait a long time before we hear the NDP mention some of these things.

I am confident that once this information is before the House, members' concerns about the transfer of policing costs from the federal government to provincial and municipal governments will be allayed.

The RCMP acts within its mandate to prevent, detect and investigate offences against federal statutes and to provide investigational assistance and security advice to other federal departments and agencies as required.

This responsibility involves the force's participation in the enforcement of over 40 major federal statutes from the Aeronautics Act to the Young Offenders Act. The force's Customs and Excise Program investigates smuggling and offences involving the illicit manufacturing of spirits or tobacco products, offences under the Excise Act. It is also responsible for investigating illegal trans–border shipping of strategic goods, high technology and cultural property.

The Mounties also enforce Canada's fight against the problem of illegal trafficking in endangered wildlife species. The Immigration and Passport Program assists in the enforcement of the Immigration and Citizenship Acts as well as the investigations of Canadian passport regulations under the Criminal Code.

Special Services provides support to investigators in technical and physical surveillance, polygraph examination, audio and video analysis and personality profiles of violent criminals. The force also maintains a special emergency response team which is trained to resolve terrorist hostage–taking incidents and related crises which may be beyond the normal capabilities of regular RCMP personnel and other police forces.

The War Crimes Investigation Unit works to bring to justice persons suspected of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Two areas of federal enforcement, drug enforcement and economic crimes, are areas of particular emphasis by the RCMP. The relatively large number of resources assigned to these initiatives reflects their priority for the federal government.

Currently, over 1,000 persons and approximately $84 million are committed to the investigation of offences relating to the importation, exportation, trafficking and possession of narcotics and other prohibited drugs in Canada. Federal drug sections co–operate with local police in drug enforcement activities and the operation of drug prevention and awareness programs.

The RCMP federal drug sections in connection with the contracting policing resources provide street level drug enforcement services across Canada.

Approximately 600 persons and $41 million are devoted to the specialized investigation of economic crime. This includes the investigation of fraudulent bankruptcies, violations of the Income Tax Act and the UI Act, counterfeiting, computer crime, and other forms of business-oriented crime.

In 1989, the economic crime program provided assistance in over 4,000 investigations which resulted in recoveries of almost $42 million by affected parties.

In addition to federal law enforcement, the RCMP is also responsible for discharging the government's protective policing obligations and providing security services to a range of federal properties, office-holders, and dignitaries.

Security services are provided to the Governor General, the Prime Minister and their families, as well as to foreign missions and visiting dignitaries. Federal properties such as Parliament Hill, Government House and the Supreme Court are also provided with security arrangements by the RCMP.

I am certain that in the course of most members' travels to and from their constituencies they have had occasion to see a member of the RCMP patrolling Canada's airports. Their uniformed presence at these facilities is the most visible part of the force's airport protective policing program which provides security services at 10 international and eight major domestic airports. Specially trained and armed personnel patrol critical access points inside terminals and aircraft operating areas to prevent and detect security incidents.

Resources devoted to the airport policing program in the current year total 895 person-years and approximately $75 million.

The RCMP maintains a small core of personnel which provides advice and expertise to ensure that security procedures at special events are in place to ensure the safety of participants. In this way the force contributes invaluable security advice and guidance to the planning of major events across Canada.

In 1990 the Royal Canadian Mounted Police co-ordinated 28 special events and was consulted on preparations for a further 52. Depending on annual requirements these events can range from state visits to major economic summits and major sporting events such as the Winter Olympics held recently in Calgary.

Protective policing services are estimated to account for 12.8 per cent of total RCMP expenditures and 9.7 per cent of person-years for 1991-92.

The Law Enforcement Services Program provides specialized services to the RCMP as well as to other law enforcement agencies, corrections agencies, government departments, and criminal courts. These services support participating agencies in exercising their responsibilities for maintaining peace, order, and security.

The Canadian Police Information Centre provides and maintains an automated national information system for the storage, retrieval and exchange of operational police information on behalf of all accredited Canadian police agencies. This program, along with the management of information, resources, and services required to support other RCMP programs, will account for over 1,700 person-years and about $155 million in RCMP expenditures for the current fiscal year.

The $31 million Forensic Laboratory Service Program provides scientific and technical assistance for the benefit of the Canadian criminal justice system. The program provides analysis of physical evidence acquired during the course of investigations and expert opinions based on scientific examinations to aid investigations and for use as court evidence.

In addition to court and investigative assistance, forensic scientific support is provided to participating agencies in the areas of developmental and technical training. Consulting services and training assistance may also be provided to other government departments and foreign countries.

Roughly $59 million of the RCMP's current resource allocation is allocated to the provision of identification services. This program maintains a centralized criminal records function supported by fingerprints for use by police agencies and other aspects of the criminal justice system.

• (1340)

Identification Services provides photographic processing and printing services, maintains records of restricted firearms, and examines fraudulent cheques and hold-up notes for similarities with other documents on file.

This program is also responsible for maintaining the missing children's registry which holds records on children who have been reported missing across Canada. The registry shares information with other police agencies and the media to assist in locating these children.

The RCMP also operates the Canadian Police College program, which provides advanced police training in organizational and administrative personnel management and specialized investigative techniques to assist law enforcement agencies. The college operates on a budget of about $9 million and provides training to over 2,000 candidates annually.

Criminal Intelligence Services Canada is a national organization which is administered by the RCMP and which focuses on gathering and sharing information on organized crime and tactical intelligence. The service provides facilities for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of criminal intelligence and ensures that the relevant intelligence is submitted to provincial bureaus. In this way the flow of information between units provides all Canadian police agencies with access to organized crime intelligence.

As I indicated at the beginning of my remarks, I have attempted to provide a brief overview of the many and varied services which are provided by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for the benefit of all Canadians.

In addition to the important and high profile contract policing services, the force devotes a sizeable portion of its resources to federal law enforcement, protective policing, and law enforcement services. In many cases these non-contract services provide considerable investigative and professional support, both directly and indirectly, to the contracting jurisdictions.

The government is pleased to reaffirm its continuing commitment and support for the RCMP's important national role in providing non-contract policing services, at federal expense, to all Canadian communities.

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, it was interesting to listen to the hon. member give a dissertation on the contents of the budget of the RCMP.

I am hoping he did not miss the point. The point is that many communities which have RCMP policing are going to be severely handicapped by these increases at a time of rising crime and recession and they are having extreme problems. It is not just the increases which are causing them the problems. There are a whole host of activities the federal government has done.

We do not have to take a riding held by these evil folks, the socialists. Let us take one that is held by one of the Conservative members.

Mr. Nunziata: Temporarily.

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Temporarily is an understatement. At Cariboo—Chilcotin and Williams Lake, the budget is estimated to go up 36 per cent. It is substantial. How do the people of Williams Lake feel about the Conservative member for Cariboo—Chilcotin on this matter? I can tell you how they feel about it. They are outraged. It is not the only problem.

We have a minister across the floor from Prince George—Peace River. His communities feel the same way. They do not want him to represent those communities any more and it is not going to happen. The people there feel they have been seriously aggrieved by this government.

I would ask again if we could maybe deal with three things. The member who just spoke would not agree that these three items are critically important for policing by the RCMP in the areas where it works. It is understaffed.

There is no question in this House about the kind of job that police force does, short of resources, short of a statute that needs to be brought up to date, and short of remuneration and working conditions that have to be considered. We need to support that organization, not abuse it. The level of policing has to be brought up in those communities. We do not need price increases right now for the existing services so we can reallocate the burden of taxes. We need an increase in the level of policing in those communities. The Solicitor General should be at the table now asking how the federal government can assist the provinces to provide safety for Canadian citizens.

The second thing that has to happen is that these price increases have got to be staved; the Solicitor General has got to go to the table with the provinces and work out an acceptable agreement now. We desperately need those services. They are good and we need them.

I would ask the member—I know his interests in the area of justice—whether he has made any representations on the question of the annual report of the RCMP public complaints commission. There are about 40 recommendations in there that are absolutely critical to upgrading public confidence in the RCMP. It is a good police force but there are some serious grievances that people have. There is an effective agency to hear those grievances and it is being hamstrung by the fact that the legislation is not up to date. There are many things that were not contemplated when that legislation was put on the books and that legislation needs to be revamped.

Is the hon. member prepared—I know he has considered it already—to go through it one more time and make some representations to the Solicitor General? The Solicitor General has got to bring forward proposals for adopting these recommendations put forward by the agency itself and upgrading that service. We need better levels of policing; we need some help with those communities, not in the form of enormous cost increases but in developing those policing services over a rough economic time; and we need to do something to improve the public's confidence in this agency by establishing the complaints procedure. There are one or two items that really do need to be brought forward and dealt with in a public and fair way.

Would the member be prepared to talk about those with the Solicitor General to see if this House can begin to deal with those recommendations?

Mr. Nicholson: Madam Speaker, I am always prepared to speak with the Solicitor General. The Solicitor General, I believe, indicated in his concluding remarks that he was prepared to look at the recommendations concerning the public complaints commission. All hon. members take him at his word that he is studying those very carefully and will certainly be making comments directly on that in the future.

If I understand the first two points that the hon. member made, he made a plea for increased services. There is no doubt that the federal, provincial, and municipal governments can provide increased services in policing services. There is probably no area of governmental endeavour in which I would not like to see in some way a change or an increase in services. In the second part of his appeal he said among other things that we do not need—and I guess he was referring to municipal and provincial levels of government—an increase in costs.

I listened to the hon. member's comments about his analysis of the political situation in Canada. I am glad that he in a sense captured the NDP philosophy about government and taxation. I do not want the House to misunderstand. I always agree. I always want to increase services and I certainly do not want increased costs. Just in a nugget, the NDP philosophy is that the federal government should increase services but not increase any of the costs at the same time.

One of the finest things about the NDP being elected in Ontario, perhaps the only thing, is that people will finally get a look at that sort of theory in practice, the idea that you can just have more of everything. I remember people during the past provincial election, now that the member has raised this question of costs and services, who said to me: "I am from this particular profession. I would like to have some more money. The NDP is going to give me more money. There is going to be more money for hospitals, teachers, roads, and more money for all provincial services. The wonderful thing about it is despite you bad guys who like to tax us, we are going to be taxed less in Ontario".

• (1350)

I said: "Well, jeepers, you might as well have the perfect people running Queen's Park down there. I mean, if they could do all those wonderful things, let the perfect people do them. You know the Tories and the Liberals have a difficult time in providing the high level of services we have in this province and other provinces, and God bless the NDP if all of a sudden it can do that and everybody is going to get a tax holiday".

When people advocate and demand more services but want it to cost less for the taxpayer, they get into the mess the NDP is getting into at Queen's Park. The NDP government turned a surplus—and I give credit to the Liberals in Ontario for that, they had a surplus 18 months ago—into a $10 billion mess because the NDP live in a dream world where it can go on borrowing money.

The biggest threat to services in this country—all services, everything from policing to social services—is the level of debt in the country. The NDP is going to find that out at Queen's Park. Pretty soon we will have no chance to make the kinds of decisions about where we want to spend our money. If we continue with the way we have been going in this country for many years, the direction in which the government is apparently going at Queen's Park, all the money will go to the banks that the hon. member does not like. We will be paying it in interest whether he believes me or not. That is where the money is going to go. He will find that out in the long run.

Sure, we could run up a $60 billion debt in Canada this year. Our good friends at Queen's Park are probably just getting going. Next year they will be telling us: "It better be a $15 billion deficit". We can do that for a couple of years, but eventually we have to come to the conclusion that it is all over. We cannot do it anymore. We cannot shuffle the books. We cannot hide from the fact that difficult decisions have to be made.

It is at that point that we have to say: "We cannot give the increased level of services that we want, and we sure cannot do it at the same time without having anybody else share the cost with us."

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to hear the hon. member speaking about the deficit. I wish he had done so in 1984. Perhaps then the national debt would not have doubled in the years that the government he supports has been in office.

I am also delighted with the positive comments about the Liberals. I had the pleasure of seeing the former premier of Ontario last night. I am certainly well aware of the very competent job he did, and I know my hon. friend agrees that it was probably the best government the province of Ontario has ever had. Things have certainly gone downhill since. I know my hon. friend will agree with that.

In his long recitation of fact and fiction about the RCMP and the things it does—and I on this side of the House acknowledge the good job the RCMP does in our country—I wondered if he was perhaps going on a bit harshly about the member of the New Democratic Party who spoke before.

It seems to me that perhaps what the hon. member has confused in his mind—and I do not mean the hon. member for Niagara Falls, I mean the member for North Island—Powell River—is that perhaps the province of British Columbia was being assessed unfairly for the contract services provided by the federal government through the RCMP. I wonder if, in calculating the amount of fee to be charged to the province, the federal government has been adding in as expenses some of the activities carried on by the RCMP in its national mandate, not on a contractual basis.

I live in a municipality which recently had to contract services from the Ontario Provincial Police. It cost us an arm and a leg. The hon. member for North Island—Powell River talks about an increase in taxes. It is nothing compared to what residents of the township of Kingston recently had to endure, but I am not going to go into that.

I wonder if, in calculating the costs, the additional costs of running the RCMP have been added to the mix and charged out to the provinces. If so, I submit that this is the part that is unfair. Perhaps the parliamentary secretary could address that particular question more directly.

Mr. Nicholson: I am pleased to address that point. I wish I had time to address that first part about the debt, but we can save that for another day.

Something not mentioned in the debate is that the estimates and the basis upon which the contracts have been determined between British Columbia and other provinces actually underestimate the costs to the federal government.

However, certain things like pension and UIC benefits and indirect subsidies in terms of rental spaces in a number of western provinces, including British Columbia, actually underestimate the costs. Those costs are a contribution by the federal government to, what is in Quebec and Ontario, provincial policing services. They are an underestimation of the costs.

The Solicitor General, in the statistics he read to the House, actually pointed out that not only is there a contribution from the federal government to municipal and provincial services that does not take place in the two largest provinces, but, besides that, the cost is considerably less expensive.

Somebody referred to the RCMP as a frugal policing agency. It is frugal and effective. One of the things that can get lost in this debate is that the federal government has been very fair over the years in its negotiations. It obviously does not want something like this motion, which looks like an attempt to tie the hands of the government in its negotiations. The government just wants to have a reasonable agreement. That is all the federal government is looking for.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, I want to ensure that I have the details of my sharing of time correct. I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Western Arctic. I assume I have 10 minutes and 5 minutes of questions and she will have the same.

I am pleased to be able to stand in the House today and address this particular motion, the essence of which is really the budgetary reality of the provinces and municipalities involved with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police contract negotiations. That is the very essence of it. What is the budgetary reality out there for all of the provinces and municipalities using this particular service at this time?

I have heard a number of colleagues mention—

[*Translation*]

—that we have a very proud and effective police force that is an extremely important symbol in the country and of course an extremely important symbol of national unity. I agree. This police force, the RCMP, is known throughout the world. I do not think we should underestimate the importance of this institution for Canada and for keeping Canada together.

[*English*]

As I indicated in previous remarks this morning, the attorney general of Manitoba, Mr. McCrae, made the point that the RCMP was a unifying force in Canada.

Let us not delude ourselves. We are talking about $79 million fewer that will have to be replaced by the provinces and municipalities. We are talking about roughly 10 million Canadians, western and northern Canadians and people from the Atlantic provinces. Approximately 80 per cent of those come from western and northern Canada. Therefore, roughly 80 per cent of that $79 million will be taken out of the pocketbooks of western and northern Canadians. We must not ever forget that.

This is another excellent example of off-loading which the government continues to do. It is not unlike me saying to my spouse: "I want to cut down on my expenditures. Of the $700 mortgage, I am only paying $500 now. You are spending $500 on food but I am only giving you $400 now". All of a sudden, I stand up and brag to everyone and say that I am controlling my expenditures. What nonsense. It is just totally illogical.

This is what is happening. This is a continuation of the withdrawal of the federal presence in certain parts of Canada. Of course, it fits the Conservative ideological framework—the trend to complete decentralization.

Here are the facts with respect to this particular issue. Not only will $79 million have to be found by the provinces and municipalities involved, but it is this continued attack on the Atlantic provinces and western and northern Canadians that is most unfortunate.

This agreement, as many members will know—

[*Translation*]

—expired at the end of March, 1991 and, if I understood correctly, the provinces were paying 70 per cent and the federal government 30 per cent, and in the case of the municipalities, they were paying 90 per cent and the federal government 10 per cent.

• (1400)

The government now wants a 5 per cent increase in the share paid by the provinces and the municipalities. This is a tremendous financial burden when we consider what has happened in these regions.

[*English*]

This is a good example of looking at a problem in isolation. By itself it is not particularly pleasant, having costs increase by 5 per cent. But if we look at the total situation, the economic reality out there, it is another blow to western and northern Canadians and to people from the Atlantic provinces.

That is in addition to everything else that has happened. What about Portage la Prairie? Do you remember that closing? Do you remember the base closing in Prince Edward Island? We are talking about others. We are talking about Shilo. We are talking about Chilliwack. Just imagine the number of jobs lost, the damage to the economy.

What about the reductions to the agricultural community, particularly in western Canada, my own province of Manitoba? That was devastated, particularly in Portage la Prairie. It was not only the base closing but the farm community around that base suffered as well.

What about the reductions to health and education? I have said it again and again: from 1986 to 1995, because of the cut of 2 per cent in 1986, another one in 1989–1990 and the freeze that has been extended, there will be $30 billion less for health and education being transferred to provinces. A lot of that, a little more than a quarter, will be to western and northern Canadians.

What about the cap on CAP? It will affect Ontario of course but also the western provinces of Alberta and British Columbia. Do you know that that will take from those three provinces about $865 million over two years? Because British Columbia and Alberta together have almost six million people as opposed to Ontario's ten million, a substantial amount of that $865 million will come from British Columbia and Alberta.

We have not talked about the closing of the rural post offices and the devastation that that has wreaked. In one of today's newspapers, another headline read: "Another series of closings of rural post offices". When will it ever stop? The people of western Canada are obviously being affected in a significant way.

What about the high interest rate—the high dollar policy that we have heard so much about? Most of us know that another point in interest rates costs Canadians roughly $2 billion. This has been going on and on. We tried to control inflation in this country by virtue of the economic activity that was happening in Ontario. We have applied a policy to cool it here that has affected a number of regions—western and northern Canada and the Atlantic provinces—in a very regressive kind of way.

We have not even talked about the losses that have been suffered by western Canadians in the Canada–U.S. trade agreement. I will not quibble about the figures because I know we all have our own figures, but we are talking about nearly 300,000 manufacturing jobs that have been lost. Have they all been lost as a result of that agreement? I do not know, but certainly many have and a large proportion, well over a quarter, have been lost to western and northern Canadians.

I have not talked about the devastation that was wreaked on western Canadians, and particularly Manitobans, because the CF–18 contract we had won fairly was taken away from us.

I have not talked about the cuts to the CBC in Calgary, Saskatoon, and the reductions in service in Winnipeg.

What about VIA Rail? Twenty-nine hundred Canadians lost their jobs, many of them in Manitoba, many of them in the other western provinces.

What about the closing of passenger lines—the line from Victoria to Courtenay, *The Canadian*? What about Montreal, Ottawa, Sudbury, Winnipeg, Calgary and Vancouver? What about the line from Winnipeg to Capreol? What about the 85 closing, Calgary to South Edmonton?

The point that has to be made is that we cannot look at this in isolation. It is another attack on what has been happening to Canada generally and today, more specifically, to western and northern Canadians and Canadians from the Atlantic provinces.

Let us look at those particular regions. I am going to concentrate on western Canada and on the bankruptcies of farms, one of the basic elements in a number of those western provinces, from January 1, 1991, to March 31, three months.

For example, in Manitoba it has increased by 7 per cent. In Saskatchewan, it has increased by 68 per cent and in Alberta, by 19 per cent. In British Columbia, it has increased by 80 per cent. It is a massive increase in bankruptcies and in the destruction of one of our major basic principles.

What about bankruptcies year after year: Manitoba, 53 per cent; Saskatchewan, 42 per cent; Alberta, 40 per cent; and B.C., 55 per cent. Those are part of the reality of the economic situation of our western provinces.

If you check, unemployment in every single province has increased massively from a year ago. In fact, in Manitoba it used to be at 6.5 per cent. It is now at 8.9 per cent.

For example in Calgary we did not close Petro-Canada International Assistance Corporation which was in fact an organization that was put into place for developing nations to reduce their dependence upon foreign oil.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, I don't want to be nasty but it seems to me there is something rather contradictory in all this. I don't want to mention the word hypocrisy, but it's pretty close, when we see this persistent attack on the western provinces, the North, and the Atlantic provinces.

I would have a lot more to say, but I see my time has expired.

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, today we are talking about the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and I have a question for the hon. member. Could he tell me whether in his riding and, in fact, in his province, he hears the same kind of thing from his constituents as I do in connection with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which allows Canadians of Sikh origin to wear a turban in the RCMP? I would appreciate hearing how the hon. member's constituents reacted to this decision which was based on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): I want to thank the hon. member for her question. I would also be interested to hear what yours said. As you know, a member on your side of the House sent the government a petition signed by several thousand constituents which, if I am not mistaken, indicated that they were against this decision.

In my own riding I got calls for and against the decision, and quite honestly I have to say the numbers were about equal. If I remember correctly—and I think I am pretty close to the exact figure—it was about a dozen for and against. I think that having someone who had just finished his training and had now graduated was helpful in toning down some of these strong reactions. However, I realize we have not seen the end of it. People often find it hard to accept radical change, especially in the case of long-held traditions such as the RCMP, the churches we go to, and other institutions.

[*English*]

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, the question of cuts to the federal contribution to existing services that are already inadequate is the issue.

This is placing the burden on an inappropriate tax area, the municipality, which is already hanging on by its fingernails. I would not want to leave the hon. member for Niagara with that open-ended situation. The federal government is proposing to load on enormous costs to already existing services that are inadequate. The point that was made—it was supported by the previous speaker—is that the level of service is inadequate. The federal government must assist.

If the costs for existing services are jacked up, the proposed amount is unfair to the taxing bodies that are going to have to pick up the cost. Again, more inadequate services.

I want to give one single example, and I hope you can respond to it. In Port Hardy, the customs officer was removed. It is no longer a port of entry. The municipality said: "We will pick it up. If you want to privatize, we will do it. We will put in $15,000 a year. We have a qualified, experienced customs officer who will do that job for $15,000 a year. He will work with you on it".

The government said: "No, no. You have to pay for a full-time one, $60,000-plus a year". The municipality said it did not have the tax base to do it. They said: "Tough. You are not a port of entry".

This is what the government is proposing for RCMP services because those communities have got to have some kind of security. I do not want to see somebody roaming around their community with a German shepherd or a Doberman, paid $4.50 an hour, without training, dealing with citizens and creating a dangerous situation. I see that as the end result. I want that customs officer back in that community and so does every other person. The feds have a responsibility to give them port of entry status. There is also a need to provide fair and safe levels of policing, not drive them out.

• (1410)

Mr. Duhamel: Thank you for the question. You actually raise a number of important issues.

Of course, one can remove any service and replace it with a more economical one, but one always has to ask, will the quality of the service be better. In many instances it is not. So it is a false saving. That is one issue.

Let us not delude ourselves. The service will be paid for by you and me and all other Canadians. The point I am making is that it is being transferred over. What offends me and what offends a lot of Canadians, is that in the action of transfer, the federal government is trying to claim that it is controlling expenditures in a responsible way.

I give an analogy. If I were to tell my spouse that the $700 mortgage to which I contribute $700, as an example, I now only contribute $500, I have reduced my expenditures. But is it fair? It is going to have to be picked up. That is the same kind of scenario that is happening here.

If there was not at the same time a claim that it is whiter than snow, in terms of controlling expenditures, I guess I could more easily forgive.

The issue you raise about the quality of services is a particularly important one which must never, ever be forgotten. We can always do things more cheaply, but will it be good enough. In many instances, it is not.

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by expanding the motion from my NDP colleague to include the jurisdiction of the two territories in addition to the provinces, with respect to the transfer of police costs.

The government of the Northwest Territories is currently paying for 70 per cent of the cost of the RCMP in the north. The federal government expects, unrealistically, that the territorial government can now absorb 75 per cent of the cost. That is a big jump in the proportion contributed by the territorial government.

There are extraordinary needs in the north that cannot be equated with southern needs. One such is the fact that there is a heavy reliance on the RCMP in the north to travel to various communities because members are not stationed in each of the communities in the north.

There is a heavy reliance on capital refurbishment because of the use of ski-doos and trucks which do not have the luxury of travelling on paved highways, but gravel roads and winter roads where they are available. There is also the use of Twin Otters, one of which, unfortunately, crashed in a community. There was much debate as to whether that would be replaced. Much capital infrastructure is needed in the communities where they travel only by air and they do not have highways and roads.

The territorial government would rather invest its money in providing more and better service. For instance, the Yellowknife detachment of the RCMP is seriously understaffed. We have a high transient population and this is the feeder community for all of the outlying communities. We have a high incidence of people coming from out of town, a high transient population that needs to be served.

As well, there are communities that do not even have resident RCMP. Some communities in the Keewatin region are served only once a month. There are communities that should have full-time service and others that should have more frequent visits. The federal government cannot ignore the unique situation which the two territories present to the role of the RCMP.

The Yukon and Northwest Territories encompass an area of some 3.9 million square miles, covering 40 per cent of Canada, spanning more than 4,000 kilometres from west to east, and 3,500 kilometres from north to south. As I have said time and again in this House, the north is an immense region which is of strategic importance to all Canadians.

Let me explain what the challenges are in providing policing service in an area of this size. Although two-thirds of the Yukon's 25,800 live in and around Whitehorse, less than one-quarter of the Northwest Territories' population of 54,000 live in Yellowknife. The rest live in some 100 smaller communities scattered across the north. The federal government, rather than expecting the territorial governments to put up more money to cover the cost of policing, should be looking at how the north can receive support for better policing services for those residents living in northern communities.

As well, the government should be investing in methods for the RCMP to take steps to strengthen its relationship with the aboriginal people who are the majority in the north, as well as the other people who live in the remote regions. The government has to continue to develop community policing concepts and special recruitment drives for attracting aboriginal people into that particular profession.

On May 16 I met with the representatives from the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council regarding the funding concerns for policing services. The DOTCPD receives joint funding from both the federal government and the province of Manitoba. Despite the fact that operating costs continue to increase, neither of these governments will increase or commit to long-term funding before the national native policing review has been submitted. Although the initial report for the national native policing review was completed in January last year, an additional round of consultations pushed the date of this review that would be submitted to the cabinet back to January of this year. It would not be submitted to Treasury Board until the spring.

The DOTCPD handles about 95 per cent of the workload in eight reservations in Manitoba and has received requests for services from non-native communities, thus reducing the workload for the RCMP in these areas.

Without adequate support, this police department cannot perform its duties as effectively as possible. Native policing is an important and valuable program. It is beneficial for native communities to work with a police force which can speak and understand their own aboriginal language and which possesses a cultural understanding of the residents.

The history of the RCMP in the north has been a long and honourable one. The relationships that have been forged over the years are ones that are based on mutual respect and concern for the people who have lived there.

What has happened over the years is that as we have had recruitment, which is basically federally driven, we are being asked to pay for services to the tune of 75 per cent. Yet the policies all come from a federally driven process.

If we are going to have accountability and credibility of the work that is undertaken by the members of the forces and if the moneys are going to be paid by the territorial government, clearly there should be a greater input by the Minister of Justice in this case, who has responsibility for policing matters in the Northwest Territories. Clearly there has to be more of an input in terms of policy and the kind of mandate that they have and the kind of relationships that they build.

Even with regard to recruitment there has to be a greater effort to promote the idea of having suitable individuals come into remote communities. There is no orientation or familiarization process that meets and accommodates the needs of these people who are expected to go into communities where they have never been outside of looking at pictures and doing their own particular inquiries.

It is rather difficult at this time to look at the long history of the RCMP in the north and the relationships they have built and to forfeit that because we have additional financial pressures put on the territorial government. Yet they are distanced from the policy mandate that is given to that particular force to carry out.

The relationship in the past has been one that is based on mutual respect. The RCMP in the old days travelled by dog team. Their first commitment upon coming to a community was to meet with the leaders of that community, to make contacts, and to have an established communication strategy in terms of who they communicate with and just exactly what the people could expect. The expectations were varied. In many cases the RCMP provided services that were not within their mandate. They were expected to be there when someone died; they were expected to be there when someone was born; they were expected to be there when there were emergencies; and to provide an extensive array of services.

• (1420)

These people cannot go unnoticed. I am proud to say that there is some progress. I am not one to sabotage the good work of the members who are there. What I would like to do is recognize that there are individuals who have come to the north and have contributed greatly. They have built very strong relationships with the people of the north and they should be recognized for that. In fact, it has been a great inspiration for many northerners to look at the whole profession of policing.

Just of late, we have sworn in a number of aboriginal people to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police force. These young people look forward to a career they feel will be challenging and will contribute to the betterment of life in the north.

The long-standing relationship with the aboriginal people is one based on a lot of creativity and ingenuity. We have, with the RCMP in the north, something worth preserving. Members of the RCMP have endured a lot of things that other members in other places do not necessarily realize until they come to the remote regions of our country. These include the fact that they are there for long periods of isolation. There are many expectations. They are sometimes on call 24 hours a day when they are alone. They are expected to provide a whole array of services.

There must be a way, within the recruitment process, to outline the variety of different services. There is a great deal of counselling, for instance, that goes on with regard to RCMP work.

The RCMP is much admired and it is a noble profession in my part of the world. It is a relationship that has grown through adversity at times, and a relationship that is well worth preserving and working for. There does not need to be the additional pressure of additional costs to serving in the north in a number of capacities.

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, I would just like to ask the hon. member if she concurs with the concerns expressed by a number of her colleagues in this House?

The member for Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt has expressed serious concerns about the added policing costs for the community of Penticton, Merritt, and the Grand Forks area. The member for Okanagan—Shuswap has expressed severe concerns about the increasing police costs and the level of policing in communities such as Vernon. The hon. member for Kamloops has expressed serious concerns about the impact on the quality of life in that community because of policing costs. Concerns were also raised by the member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley, the member for Skeena, the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan, and it goes on and on and on.

In Williams Lake, for example, 37 per cent of the municipal budget will be for policing. In Abbotsford there is a $500,000 increase, a 10 per cent increase in taxes. In Prince George there is a $719,000 increase, in Richmond there was a 66 per cent increase in policing costs over the last five years. These costs are going to mean that other areas of life suffer. The services provided are going to be inadequate because of the growing population, the nature of the economy, and a growing crime rate. These are very important issues the member mentioned about policing and its impact in the north.

These cutbacks will devastate the north and cause serious problems in its communities. I am absolutely certain about this. Maybe the member could tell us more about it.

In addition to those serious cuts on policing, one of the things I would also like to ask concerns the RCMP public complaints commission annual report which outlines about 40 recommendations. Has the member had an opportunity to read those recommendations? Many of the complaints were from aboriginal people concerning participation in policing, consultation with policing, and a number of areas which this report contemplated to make recommendations that would be helpful in improving a good police force, making it better and more responsive. Is the hon. member in a position to take a look at the recommendations of this annual report and recommend them to the Solicitor General for inclusion in legislation in the House?

Ms. Blondin: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very thoughtful questions, very difficult ones at that.

I do not envy the Solicitor General in his endeavour. There have been a number of very formalized and informal reports that have been put forward. I had the opportunity during the Oka hearings to question the Solicitor General as well as the Commissioner of the RCMP on a number of areas.

I have to agree that communities south of the 60th parallel have their own unique problems regarding policing that we may not share in the north, but they are no less important. I agree that there is a greater degree of service required in the communities that my hon. colleague refers to.

I have just been notified of one particular report done with a retiring member of the RCMP, Bob Head, which made similar recommendations. He recommends better training for aboriginal constables, conversion of aboriginal constables from special status to regular status, more contact and communications between aboriginal chiefs, people, and police, more community involvement, more reaction to community concerns, and more cross-cultural awareness, especially for transfer members. He is recommending that RCMP special constables should achieve more credibility with regular training.

In relation to the report referred to by the Solicitor General, I strongly recommend that he also have a look at these particular reports. I would also recommend that the Solicitor General and the Commissioner of the RCMP come to these areas. I made reference to the Twin Otter that crashed. To my knowledge, it has not been replaced and the capital budget for equipment is not adequate. There are clearly problems all across the board.

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Madam Speaker, I welcome the motion of the hon. member for Comox—Alberni and I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak to it.

The federal government has been and remains strongly committed to the RCMP and to the contract policing program. We made a reasonable offer to the provinces and territories on September 29, 1989, to renew the contracts. We are more than willing to do just that.

The federal government believes that everyone is well served by having the RCMP provide provincial, territorial, and municipal policing services under contract. These arrangements give Canadians the highest possible professional standards on a national scale. Canadians in the contract provinces are getting some of the best and most economical policing services in the world.

The RCMP is one of the largest and most sophisticated law enforcement agencies in the world. It has grown from a small group of people who many years ago marched 800 miles across the prairies, often short of water and provisions, to establish authority throughout the west.

It is important that we understand some of the history surrounding this uniquely Canadian institution. The idea of a mounted police force originated in response to a need to establish law and order in the northwest in advance of settlement. The solution of Sir John A. Macdonald was the creation of a paramilitary police trained for plains warfare but with primarily civil responsibilities. Its model was the Royal Irish Constabulary.

Accordingly, in 1873 the Dominion Parliament passed legislation for the establishment of a mounted police force for the Northwest Territories to be known as the North-West Mounted Police.

Three divisions of 50 men each were mobilized at Fort Garry, Manitoba where training and organization proceeded throughout the winter of 1873. Authority was subsequently granted to recruit up to the authorized strength of 300 members and another 150 men were recruited.

• (1430)

Once established in the northwest, demands on the force increased. Members supervised trading practices, provided some relief and medical services to Indians, and carried out patrols throughout the area.

In addition to having an economic effect, the arrival of the force and the collective social and cultural values of its members had an impact on the development of western Canada. On leaving the force, many members settled in the west and continued to have a permanent influence on their communities.

In 1883 the government increased the force's strength from 300 to 500 men in order to respond to growing responsibilities. Detachments and divisions were soon established in new urban centres and in railway settlements.

On account of the North-West Rebellion of 1885 the authorized strength of the force rose to 1,000. The Depot Division was created in November, 1885, to train recruits in Regina, which had become the headquarters of the force in 1882.

By the turn of the century new responsibilities had been assigned to the RCMP in the Canadian north. The gold rush in the Yukon became potentially troublesome as thousands upon thousands of prospectors came to the territory and converged on the tiny settlement of Dawson. The North-West Mounted Police was sent to impose order, and violence was kept to a minimum.

From the start, the mounted police carried out almost all the administrative functions of government. Its members acted as land agents, magistrates, police, mail carriers and so on. By 1899, after the peak of the rush had subsided, civil servants had relieved the force of many of its administrative duties.

Reports of abuse of natives and threats by European nations to Canadian sovereignty in the far north led to the opening of detachments in the eastern and western Arctic.

In 1904, in recognition of its many services to Canada, King Edward VII renamed the force The Royal North-West Mounted Police.

When the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan were created in 1905 the first contracts were negotiated for the force to act under the direction of the provincial authorities to enforce criminal law and local statutes. The agreements required the dominion government to maintain and control 500 Royal North-West Mounted Police in the two provinces in return for annual payments of $75,000 each.

On all provincial matters of justice administration, the force was responsible, through the commissioner, to the provincial attorneys general. This arrangement gave the provinces a bargain as full police services to the new provinces had been costing two or three times as much as the amount set out in the agreement.

During the First World War the North-West Mounted Police was forced to withdraw policing services from Alberta and Saskatchewan, causing these provinces to organize their own police forces. After the armistice, however, the force absorbed the dominion police which had performed federal policing duties in eastern Canada and on February 1, 1920, became the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Mr. Kilgour: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I have a very soft spot for the riding that the member represents. It is my former riding.

It seems to me the hon. member is simply reading a speech that is probably a copy of *The Canadian Encyclopaedia*. If he is going to read to us from the Encyclopaedia we can go out and read it ourselves.

For one thing, he is not permitted to read his speech.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member will please resume his seat for a moment.

Mr. Nicholson: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order. As I understand it, the member was giving among other things some very interesting and pertinent points about—

Mr. Kilgour: You were not even here.

Mr. Nicholson: I can tell the hon. member and the hon. member will be aware that there are five television cameras right in behind—

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Nicholson: I believe I have the floor, Madam Speaker. I was watching and I was listening to what the hon. member had to say. He was talking about the development of the RCMP. I think that was interesting. I thought it was important to put that on the record. I think the member should be allowed to do so. He certainly is giving a better speech than I have heard from the hon. member in a long time.

Mr. Thorkelson: Madam Speaker, I have a well researched speech which outlines not only the history of the RCMP, but the contractual arrangements of the financing between the federal government, the provinces and municipalities. It is very much relevant to this debate. I am sorry if the member feels offended, but it is relevant and has a large bearing on the debate and I would like to continue, as I will.

For more than a decade after 1917 the RCMP policed only the Northwest and the Yukon Territories as well as being responsible for federal statutes. The matter of provincial policing was raised again in a letter dated November 20, 1926, from Saskatchewan Premier James Gardiner to federal Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe. It reads:

> The policing of this force is rapidly developing into a condition which is likely to bring the whole matter into the field of political controversy. The main reason for this, to my mind, is that we are very much over-policed. We have a condition which developed during the war, which leaves us with virtually three police forces: the RCMP, the provincial police and the municipal police. The result is that there is overlapping, local friction, disagreement between different organizations, the appearance of too many uniformed men at every public gathering, (giving the appearance of a military occupation), and cost which, if continued, will develop into a first-class political issue.

That was the federal justice minister, Ernest Lapointe.

By 1932 the RCMP had assumed contracts to provide a provincial police force to Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. The provincial contracts all expired at the end of May, 1935, and by May, 1937, all had been renewed to a variety of expiry dates. Though contracts for the provincial policing of British Columbia and Newfoundland were both signed in 1950, the idea was considered much earlier in British Columbia.

In 1932, when many other provinces moved to RCMP policing because of financial pressures, a committee studying policing in B.C. concluded that so large a territory with so sparse a population—700,000 people at that time—should economize by having one police force instead of 39 separate ones at the various levels of government. The federal commission arrived at the same recommendation in 1939.

At the beginning of 1950 the attorney general of British Columbia introduced legislation to empower his government to conduct negotiations with the federal government to contract the RCMP. He estimated annual provincial savings of $1.5 million by using the RCMP, taking into account the pressure for improved services and capital costs of necessary equipment and buildings.

In August, 1950, British Columbia and the federal government signed an agreement for the provision of provincial policing services by the RCMP. This contract also had the effect of doubling the municipal responsibilities of the RCMP. The British Columbia provincial police had formerly conducted municipal policing under 46 contracts throughout the province. All of these were taken on by the RCMP.

The RCMP began policing Newfoundland as a result of the entry of that province into Canada in 1949. Although the Newfoundland Rangers and the Newfoundland constabulary also represented long, local tradition, it was recognized that the RCMP would offer superior effectiveness with financial savings over a combination of federal and provincial forces. In August, 1950, a contract was signed with Newfoundland for the provision of RCMP provincial policing for $196,000 a year in contrast with the previous annual cost to Newfoundland of $550,000 for the rangers and for the constabulary. The province arranged for the construction and location of new prefabricated housing and detachment buildings. The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary was to continue policing St. John's. Seventy-three rangers and 37 constabulary members joined the RCMP.

• (1440)

The RCMP became involved in municipal policing because municipalities in the depression years began applying for their services under contract. In January, 1932, the mayor of Calgary directed his city council to consider the merits of the RCMP policing that city. The suggestion did not go anywhere at that time. In any case, the RCMP Act of that time appeared to prohibit the enforcement of municipal by-laws.

Persistent requests culminated in an initial experiment in 1935 of a three-man municipal detachment at Flin Flon, Manitoba. In 1936 the RCMP Act was amended empowering the Governor General in Council to authorize the RCMP to enter into municipal contracts. The Flin Flon arrangement was confirmed retroactively in 1936.

Requests for RCMP participation in municipal policing continued to be numerous through the late 1930s. The federal policy was to entertain only those applications—

Mr. Kilgour: Scott, they are leaving.

Mr. Thorkelson: If you would listen you might learn something.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I do hope that the hon. member for Edmonton Southeast will be offered a better type of courtesy when he takes the floor. The hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona.

Mr. Thorkelson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The only town besides Flin Flon to receive RCMP policing by contract during this time was Melville, Saskatchewan. By the end of the decade it became clear that the two municipal contracts were appealing examples to an increasing number of applicants and procedures were generalized. In 1940 the commissioner of the RCMP was authorized to conclude municipal agreements on behalf of the federal government.

The third municipality to receive RCMP policing was Humboldt, Saskatchewan, and it was quickly followed by a succession of others. At first most of the communities were in Manitoba and Saskatchewan but the maritimes and Alberta soon had municipal contracts as well.

By March, 1946, 68 towns and cities in the contract provinces were being policed by the RCMP. Six were in the maritimes and the other 62 were in the prairies. By 1951 the addition of the British Columbia municipalities brought the number of RCMP municipal contracts to 119. Today the number stands at 191.

From early on the federal government recognized the limited federal benefit of municipal policing and in 1941 the commissioner of the day declared that the force was only interested in municipal policing where some locational or other advantage to the federal policing role could be achieved. Initially the cost sharing for municipal contracts was the same as that of the provincial contracts. Costs were rising and the force realized that municipal RCMP officers were devoting their full time to the towns while those doing provincial contract work usually carried out federal duties as well. The possibility of requiring municipalities to pay more than was demanded from the provinces was debated in the late 1940s.

As the latest contracts expired on March 31 of this year, provinces were paying 70 per cent and the federal government paid 30 per cent of the costs of municipal policing. The cost share with municipalities with a population under 15,000 people was 70 per cent municipal and 30 per cent federal. For municipalities with populations over 15,000, the split was 90 per cent municipal and 10 per cent federal.

The federal offer of renewal that is currently on the table proposes that within the next 10 years the provinces pay 75 per cent of the costs of policing their province. The offer proposes the costs to municipalities with a population of less than 5,000 increase from 70 per cent to 75 per cent. The cost to municipalities with a population between 5,000 and 15,000 increases from 70 per cent to 85 per cent.

Finally, the costs of policing services to municipalities with populations in excess of 15,000 increase from 90 per cent to 95 per cent.

An important fact to remember is that even at 100 per cent of the costs, the RCMP continues to present an economical and efficient police service. The RCMP has a clear cost advantage over independent police services.

In conclusion, the history of the RCMP is an integral part of the history of this country. I repeat what I said at the opening of my remarks: The federal government is strongly committed to the RCMP and to contract policing. We have made an offer and we look forward to the provinces coming to the table to negotiate an agreement acceptable to all parties in order that these contracts can be renewed.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is a supporter of a government that is extremely keen on privatization.

I wonder if he has discussed with the Solicitor General of Canada and with the Minister of State for Privatization, two of his caucus colleagues, any plans they might have to privatize the RCMP.

Mr. Thorkelson: In response to the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, I have not discussed this matter and I would not discuss it because I do not think that police forces, as he would suggest, should be privatized in any respect.

Mr. Milliken: I did not suggest it. I was just asking. I was clarifying.

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member if he could answer a couple of questions on affirmative action.

I know that there are under–represented groups that have to be accommodated in the recruitment of the force.

I would like to know his thoughts on the recruitment drives for women, specifically. They want to attract more women into the force and also to bring in aboriginal people and disabled people. I wonder if there are administrative capacities at which these people can operate at a higher level, the management level. What are his thoughts on that?

What are his thoughts on how to compel the forces that be or the government to refurbish, in fact, capital infrastructure that is depleted, such as the Twin Otter that crashed. That is the only means of travel for the force into some isolated areas. What are his thoughts on those two points?

Mr. Thorkelson: Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the question on affirmative action and what we are doing as a government to increase the number of aboriginal Canadians, females, and minorities, into the police force. We are doing the best we can. We have a long way to go. We have made strides. As you know, the first Sikh wearing a turban was inducted into the RCMP not too long ago.

Right now the number of women in the force stands at 8 per cent and the RCMP has a goal of increasing that to 21 per cent by the year 2001. I would hope that they will achieve that goal.

• (1450)

I am very much in favour of increasing the number of visible minorities, women and others, into the RCMP.

I believe the second point was capital acquisitions. Certainly the RCMP requires capital to pursue its mandate. If it does not have that capital, I certainly would support the acquisition of capital equipment in those cases.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, the hon. gentleman said he had not discussed the case of privatization with the Minister of State for Privatization and the Solicitor General. I can understand why he would be reluctant to raise it. I would be too, because I would be afraid they might say yes. We have noticed the government privatizing things like the post office and a whole list of Crown corporations. The CBC is being shut down and privatized. VIA Rail lines are being sold off, including the major line through the mountains in the province which the hon. member has the honour to represent in this House.

I was apprehensive in asking the question that the government in fact was going to start selling off the RCMP and perhaps turn it into a private protective agency, much like soldiers of fortune, as my hon. colleague suggests.

The parliamentary secretary in his remarks listed the long and distinguished career of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It was interesting to hear that recitation of historical fact. But I am concerned. Given the mind bent of the Minister of State for Privatization and the glee with which he latches on to Canadian government assets and sells them out, thinking he is doing a great service for our country when, in fact, he is dismantling the place, I would urge the hon. member to take this matter up with the Minister of State for Privatization and see if he could convince him that privatization is wrong.

Mr. Thorkelson: Madam Speaker, I would like to again thank the member for Kingston and the Islands for his question and comment. I think it is a silly comment to suggest that anyone would ever want to privatize a police force. He has raised it twice, which shows us how foolish he is.

On the question generally of privatization, as you know, the government is very much pursuing the issue of privatization when corporations and companies compete directly with the private sector. In those cases, such as Petro-Canada and Air Canada where they can be more efficiently and better run and are able to borrow on the capital markets to buy assets such as, in the case of Air Canada, the planes and so on, it is a good policy to privatize.

Once again, the question I would return to him is this. Does he really want the police force privatized? To me, that is a silly, foolish notion and I can only assume he raised it as a joke.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Madam Speaker, the motion, as everybody knows, is basically to the effect that in negotiating contracts with the provinces, the federal government not unfairly transfer policing costs from the federal government to provincial and municipal governments.

I salute the member for Comox—Alberni for introducing it.

I was quite sincere when I said that I have a soft spot for Edmonton—Strathcona because, as you probably do not remember, I represented Edmonton—Strathcona for nine years, and it goes beyond that because I used to work at the Justice department. I cannot guarantee it, but I—

Madam Deputy Speaker: On a point of order, the hon. member for Don Valley North.

Ms. Greene: Madam Speaker, you recognized the member and he was supposed to address the issue. Instead, he is giving us a diatribe about his previous experiences as a member of Parliament, and so on.

It seems to me that he should be speaking to the issue as the previous member did.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I would imagine that on this beautiful Friday afternoon the hon. member will eventually get there.

Mr. Kilgour: Madam Speaker, I would like to put on the record that I have enormous respect for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice. There are few people in this House whom I have more respect for than that member. I do not mean to give him the kiss of death by saying that. I did not hear his speech, but I am quite sure that it was nothing like what we just heard. If I am wrong, and it was not cribbed from the *Encyclopaedia Canadiana*, I will be the first to apologize to the member. But, I am sure it was taken from the archives of the Solicitor General's Department or from the archives of the RCMP.

I know, having worked for the justice department, it actually has things like that in its archives. Nobody reads them except when they need a speech for a Friday afternoon. One of the best reasons for parliamentary reform is to prevent us from having to listen to speeches like that.

With great respect for the parliamentary secretary, they have to try to find some warm-blooded westerner who will get up and defend the government on the RCMP. Again, I am just surmising because I used to be a parliamentary secretary, but this poor gentleman across from us had to go and find a warm, live, breathing member from western Canada who would read the kind of drivel we just heard. Even the students who seemed to be from grade seven or under left.

What did he tell us, buried among the pearls in his speech? Did he tell us that we were overpoliced in Canada? Was that the point he was trying to make? He can ask another question afterward if I misunderstood him.

Let me try to get to the issues that are at stake here. I confess that for over 12 years I worked with the members of the RCMP in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, and here in Ottawa to a degree, so I have *une faiblesse pour la Gendarmerie royale du Canada*. I have also worked with municipal police and city police.

One of the things that they do not understand on the other side of the House is that a village policeman in a small municipality in Manitoba has difficulty giving a ticket to the son or daughter of the mayor of the village. This is one of the reasons why western Canadians, all 7.5 million of us, and Atlantic Canadians I am sure, like members of the RCMP. It is because carry out their job without fear or favour. They do not care if they are giving a ticket to—at least this is what I believe—the mayor's daughter, the Speaker's daughter or son, or even the Prime Minister's daughter or son, no offence to the sons and daughters. That is why the RCMP has been respected in western Canada, in northern Canada, and in Atlantic Canada.

I hope the hon. parliamentary secretary will tell us, if he gets up after this talk, about this canard that westerners, northerners, and Atlantic Canadians are subsidizing the people in Ontario and Quebec. Who does the parliamentary secretary think pays for the members who are outside guarding this building? Who does he think is paying for, I gather, 2,000 members of the RCMP in Ontario and Quebec if it is not taxpayers in Atlantic Canada, northern Canada, and western Canada? Do not tell me, please, that the provincial budgets of Ontario or Quebec are paying for that, because they are not. I understand all Canadians are paying for the 2,000 men and women in the RCMP in Quebec and about the same number in Ontario.

I understand that back in 1981 it was agreed that the provinces would pay 70 per cent because about 70 per cent of the police work was Criminal Code and provincial statutes. As you know, the enforcement of the law of the Criminal Code across Canada is a provincial responsibility. The provinces agreed to pay 70 per cent. The federal government agreed to pay 30 per cent because about 30 per cent of RCMP work is federal statutes such as the Narcotic Control Act. In municipalities the formula was 90 per cent—10 per cent. The ratio was different in municipalities like Edmonton where the member who just spoke is from and therefore there was a 90 per cent—10 per cent formula.

• (1500)

The other reason they agreed on the 70–30 split was the efficiency argument. It was far better to have one police force, where it was acceptable, than to have two. The third reason they agreed on the 70–30 formula was because of national unity. The RCMP is a symbol of our country and is very important. When has it been more important to have a symbol of national unity, such as the RCMP, than right now?

The same government which gave a throne speech last week telling us that it is trying to do something about national unity will try this week, or the next time it gets contracts with the provinces, as the member for York South—Weston mentioned, to increase the burden on municipalities.

Why was it that two weeks ago there was a budget speech stressing national unity and the government now wants to hold a financial gun to the heads of the provinces and the municipalities in outer Canada, meaning every place but Montreal, Toronto, and Ottawa? It seems very odd to me.

The government has yet to give a substantive explanation for these contract demands, unless it thinks that what we heard today was a substantive explanation. Furthermore, due to the stalled federal transfer payments and limited taxation powers those two levels of government—

Ms. Greene: Are you reading your speech?

Mr. Kilgour: Just skimming. The member for Don Valley North asked if I was reading. I will try not to do more than glance at my notes.

The outer eight provinces can ill afford to reduce their law enforcement services because of the havoc wreaked upon Canadians all over the country, particularly in outer Canada, by the government's high interest rate and high dollar policies.

To build unity it seems to me—I notice that some of the children have come back from the—I wanted to be light hearted, Madam Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member, who has been here so long, I am sure knows that only the Speaker can talk about people in the gallery.

Mr. Kilgour: The federal government has to maintain a strong presence in all regions of Canada. The contract proposals seem to fly in the face of the government's rhetoric about national unity.

If I may say a word about Alberta. In my province 61 out of 291 municipalities contract services from the RCMP, and 44 per cent of Albertans, or about 1.1 million people, live under the jurisdiction of the RCMP detachments. The current cost-share ratio for contracted RCMP services was established in 1981. Both the municipalities and the federal government believed a 30 per cent federal share of RCMP cost was an adequate contribution.

The government is in effect saying to the municipalities across the country, outside of Ontario and Quebec, that they can either maintain existing RCMP services by cutting costs elsewhere or they can cut RCMP services at the risk of endangering public safety and emergency responsiveness. What the member for Western Arctic said about the north and the traditional role of the RCMP applies just as much in western Canada and, I am sure, in Atlantic Canada. The person people call on when they have virtually any kind of problem, including the birth of a child, is the RCMP officer who is there in two minutes. I do not know how many babies the RCMP has delivered, but I am sure it is a lot.

If the contracts are going to force municipalities and provinces to pay 16 per cent more for the RCMP in unincorporated areas, that will cause the public safety to suffer in those areas.

The Nielsen task force and the federal law enforcement review talk a lot about these issues. I do not believe anybody on the other side has mentioned them today but I have not been here for all the speeches.

Gary Browning, on behalf of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, has not received any satisfactory response to the association's inquiries.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has requested a meeting on this matter on behalf of its members from the eight contracting provinces, and it has yet to receive a response.

What kind of government would turn down—it may have given up on Alberta—the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, which represents three-quarters of the 26 million or 27 million of us in this country? What kind of government would turn down a meeting with that federation on a matter of such fundamental importance as this?

In closing, I would just like to stress some of the points that were made by the hon. member for York South—Weston. The government is talking about an amount of money. It always has money for its friends.

I do not know whether you read *The Toronto Star* today, Madam Speaker. The lead story in *The Toronto Star* is about a contract to a company for which a resigned Conservative member of Parliament from Quebec City, Michel Coté, works.

The government always has money for its friends. In Calgary the other day, I learned that the federal government has paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for public relations and for lawyers to deny the Lubicon people in northern Alberta what they have been struggling to get for 55 years.

Our tax dollars have been funding government lawyers, private lawyers and public relations consultants in an attempt to deny the Lubicon band in northern Alberta nothing more than simple justice.

The government has money. For example, there was $14 million in the last budget for businessmen to learn Pacific Rim languages. That same budget cut every penny out of the Secretary of State office for the funding of heritage languages across Canada.

I can only try to be funny. What our Prime Minister has decided and is really trying to do—all the evidence points this way—is to get the nomination for the Republican Party in 1992.

How else can we explain what he is doing to the RCMP, VIA Rail and the CBC? He has turned Montreal into a border town for Burlington and for other cities in New York.

He has turned Toronto into a border town for Buffalo. Maybe there is some arrangement that if he can get enough people from Toronto to desert their own local stores, their own markets and supermarkets and shop in Buffalo it will improve his chances of getting Mr. Bush to allow him to stand on a ticket in 1992.

Madam Speaker, please do not tell the Prime Minister that—if my law is correct—you have to be a native-born and not a Canadian-born American to stand on the ticket.

Maybe if we stress to the other side that he is not eligible to be the vice-presidential nominee for the Republicans—

Mr. Nunziata: They could annex Canada.

Mr. Kilgour: I never thought of that, but I'll bet you they did.

We can be frivolous about this, but the people in northern Alberta, the western Arctic or in Atlantic Canada are not joking about it. It is just one more example of how the government is weakening the fibre of a country we all love very much.

What more can I say, but to salute the member for the motion.

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for making a presentation and giving us some information on the funding arrangement between the province and the federal government regarding the RCMP and the 70-30 split.

I would just like to refer to last summer. The hon. member referred to the credibility of the RCMP being above and beyond compromise in certain areas.

• (1510)

I would like to refer to the Oka incident. I very adamantly put to the Solicitor General at the time the idea of having a force, an alliance of police forces, or maybe a small coalition or group. It could possibly go into a crisis situation and be somehow beyond any kind of bias or compromise. It could be beyond the realm of the immediate crisis and not have any serious problems or doubts about its credibility in that jurisdiction. It could be accepted in a way that would be legitimized through an amendment to the RCMP Act.

I referred specifically to the RCMP, whether it could have a force or could have moneys allocated to put together a force that would be respected by all of the provinces and the territories come in at a time when there is no movement, at a time when the provincial police force or other levels of police forces would have been rendered ineffective by the crisis that was created and the immediacy of their being close to that problem or that particular group.

What are the hon. member's thoughts on perhaps having an allocation of money for such a force? It may be needed in the future as tensions rise over a number of issues across this country.

I could point to the logging issue in B.C. I could look at Lubicon, which was referred to, and at James Bay. A number of places need a force that is above compromise and is unbiased as such. Could moneys be allocated for that? Would we would need an amendment to the act to accommodate that and to complement provincial jurisdiction?

Mr. Kilgour: Madam Speaker, I think that is a very interesting idea. The member has obviously thought about it at length.

All I can add to what she said, which I think was in support of the idea of a special unit, is that Colonel Macleod, the second commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, later became a judge. The city of Fort Macleod was named after him. He had empathy, as I am sure the member knows, with Cree and Blackfoot people who came before him in court. Many people feel that he preserved the peace and minimized violence throughout the area of his jurisdiction. The RCMP has a long tradition of doing that.

The member might wish to consider the fact, if my memory is correct, that only 500 out of 14,000 members of the RCMP are aboriginals, visible minorities, or basically other than from the larger Canadian community. Perhaps the answer would be that a unit such as she is proposing should have members recruited from aboriginal peoples across Canada.

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, is the hon. member who spoke previously familiar with the RCMP public complaints commission and its recent annual report in which it laid out about 40 provisions it would like to see as amendments to the RCMP Act?

They are sort of fair and balanced things such as: if the RCMP takes action on the basis of a complaint, the complainant should have access to it; if there are costs for the complainant, the complainant should be entitled to suitable costs under guidelines; and certain confusions between the Privacy Act and the RCMP Act should be straightened out.

Is the hon. member familiar with that annual report and its recommendations? Would he be in a position to peruse it and act with other members to see if the Solicitor General would consider bringing forward some amendments?

Mr. Kilgour: Madam Speaker, the member for Western Arctic has just handed me a copy of the report. It is 114 pages long. I am sorry to say I have not read it. I am sure, in light of what the member just said, that any Solicitor General on this side of the House—and I can assure him of that if it is the member for York South—Weston or, who knows, perhaps even myself in a future government—would give this every consideration. Perhaps it is going to be the member for Western Arctic since she has got the report and I do not.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Madam Speaker the NDP member is rather humorous this afternoon, suggesting for a moment that the NDP might occupy the seats across the way in few short years. One thing is certain: at the rate this particular government is going, the people of Canada have already decided what fate to bestow upon them.

I would like to compliment my friend and colleague from Edmonton Southeast on his comments with regard to this particular resolution. I am afraid that members from Quebec and Ontario really do not fully understand—and I am a member from Ontario—or comprehend the importance of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to western Canada, to the north and to Atlantic Canada.

When we hear comments from Conservative backbenchers from Toronto about having western Canadians pay their own way in terms of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, it really makes us wonder at the mindset of the Solicitor General who comes from Orillia, Ontario. It really makes us wonder whether these backbenchers understand what Canada is all about. A very integral, central part of Canada and being Canadian is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We now have the government trying to gut the RCMP by slashing funding to provinces in Atlantic Canada.

I know the member for Edmonton Southeast has always been an outspoken advocate concerning the problem of western alienation and has in his time in the Liberal caucus certainly spoken out very vigorously and continuously for the Liberal Party and for the Government of Canada to understand and to speak out for western interests.

I would like the member to expand on the importance of the RCMP to western Canada for those of us who do not live in western Canada. Exactly what does the RCMP mean to a western Canadian?

Mr. Kilgour: I see the minister from the Carberry area is going to get up. Perhaps he will speak on the merits of this bill rather than give us a history lesson. I hope when he is giving his talk he will bear in mind the fact that Manitoba, according to the member for York South—Weston, is going to pay $90 million more over 10 years if the federal government has its way in terms of its contract with Manitoba.

On the question of the member, he might be interested that Colonel James Macleod went from Winnipeg to Alberta. He was a commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police. When he died as a judge in Alberta, or the Northwest Territories as it was then, there was not a single dime of a pension for his wife Mary. I think they had three or four children and she found it extremely difficult to get by in the years after that. Some ranchers from southern Alberta basically pitched in and helped her out.

Why do I cite that? It shows that things have not always been easy for the RCMP and that even some of the giants like Colonel Macleod, at least his wife and children afterwards, did not find it easy in the days before they had pensions for anybody in the RCMP.

It is a deeply ingrained part of our history. We take pride whether it is in southern Manitoba or northern Alberta or the western Arctic. The RCMP is a symbol of Canada and these morons on the opposite side are doing everything they can to try to make it more difficult to maintain that symbol. These days, symbols are extremely important to this country.

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Madam Speaker, I wanted to make a comment and ask a short question of the member for Edmonton Southeast.

The member for Edmonton Southeast has railed against cuts in VIA Rail and against cuts to the CBC. Now he has risen today and talked about the adjustments we will be making in terms of contractual arrangements with the RCMP. On the other hand he is against the GST. He is also against an increase in the deficit.

I would like to ask the member how he would get this extra money. Would he raise taxes or would he reallocate it from other programs?

• (1520)

I do not want to hear his old standard answer that we are going to cut fat and waste in Ottawa because he knows, as his colleagues from the Ottawa area will attest, a lot of the fat and waste in the bureaucracy has been cut.

His other standard answer is: "Oh, we will remove some troops from Europe". Those are the only two answers I have ever heard the member from Edmonton Southeast give.

I would like to ask him: Where would he get the money and how would he get the money to pay for all of these services which he has railed against us cutting for the last few years?

Mr. Kilgour: Madam Speaker, the first place I would start would be by amputating half the members of the cabinet and half the parliamentary secretaries. India, with 850 million people in a parliamentary system, has a cabinet of 15.

Pick up the Order Paper and read the 18 motions I have on it and you will see a number of ways of cutting expenses.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. member has answered part of the question. The time for question and comment is now expired. Debate.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, despite the pain that the government's proposal in the RCMP contract negotiations is giving to a number of Canadians, I still welcome the opportunity to be able to make a few comments on behalf of not only my own constituents but a number of my colleagues and their constituencies from around the country, particularly in the province of British Columbia.

I should begin by briefly reading the motion that my New Democratic Party colleague from Comox—Alberni presented to the House today. The motion reads:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should take into full account the budgetary reality of the provinces and municipalities involved in Royal Canadian Mounted Police contract negotiations and therefore be prepared to negotiate a contract for RCMP services which does not unfairly transfer policing costs from the federal government to provincial and municipal governments.

One of the members opposite noted earlier that we had phrased this motion in as civilized a way as possible in order to encourage the government to think again that when it is transferring burdens, as it seems to want to do time and time again, it seems to have a proclivity to transfer them to those Canadian taxpayers and those assemblies of Canadian taxpayers least able to pay. In this case, that is the smaller municipalities, the small villages and cities that spread right across this country, particularly Atlantic Canada, the west and the province of British Columbia.

The eight provinces unanimously rejected the federal proposition to raise the provincial share of Mountie policing costs by an additional $79 million. We have a lot of company in our protest.

Policing contracts between the RCMP and eight provinces expired at the beginning of April. The ten-year deal covers all provinces, except Quebec and Ontario, which have their own provincial police forces.

Under the proposed agreement the Mounties provide provincial policing and some municipal services in the eight provinces at a total annual cost of $761 million. The provinces pay 70 per cent and the federal government pays 30 per cent.

What Ottawa wants to do with the current proposal is change that formula to 75 per cent paid by the provinces and municipalities and 25 per cent by the federal government. That would cost an additional $79 million to those jurisdictions least able to pay.

At this point I would like to pay some tribute to a number of my colleagues who have fought very hard over the period of the last number of weeks to raise this issue with the government in as non-confrontational a way as possible, hoping that they would be able to appeal to the conscience of those on the other side of the House to recognize the severe difficulties which people in small town western Canada, in particular, are having.

The member for Okanagan—Shuswap, in particular, arranged a meeting two weeks ago, on May 8, in the city of Vernon, with all of my British Columbia New Democratic Party colleagues and a representative of the Union of B.C. Municipalities.

She did a tremendous job of outlining for us very clearly the issues that were at stake for them and the financial implications of this almost dogmatic pursuit of their unreasonable proposal by the federal government.

Others who have taken a major part in our campaign to get the government to change its mind have been the members for Kamloops, Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Kootenay East and Prince George—Bulkley Valley, as well as our party's federal critic, the member for Brant.

We have not met with any more success at this point than have the eight representatives of those provincial governments that are being seriously impacted by the government's very hard-nosed bargaining stance on this issue. One can hardly call it bargaining because while the federal government and the Solicitor General have been prepared to discuss estimates of the cost base, when it comes to cost share they said simply: "That is not negotiable; you have our position; take it or leave it; we will cancel the agreements."

At one point they were threatening that the police contracts would simply end at the beginning of April. Thankfully we have gone beyond that point and they have withdrawn to a more reasonable position. I would still hope that we can come up with some kind of interim agreement or at least a phasing-in proposal by the federal government. This has been suggested by a number of municipalities in order to provide some breathing space at least and as an indication of good faith to those municipalities and provincial governments, especially those smaller municipalities that need time if they are going to adjust to the kind of financial impacts the government's proposal will place on them if it does go ahead as it is proposing.

The proposal by the federal government of new contracts calls for municipalities to pay an extra 5 per cent to 27 per cent for policing costs. That is the impact. We say that move is an unfair burden on local ratepayers and particularly hard on very small communities. The cut amounts to an extra unfair tax for Canadians who choose to live in smaller towns.

Canadians in rural communities are already hurting from post office cuts, CBC cuts, and the downsizing of VIA Rail. They have the same right to police protection as do citizens in larger metropolitan areas.

We call on the government to negotiate a new contract which does not unfairly transfer policing costs from the federal level to provincial and municipal governments.

I would just like to mention a couple of examples. In my own constituency, the city of Castlegar will have to come up with about $25,000 more this year for policing services if Ottawa's proposal to decrease its share of RCMP costs goes through. The city paid $508,000 last year for 10 officers. Under the government's proposal, the city would pay $533,000 for nine officers. More money for less service.

The B.C. solicitor general, Mr. Ivan Mesmer, who has been negotiating this agreement with the federal government, has said quite clearly that these municipalities do not think it is fair. He explained that in communities such as Williams Lake, 40 per cent of the municipal budget will go toward policing if the municipality's share of policing costs is increased, as it will be if the federal government's proposal becomes fact.

This is very serious. In a letter which I received in late March from the city of Trail in my own constituency, the mayor, Sandor Santori, points out that the city's share of policing in the city of Trail in 1990 amounted to $705,000 from a total cost of $1,007,904. A 3 per cent increase to that cost base will bring the city's share to $726,699 from a total of $1,038,141.

With the proposal from the federal government to increase the cost base from 70 per cent to 85 per cent, the city's share of policing costs will increase by $176,888. This would represent a 5.25 per cent increase over the city's 1990 total taxation of $3.37 million to $3.543 million.

• (1530)

To the individual taxpayer, this represents an increase of $20 per residential property. In the case of the city's largest taxpayer, Cominco, it is an increase of $120,000.

I need hardly point out to cabinet ministers who come from western Canada, especially those who are somewhat familiar with the history of Cominco, that this is the time when it can ill afford any other large tax expenditure.

It has been hit very hard by astronomical increases in water charges from the province of British Columbia in the last few years, which have been totally unjustified. The federal government is a shareholder in Cominco's current modernization program. It should be aware as a shareholder that there are severe financial restrictions on that company at the moment.

Many people in the community of Trail and surrounding areas feel very threatened by a somewhat shaky future as a result of the difficulties they are having in adapting to the new technologies.

The past Solicitor General said in the House of Commons that there is one reality that has to be taken into consideration and that is the cost of the RCMP borne by the federal government.

He also stated in a press release that his offer of a 5 per cent increase was "designed to redistribute the net costs more fairly so that those who use the services assume an appropriate measure of the cost".

This is proof that in setting up his strategy, his office has completely disregarded the fiscal reality in which municipalities have been placed, thanks to a multitude of policies set up by his own government over the last six years.

This time, thanks to the structure of these agreements, the government has managed to download its responsibility on to the third level of government, especially small- and medium-sized municipalities.

We feel that this is one more indication—if we needed one—that this government and the Conservative Party are just totally out of touch. In its blind rush to deal with only the federal deficit, it has managed to undermine the very fabric of this country with cuts to VIA Rail, the CBC, the Forest Resource Development Agreement, postal services, and the sale of Petro-Canada.

This is now threatening the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and its presence at the community level in much of this country. At a time when Canada's future is on the line, this government cannot afford to play high roller with one of this country's most respected institutions.

It worries me when I ask myself the question: What is this government's bottom line? What is our bottom line? Our bottom line is Canada, and I hope it is theirs, too. I am sure, in their hearts, it is.

Judging by what the government does, more and more Canadians are having a difficult time believing that.

A few months ago, I had an opportunity to spend some time with a gentleman from the Golden Horseshoe in central Canada who was a major manufacturer of pollution control equipment. He is a major real estate developer. He has agricultural estates in Central America and he moves in a circle in which I do not normally move.

He is not a person who puts much credence in conspiracy theories or anything like it, but in trying to determine what the economic policy of the government and the rationale for it was, he said that he and his associates were saying that they could not understand what the reason for the government's approach was to the Canadian economy, unless it was to attempt to force Canadians into becoming Americans.

That is the only one that seemed to make any sense if you followed all the courses of action that this government is following. I do not believe that, and they do not believe it. Nobody wants to believe it.

You see the artificially high price of the Canadian dollar. There is the emasculation of one Canadian institution after another and you hear the Prime Minister coming up with words to the effect that Canada is more than a few Crown corporations and a few national programs.

Yet we begin to ask if we continue to destroy all those national programs, all those national institutions and all those national services, how long it will be before some Canadians begin to say: "If we have this huge bureaucracy and this expensive government and all we have got left is an anthem and a flag, maybe we ought to wonder what the hell we are doing as Canadians"?

That is what they are going to ask if we start removing all of the symbols and all of the services that we have so carefully and thoughtfully built up over decades and decades since those first Canadians, as an article of faith, said to themselves: "Even though this nation called Canada is not an economic unit, by a political act of will we want it to be a separate, identifiable nation and community".

This country was not created because it made a lot of economic sense. A small ribbon of population stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific and to the Arctic is not a natural economic unit. This country was built because people wanted something different and something distinctive and the government is wrecking it. I do not believe it is consciously doing it. However, if it wants to leave these decisions up to the glories of the marketplace in some kind of doctrinaire, dogmatic belief that what is good for General Motors is good for the country, what is good for whomever it happens to be—Richardson in Winnipeg or the Bronfmans or whomever—then we are in serious trouble in this country and we are not going to have a country left.

I just want to return briefly to the presentation that the Union of B.C. Municipalities made to us on May 8 in Vernon, B.C. The UBCM did an excellent job. I am sure many members of the government have read its submission, and I would ask them to look at it carefully again.

On the first page of that submission, the UBCM points out very clearly why those of us from British Columbia are perhaps more worked up and more concerned about the impact of this particular proposal than almost anyone else across the country. In fact, all three speakers from my party today in this debate have been from the province of British Columbia.

People from British Columbia, a province with only 10 per cent of the population, comprise 27 per cent of the RCMP force in Canada, 39 per cent of the RCMP contract force in Canada, and 63 per cent of the RCMP municipal contract force in Canada.

If members were wondering why we are acting and behaving as though this particular action of the federal government singles out British Columbia and its taxpayers and small and medium-sized communities for punishment, the reason is because 63 per cent of the RCMP municipal contract force in Canada comes from our province. I think we have a reason to be a little annoyed.

There are three issues to be resolved: the cost base, the cost shares, and accountability. The position of the UBCM, which is one that we share, is that on the cost base issue there is no disagreement that there are items which can be negotiated where there is a good business reason, for example UIC payments for federal civilian staff. With respect to cost shares, however, we remain firm in our view that there should be no increases.

Finally, there also must be improved accountability so that we are assured that we are getting the best value for the dollar spent.

Why should members on the government side support the position of B.C. municipalities on the cost issue?

First, the federal benefit has not diminished since the last contract. Second, federal costs would increase if the federal government did not enjoy the economies of scale of municipal policing. Third, federal costs to maintain a national force for internal and external emergencies would increase. Fourth, the contribution to national unity is beyond dollars and cents. We do not put a price on Canada.

Finally, what the UBCM and British Columbians from one end of the province to the other are asking for is initially an interim agreement.

• (1540)

B.C. has been without a policing contract since April 1. This situation cannot continue. We urge the government to immediately enter into an interim agreement with a retroactive provision as proposed by the province of British Columbia.

We support a new federal negotiating direction. We urge the government to support a resumption of negotiations in which federal negotiators have more latitude to negotiate cost-base issues, to approach phasing in a total cost framework, and to quantify the federal benefits that are reflected in the current cost shares.

In the 1984 election the Prime Minister defined Canada as a nation of small towns with big dreams. We hope that it is the intention of this government, as I am sure it is, and as it is of all of us, that small town Canadians should have more than dreams. They should have the right to the same standard of services as other Canadians whose circumstances have put in larger metropolitan areas and in the heartland of this continent.

We produce much of the wealth of this nation in small town Canada. As a result of that we often undergo much greater variations in our economies and much higher levels of unemployment more often than central Canada, even though central Canada is undergoing some tough times right now. We undergo really serious times every four or five years when 1,500 people are out of work in a town of only 6,000 people, sometimes permanently. We are used to that sort of thing. We in small town Canada in the west, in the east, and particularly in the province of British Columbia—because it is so seriously impacted by this government proposal—have a right to equality of treatment. We demand it. We ask the government to think again, to be more flexible in its approach and give us a deal that we can live with.

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Madam Speaker, the member just spoke about the importance of symbols to Canada. I would agree with him. Symbols are very important, and the RCMP is a symbol.

There are other symbols. I wonder if he could comment on the move of the NDP government in Ontario to not require police in Ontario to swear an oath of allegiance to the Queen, who is also a symbol of Canada. Is that not destruction of a symbol?

Would he also comment on the Liberals' move a few years ago to remove the coat of arms from the RCMP and to change its name. Is that not also destruction of a Canadian symbol?

Mr. Kristiansen: Madam Speaker, I know these are issues that arouse a great deal of sensitivity among many Canadians. There are a number of us, perhaps myself included, who wish that people with important agendas would sometimes not tamper with things that really do not have to be tampered with, that unduly upset people, perhaps for no positive reason that can be seen.

Again, there is a strong perception in many parts of Canada that we are changing, that our international relationships have changed, that our broader loyalties, at least outside of Canada, have been changing. The Government of Ontario obviously believed, and there is considerable evidence to support that belief from polling throughout the province, that people at this time have different loyalties and want those reflected in their institutions and in the types of oaths that they swear.

I have my own druthers but I also have tremendous respect for the people involved in making that decision and it is probably the one that reflects majority opinion even if I might personally wish that it were opposite.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the comments of the hon. member. I have a couple of questions and a couple of comments.

With the cabinet shuffle and the new Solicitor General, certainly it is my hope that negotiations between the provinces and the RCMP for RCMP services will take a much more constructive and realistic tack. I think it is very important that the contract be signed. That contract, though, has to be fair and reasonable. I feel that the cost-sharing agreement of 70–30 should remain as it is.

In my province of Prince Edward Island, municipalities are financially strapped. They really have not got any more money to pay for RCMP services. What we have here is simply another example of government members passing on their budgetary problems to other levels of government. They have already shirked their financial obligations in the area of health. They have discarded their responsibilities in the area of education, diminished their commitments in the area of social services, and now they are looking to partially abandon their commitment to policing, safety and security.

I have a couple of questions that I would like to ask the hon. member. I wonder if he would agree that the direction the government is taking to date is a further shirking of its responsibilities to communities across the country who require the service.

Would the member not admit that the diminishing of the federal government's commitment to funding RCMP services is another example of this government passing its financial problems on to other levels of government?

Mr. Kristiansen: The answer to what I will call question number one is yes. The answer to question number two is also yes. The member and I obviously share a common concern. Hopefully we will work together with a more reasonably minded minister. Hope springs eternal. Sometimes people who move into new positions are able, without losing face, to show a little more flexibility and in this case what I would call common sense.

Hopefully, by working together and with a bit of a new look, we will be able to come to some resolution of the difficulties that currently prevail in this contract dispute and come up with a package all of us can live with. For the sake of Canada I hope so.

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)): Madam Speaker, I have been in the House all day and I have had a chance to listen to the debate. I have a couple of comments before I start to address the topic specifically.

I find it rather lamentable that when we get into this kind of a debate about a very important issue, not only because of what the RCMP does but because of the esteem in which the RCMP is held across the country, we have not had a chance to have more genuine discussion of the actual issue itself.

I am not so sure that it adds anything to the demeanour of the House to have the member for Edmonton Southeast get up and complain about the way a member was delivering his speech. Some of us deliver speeches in various ways. Some of us take a lot of time and put a lot of thought into preparing speeches and doing homework and, as a result, like to refer more than others to a prepared text. I think that is something that should be left to the individual. I know what the House rules are, but I am not so sure that to get up and simply complain about the way somebody is delivering a speech adds much to the tone and to the substance of the debate. I also do not think it does anything useful to call people names, which we witnessed this afternoon. We were called morons. I don't think that is very becoming as far as intelligent debate and discussion in this House.

We are talking about something that is very important. The RCMP, the policing of our country, and the way we govern the conduct between ourselves, is very fundamental to any country. I think it would help in terms of the way we think of ourselves and look at ourselves as a country if we could have more of the respect between people on either side of the aisle that we all hold for the RCMP. I find it unfortunate that we did not get a chance to discuss more of the issue.

• (1550)

I would like in the few minutes that are remaining to talk about the issue in some perspective. We are not, and there has never been any suggestion of, withdrawing services. This has been suggested by members and I do not know where it comes from. There has never been any suggestion by any member of the government that if there could not be a satisfactory conclusion to negotiation by a certain period of time there were going to be services withdrawn. That is simply not so. That is unacceptable I think to all sides of the House, unacceptable to Canadians generally, and something that this government has never ever talked about getting into.

Second, it has been suggested that what the Solicitor General is proposing is going to gut the RCMP by implication. Gut is a pretty strong word and it conjures up some pretty fatal images, if you will. We are not talking about that at all.

Let me give you some numbers, Madam Speaker, to back that up. If you use 1988–89 as the fiscal year just for comparison, the total cost of running the RCMP across the country was approximately $1.2 billion, a lot of money. Of that amount, approximately $500 million, and these are round numbers, was used for policing that was directly attributable to responsibilities that are solely that of the federal government. That leaves approximately $700 million that is work that is done on a cost shared arrangement with the provinces and with the municipalities. That number has not been used.

Let us talk about the $700 million which, and again these are round numbers, the provinces are being charged now at the rate of about 7 per cent, which in round numbers again is about $500 million. Let me talk a little bit about how that cost sharing is done.

There is no charge in that cost share for any of the capital improvements. Any of the barracks that are constructed, any of the buildings that are built, which amounts to approximately $35 million, are not charged to the provinces or the municipalities. That kind of funding is totally a federal expense.

In addition to that, when we sit down to work out a rental fee, a rental charge if you will for the use of those barracks, the rental charge that has been used has been $5 a square foot of which the provinces presently pay 70 per cent. That means that that is $3.50 a square foot that the provinces are being asked to pay.

If we compare what the provinces charge us when they rent us similar facilities in municipal situations for which the RCMP use, the provinces charge us $15 a square foot.

Let us talk about the over-all issue in terms of that kind of number. We again are not talking about withdrawing services. We are not talking about anything that is in any way going to destroy the RCMP. We are talking about what seems to me is something reasonable in terms of moving some of the costs from the federal government where we think it should be more appropriately and that is in the area of the provinces and the municipalities.

Additionally, there are many things that the federal government does with the RCMP that are totally a federal responsibility. That is not something that we are asking the provinces to cost share.

In many ways it is unfair to the RCMP, to the force itself, to have some of these suggestions that I have heard today put out. That is not in fact what the government is proposing to do.

I want to say a little bit about transfer payments. The hon. member from Strathcona who called us names and then left the House was asking if we were going to explain how Manitoba was going to find an additional $90 million over the next 10 years. I have checked with people in the Department of Solicitor General and they have no idea where this number came from. As far as I can see, it is a fictitious number.

First of all, we are not talking about a one-shot deal if we can conclude a successful negotiation, and I say if. Whatever cost increases there are, whatever is done, it is going to be phased in, likely over a considerable number of years, maybe five years, maybe even ten years. To suggest again that the province of Manitoba is going to be asked to find an additional $90 million over 10 years has no foundation in any of the numbers that I have been able to check out. I do not think it is possible, because negotiations are under way, to give a precise number, but if you are asking me what the number would be, my guess is it would be, at most, less than half of what the member was talking about.

The member from Prince Edward Island talked about reducing transfer payments. I want to give her some numbers. In 1984–85 when we came to government, the province of Prince Edward Island received from the federal government in transfer payments, $207.1 million. In 1990–91, the fiscal year just concluded, it received $313.9 million, an increase of over 50 per cent. It needs to be put in that kind of a context because to listen to the opposition today, you would think that all the federal government had been doing was reducing our responsibilities. That belies the numbers. As I stated earlier, there was a 50 per cent increase for the province of Prince Edward Island.

In my own province of Manitoba, the number has gone from approximately $1.2 billion of transfers to the province from the federal government in 1984–85, to about $1.9 billion in 1990–91, which is an increase of $700 million. Again, these are transfers of additional money to help the provinces meet their responsibilities in various areas of health care, social assistance, and those kinds of programs.

I see the member from Kootenay West is here. Let us talk a little bit about his province of British Columbia. When we came to government in 1984, the province of British Columbia received from the federal government about $2.26 billion. The previous fiscal year, the one just concluded, the province received a little over $3.1 billion, again a substantial increase of about $800 million since we have been the government.

With some of the increased costs that we are asking the provinces to pay, we have also been transferring to the provinces additional money to meet some of those responsibilities.

If you look at some of the benefits we have from having a national police force, the estimates that I have seen—and they have been done basically by an arm of Statistics Canada—indicate that the policing costs we charge to the provinces for the services rendered by the RCMP and the kind of quality of service they get, the continuity right across the country, the ability to enforce different acts federally and provincially, if each little municipality or each province was going to do it separately it would probably cost something like two and a half times as much as it does by having the national police force.

The member for Kootenay West who just spoke talked about economies of scale. He is absolutely right, but it works both ways. It is better for us to work together, which we are suggesting we do in this cost-sharing arrangement, again bearing in mind that we are not asking the provinces to cost-share the full amount of operating the RCMP, just the portion that is attributable to some of these joint arrangements between provinces and the municipalities. We are much better off to do this together, because there is a cost saving. It varies, I am told, from about two times as much in the west to as much as three times or three and a half times as much in the maritimes. And in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories it is even larger because of the sparse population. The member spoke on that, and she is absolutely right.

If we could have had that kind of a discussion, it seems to me it would have been of a lot more service to the force, which we all respect. Again I want to say we are not trying to gut the force. What we are simply trying to do is arrive at some fiscal arrangements that make more sense. After all, the provinces are sovereign within their own borders and when it comes to fiscal and taxation matters, they have full responsibility. I sometimes wonder, as a premier of a province and a leader of the province, what some of their responsibilities are, other than to complain about the federal government not doing enough for them.

Having said that, and just to conclude, and to set the member's mind at ease I hope, and I hope he would take me at face value, we are not talking about doing anything except what he suggested, and that is, phasing in over a period of time, adjustments if we can agree on them as to how these costs are going to be increased.

If we could have had some of that discussion today I think we could have done a better job of presenting the issue, having a rational discussion on where this federal government is going to find money to do all the things we are asked to do, to keep the deficit under control, to keep interest rates coming down, which they have been doing for the last period of time, and I think they are probably four or five percentage points less than they have been. That is all part of our fiscal management. If interest rates go up, the opposition screams at us because we are not doing things to get interest rates down. When we do what seems to me to be reasonable things, to ask people to share in a little more of the cost of doing some things that we all want to keep, then we are chastised for it.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: It being 4 p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 81(17), proceedings on the motion have expired.

[*English*]

This House stands adjourned until Monday next at 11 o'clock a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 4 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 27, 1991

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from Wednesday, May 22, consideration of the motion of Mr. Pronovost for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his Speech at the opening of the session.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): On a point of order.

Mr. Cole: The time for the government allotted time for the next speaker will be divided by two members, one from Lotbiniére and one from St. Catharines.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I have a very short point of order before we get on to the last day of the throne speech debate.

This is the first opportunity I have had to raise this matter. It refers to a comment made by the government House leader in the last issue of the *Hill Times*. I know there has always been an anxious moment on all sides of the House during Question Period to enable more people to ask questions. The House leader for the government indicated that the opposition, apparently during some discussions, refused to extend Question Period each day.

I would just like to make this clear. We would like to suggest that we add 30 minutes each day for Question Period to allow additional members of Parliament an opportunity to ask questions of the ministers. I just wanted to make that point very clear. We are prepared to add 30 minutes to Question Period—

An hon. member: Do I hear 35?

Mr. Cooper: I appreciate the interest of the hon. House leader for the New Democratic Party in Question Period. I am also intrigued by his offer now, now that negotiations have been completed and the package has gone through the House.

We too are interested in reforming Question Period. We look forward to doing some further work on it and I am sure that the hon. member will have some representations that he can make at that time.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I was not at the meeting at which the hon. member opposite apparently dismissed the suggestion of extending the length of Question Period. So that the record is very clear, there were really no negotiations whatsoever with regard to the reforms that took place in this House. Basically it was a take it or leave it package. Those of us on this side of the House opposed most of the reforms which were taken by the government. However, if the hon. member is now concurring with my colleague, the House leader for the New Democratic Party, and they are now prepared to extend Question Period, the question ought to be put forthwith so that we may have unanimous consent in order to extend the Question Period for the remainder of this session.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Perhaps the hon. House Leaders on both sides of the House would care to meet outside to continue their discussions. I don't think this is the appropriate place to discuss the matter this morning. If hon. members agree, I would prefer the House to revert immediately to debate on the Speech from the Throne.

The hon. member for Lotbinière, for ten minutes.

Mr. Maurice Tremblay (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity this morning to speak to the motion of the hon. member for Saint-Maurice concerning an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne—although my speaking time has unfortunately been cut somewhat—because although a Throne Speech is not detailed in the same way that a Budget speech is, in

this case, mentions, essentially, the major challenges facing us and proposes ways of meeting those challenges.

Mr. Speaker, the speech from the Throne deals first of all with Canadian unity, and the challenge to Canadians to choose the kind of Canada we want. When we talk about unity, we cannot isolate unity from economic prosperity, and I will get back to this later on in my speech. And when we talk about prosperity, if we are at all serious about what we are saying, we must necessarily mention education, because here again, we have a major problem where the Goverment of Canada must show leadership in providing the necessary solutions. And speaking of challenges, when we think back to last summer's native crisis, I think that here again the Speech from the Throne provides some very concrete solutions. The same applies to our economic problems; to that cornerstone of our Canadian values, the family; and also to one particular group in our society where this government has provided a number of solutions to enable the disabled to play a more active role. The same applies when we talk about government responsiveness, about making members better able to represent their constituents, and about this government's commitment to cutting government spending and reducing the debt.

• (1110)

Mr. Speaker, I would like to get back to the first subject, Canadian unity. In the Speech from the Throne, we see that the government has promised to appoint a committee by next September that will consult with legislative assemblies, in other words with the various provincial members, and with Canadians in general. There is an important element here, the government will formulate proposals, to be referred to the committee. There has been a lot of criticism and there have been many suggestions about how to deal with this problem, how to meet this challenge and how to provide solutions, but the fact remains that this is not one more exercise in consultation. We must not forget that this committee will have concrete proposals to discuss, and in the present unity debate, we see that the Goverment of Quebec, for instance, has also appointed a committee that will apparently receive Ottawa's proposals.

Mr. Speaker, receiving the proposals is fine, but in the light of our past experience—and this is where Quebec adds an important dimension—proposals submitted by Canada should first be ratified by what is called English Canada. This is where the committee plays an extremely important role, because, once again, it will have concrete proposals from this government.

The committee will then consult English Canada in particular to be able to come to Quebec so that we can finally find a solution.

Mr. Speaker, I looked at the comments of the media and the general public on that aspect of the Speech from the Throne. One need only put forward a solution to hear all sorts of criticisms; everyone has his own solution. What I found unfortunate in all those criticisms is the negativism. For example, the Meech Lake Accord is always spoken of as a failure. If we want to be objective and see things differently, we could say that Meech Lake nearly succeeded.

Mr. Speaker, you know that in this wonderful country, Canada, it is not for nothing that the first ministers have spent a great deal of time discussing the amending formula at federal-provincial conferences since 1965. Everyone seemed to agree that unanimity was practically impossible; so much so, Mr. Speaker, that when the Constitution was repatriated in 1982, Mr. Trudeau, who was then Prime Minister of Canada, also tried to obtain the unanimity rule, but seeing how difficult it was, he forcibly repatriated the Constitution without Quebec's agreement. He understood so well that unanimity was impossible that he later inserted this famous unanimity rule at the time of repatriation so that when we had what is now called the Meech Lake Accord, Prime Minister Mulroney had to use the laws, regulation and rules imposed at repatriation, namely the three-year deadline for the various provincial legislatures to ratify the accord unanimously—that is, all ten provinces and the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, I said Meech Lake was practically a success because, as you will recall, within the process imposed by the previous government, this government was able to obtain the unanimous consent of the provinces on two occasions: the first time in 1987, at what I will call the beginning of this debate, when all First Ministers, including the Prime Minister of Canada,

ratified the accord; and a second time on June 9, 1990, when the 11 First Ministers of this country again ratified the Meech Lake Accord.

So Meech Lake was not really a failure. It was almost a success. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that with this new experiment, this new committee and this new department, if each and everyone of us takes a positive and constructive attitude instead wanting to tear the country apart, I am sure we will meet the challenge that Canadian unity represents.

Mr. Speaker, I see that my time has almost expired. I will therefore conclude my remarks on the economic aspects, and more specifically on education, a subject that has aroused some very fierce criticism in connection with provincial jurisdiction. In this country, from Vancouver to Halifax, we have an illiteracy rate of 30 per cent, which means people who do not know how to read or write. Forty per cent of our young people do not finish high school. I think someone has to take the lead, but I repeat, although the government announced that it would intervene in this field, it also said that it would do so without encroaching on provincial jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about unity and the Constitution, we cannot overlook the aspect of our economy, and especially our young people who are the future of this country.

[*English*]

Mr. Ken Atkinson (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne rightfully linked the two concepts of national unity and economic prosperity.

They certainly go hand in hand. In fact, they support each other. We all agree, as a country, that we must be competitive in order to maintain our standard of living.

We tend to forget what a large percentage of our Gross Domestic Product is dependent on foreign trade. This percentage is even more than that of the United States and Japan. We have to be cognizant of this fact when we consider economic policies for the country.

There has been a great deal of change and restructuring of our economy as we move to meet the goal of making our economy more competitive. We would all like this change to be calm and rational, however that is not always the case.

We cannot be reactionary and think that we are going to rely simply on a market of 26 million people for goods and services. That is unrealistic in the world today.

First, we must break down the trade barriers that exist within our own country between the provinces. We have to develop a free market within our own country. This is one of the goals of the throne speech that I certainly endorse.

In order for Canadians to be competitive we are going to need a great deal of co-operation among governments, business, labour and everyone else in the country. This is one aspect of the budget speech from the province of Ontario that I would certainly endorse, although I cannot support the large deficit financing associated with that budget.

That type of thinking in the past is one of the reasons that the federal government finds itself in its current position with very little room to manoeuvre.

• (1120)

The issue of competitiveness is one that is foremost in my community of St. Catharines at the present time. We see the spectre of cross-border shopping, which is affecting the retail industry as well as other areas of the local economy. People certainly have the right to get the best value for their money wherever they can, as long as they abide by the rules and pay the various duties and taxes on these goods.

The answer to this matter is not to close down the border, as some people have suggested, but to make sure that our industry is competitive. This requires all levels of government to review their taxation and regulation policies, and business to look at its own practices in order to ensure that it is competitive. Governments at the municipal, provincial and federal levels have to review their policies and do everything they can to ensure that our industries are competitive.

This is a complex matter. It is not a simple matter. People would say there is a simple solution to it, but as with most things these days, that is not the case. We all have to look at the problem, all deal with it, and all accept ownership of it.

The automobile parts industry is also important to my area. This is an industry that is also in a very tough, competitive position. Again, governments at all levels must review their policies to ensure they are not penaliz-

ing these industries. The industry has to review its practices in order to ensure that it is using technologically advanced processes and that it is creating high quality value added parts. It has to use new technologies in order to compete. Labour also has to do its part to ensure that these industries are competitive.

Economic prosperity will allow us to deal with the matter of national unity. I have had the opportunity, as a member of the Beaudoin–Edwards committee, to travel across Canada listening to individual Canadians speak about the Constitution and the amending formula. The committee is currently considering the recommendations we received from across the country regarding the amending formula. Therefore, I will not comment on that particular aspect of the matter.

However, the committee heard many of the goals and aspirations of the various regions and groups in the country. I agree with those individuals who have stated that this round of constitutional negotiations must be the Canada round. It is going to take a great deal of compromise, tolerance and understanding. It is something that we have to begin.

The aboriginal people want the concept of self–government to be discussed constitutionally. There may be some difficulty because the definition they attach to that concept varies across the country. As we negotiate land claims that concept is included in some of the settlements. As I mentioned, it means different things to different bands in different parts of the country. That is going to create some difficulty in trying to entrench that concept constitutionally.

The aboriginal people also mentioned the concept of consent regarding any constitutional change affecting them. We will have to try and deal with this matter and realize that the concept of consent is very similar to the concept of veto. We have heard about this concept in other contexts in conjunction with the Constitution.

The various aboriginal groups feel they can define exactly what is meant by protecting their language and their culture. Although, as we have seen, it even affects our institutions and maybe affects the entire Constitution itself. We have to try and deal with this matter. Again, it is a complex matter, something that is not very simple.

We heard from the people of the north that they would like a return to the pre–1982 state of affairs regarding the creation of provinces, in which the individual territories negotiated with the federal government in creating new provinces. We also heard of the discontent of the people of the north with the current provision in the Constitution about the extension of current provinces into the territories and the method by which that could occur. They feel slighted by that. They want that matter addressed in the current round. That is something we will have to deal with as well.

We heard from minority language groups in the various regions of the country. They have expressed a strong desire for their language and rights to be protected. As always, we have to be cognizant of their interests as well. We have to realize that there are one million francophones outside Quebec, and the need for the rights of the anglophone minority in the province of Quebec to continue to be protected.

Quebec feels that the rules of the game have been changed on it in the last 30 years by various means. It has expressed this in the Belanger–Campeau report and the Allaire report. We want Quebec to be part of the constitutional process, and it is necessary that we deal with this matter. We cannot emasculate the federal government but we must give recognition to the need for Quebec to protect its language, culture and uniqueness within the Canadian mosaic. It was well set out within the throne speech and it is a matter that we are obviously going to have to deal with.

The people of the west and some in the Atlantic region desire an institutional means in order to recognize the regional diversity of the country. There has been a great deal of energy put into the concept of a Triple E Senate in order to recognize this diversity. I have some hesitancy in saying that this would actually solve all their concerns in this regard.

We heard an expert from Australia who mentioned the Australian Senate which was set up with equal numbers of senators from each of the states within the country of Australia in order to try and resolve these regional differences. It was found that party politics and party discipline took over and the original concept of the Senate in that regard has gone.

We also heard the concerns of multicultural groups and women who want to see their hopes and aspirations mirrored in the Constitution. It is not going to be an easy task to resolve these interests, but we certainly must make the attempt to accommodate these various groups.

I do not believe that we should shy away from our diversity. I think that is a central facet of the Canadian character. We have searched for an identity. We are not all the same. That is what makes us different from countries such as the United States. We do not look for a melting pot. We have to celebrate our diversity and realize that it exists. Overhanging it all is the concept of Canadian citizenship. We have a great deal to be proud of in this country. We have accomplished a great deal together. We certainly are a country of geography but more and more we are country of history. We share a common history and we have to be proud of our Canadianism, recognizing the diversity which exists below it.

I think that is the way we can go to make this country a great country.

I am also confident in the idea of giving more power to backbench members of Parliament. It is something that may do a lot with regard to the regional differences in this country.

I am confident that the three main themes outlined in the Speech from the Throne are matters in which this country has to progress. The challenges have been set out well in the Speech from the Throne. It is now left to us to shoulder our responsibilities and deal with these matters in order that we may go forward as a confident, vibrant country in the world.

Mr. Dave Worthy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to speak to the throne speech, especially since my constituency of Cariboo—Chilcotin is one of the farthest away from Ottawa. In the eyes of my constituents it is probably thousands of miles farther from Ottawa than it really is because not only in Cariboo—Chilcotin but in rural constituencies across Canada people tend to feel that the system is there for the major centres in the country and for central Canada, but it is not there when they need it for small town Canada.

When we get into a topic such as the throne speech we have people from the centre of Canada, especially from the media and the opposition, leading Canadians, talk about its relevance, whether it is hitting the target that it was supposed to and whether it is what Canada should be dealing with over the next year or two. Many of them have been very critical. Many of them have said that it does not do the task.

It made me settle back and do a bit of thinking as to whether it did address the issues that the people in my constituency and in many other rural constituencies feel are important. I was fortunate in that over the past few weeks I had the opportunity to actually spend time with my constituents. As a western member, it takes me 24 hours to go to my riding and back on a normal trip. It is very difficult for me to get intensive time with my constituents. Over the past few weeks I had that opportunity.

• (1130)

I can say that the people I met with and the issues they discussed turned out to be those things that are in the throne speech. The things that were critical to the people of Cariboo—Chilcotin are in fact what is considered by this government to be critical to the people right through Canada.

I had the opportunity to deal with people in the schools, the students and the teachers. I met with business people who were concerned with the economy and employment. I met with native leaders regarding the problems that we are encountering in our area as they pertain to their aspirations and how quickly we are able to deal with them. I was able to discuss with people topics of tolerance and understanding which are not unique to that area but are qualities which are going to be required across Canada in the resolution of the major problems that we are facing today.

What are the Speech from the Throne items critical not only to us here in Ottawa but to the people in the rural ridings and in particular Cariboo—Chilcotin? I will try to go through and itemize the key themes of the speech and explain why they are critical to smaller towns and communities.

Unity: people may question whether that is the principal issue in my area because we have, technically speaking, no communities of francophones in Cariboo—Chilcotin. The people of that area are critically aware of the issues involved in this. They recognize that the resolution of this long outstanding problem is one that is going to be very important not only to Canada but to

them. We had the opportunity to address a number of groups over several days.

Something that the Speaker of this House, John Fraser, has been doing is something that I think is a real service to Canada. He has been trying, when he has time, to address groups. Some of the themes he covered in some of his addresses I would like to point out because they are the ones that some of the people in my area, especially the students and some of the business leaders, feel are critical to this debate.

The Speaker is very knowledgeable in the history of Canada and in the history of its traditions and was able to point out, like nobody else I had listened to, the bearing of history and the need for us to understand it and to know what it is telling us in trying to deal with the unity issue today. Most people, like me, when they think of Canada tend to go back to our Constitution of 1867 and deal with Canada since that time.

The Speaker in his discussion took us way back beyond that to the origins of Canada, indicating that it was the French-speaking communities with the English-speaking communities and the aboriginals who were here before us who formed the essence of what is now Canada. When the English-speaking people of Canada under the British defeated the French-speaking people of Canada on the Plains of Abraham, a remarkable thing happened. Unlike other parts of the world where vanquished and defeated people are treated like beaten people for some reason or other—I do not know the wisdom of this and some will criticize it but I will be maintaining it was a very wise move—they recognized that they did not want to treat the francophones of Canada as a beaten people.

They wanted recognition of who they were and their differences. In fact they were given four guarantees at that time: that they would be able to keep their language, religion and culture, and that they would be able to retain their legal system rather than that of the British.

Because of that decision, which many people may question, some significant things happened that in fact resulted in our ability to call ourselves Canadians today.

Shortly after that decision the American Revolution took place. At that time Canada remained strong with Britain. When I say Canada I am referring to Quebec as well.

The French speaking people of Canada honoured their alliance with the English speaking people of Canada. Because of that, history was probably changed. If the French speaking people of Quebec had sided with the American colonies, the Canada we know today would probably not have occurred.

Subsequently, in 1812 there was also the war between Canada and the United States. In fact, not too many people know that Canadians actually got as far as Washington. We were responsible for burning the White House. That is probably not something we want to brag about too much today.

In the War of 1812, because the French speaking people of Quebec had been treated with tolerance and understanding, they sided with the English speaking people of Canada. They were able to remain intact as a Canadian entity.

Since that time, we have gone through many points of history that I will not try to repeat here. The francophone communities in Quebec and in other parts of Canada, and the English speaking people in the rest of Canada, have been able to stay united and work together.

Because of the difference and the ability to work together, we have retained Canada as it is today, the Canada that we know. Because our ancestors were able to do that, that is the reason why we, not only in the House of Commons but right across the country, must and will ensure that Canada remains intact during our tenure here. That will probably be decided over the next few years.

The unity issue goes beyond just the Quebec fact. I think everybody has realized that. Whereas the Meech Lake discussion did deal and was trying to address the problem with the Quebec issue, we have gone way beyond that now.

In dealing with the fact of unity this year and next year, we must be concerned with dealing fairly and properly with the province of Quebec. It also entails being fair and equitable, and dealing with honour with all the other regions of Canada.

Today, nobody thinks we are going to be able to resolve the issue of Canada and its unity by dealing strictly with the issues in Quebec. In many people's minds, the issues pushing up in other parts of Canada, such as British Columbia and the western regions, are just as, if not more, critical. If we do not find solutions to these problems, the reasons for the feeling of alienation by the people in the west and other parts of Canada, we do not have a chance of finding unity for the rest of the country.

It is not just Quebec now. We are able to deal with the regions. Anybody in today's forum realizes that if we do not deal fairly and equitably with the natives, our aboriginal peoples, we will not be able to reach a consensus.

I will deal with the issue of government reform briefly. It is of interest to the people of small communities such as those in Cariboo—Chilcotin. To a great extent, their inability to relate to us here in Ottawa on how we operate is causing many of the problems throughout the country. They are sick and tired of the partisanship, not just from the opposition parties, but from all parties of this House. They want to know that the members who are sitting in this House are representing them in an honest, proper and respectful manner. Any of the steps that we take, as members of Parliament, to achieve greater respect for the people in this House by our constituents is very critical.

• (1140)

One of the members opposite is saying: "Talk to your side of the House". Yes, we will talk to our side of the House and I hope that he will talk to the people on his side of the House. It is all of us together that will be needed to make these changes, but it is the people of Canada that will be the great beneficiaries because they deserve a better system than they have now.

When it comes to the economic competitiveness that was highlighted in the Speech from the Throne, the people in my area of Cariboo—Chilcotin could write the book on this. They cannot survive unless they are economically competitive. In fact, the principal industry in Cariboo—Chilcotin is the principal industry of Canada. It is the forest industry.

In fact, we produce in Cariboo—Chilcotin 7 or 8 per cent of all of the softwood lumber that is produced in Canada. We cannot think of the economic situation without thinking about world markets, the Pacific Rim, the U.S. and the European markets. We cannot think about those unless we as a nation, and we as a people in our area are truly competitive. It has been in a world market situation for years and years. It is because of that that the industry in our area has responded.

I can remember during the 1981–82 recession the changes the forest industry in British Columbia went through. The changes that they had to make in the subsequent six and seven years to remain competitive on a world basis were substantial. They have totally transformed how they operate. In fact, they are a world class producer. They can compete with anyone on the world in their products. That of course is the ability that we require right across this great land of ours. All of our industries that can be competitive must be. That of course is the issue being addressed in the throne speech.

I could go on, but I would like to start to wrap up now with what I consider to be the most important message that we could bring to Canada during this throne speech; that is, how are we going to be able to achieve the resolution of the major problems that we are facing. I maintain that we have to find a way to change the national self-image.

I am a parent, I was an educator at one time. I think anyone who has been in either of those positions realizes that we cannot create strong children or strong students unless they have a positive self-image. They have to start believing in themselves and in their abilities.

As a nation we seem to have taken a totally opposite tack. Every time I look around I see people telling us why we as Canadians are failures, why we as Canadians cannot succeed. We are told through the media and by so many of our leaders that environmentally we are backward, environmentally we are offenders in the world environment. That is absolutely untrue. We are one of the most significant nations in the world in addressing the problems of the environment and succeeding in it. We have thousands of examples of where we are doing things that no other nation has been able to achieve. We very seldom talk about them.

When it comes to our attitude as a nation regarding our competitiveness, we are continually being told that we cannot compete, that we need to put up barriers to try to protect our industries and our people. That is implying that we do not have the ability to compete with nations around the world. That is absolutely not the case.

To return to my riding, I would like to close with two points. I travelled through my riding from the north end to the south. There are many communities but farther south they tend to have more and more extreme economic problems. I went to Litton, which is at the very southern end of the riding in the middle of the Fraser Canyon. It is a very small community. It has basically two industries: ginseng, which employs very few people, and a sawmill.

Just one week prior to my visit one of our national banks found it necessary to remove the sawmill's line of credit. Of course it had to shut down. It did not have the cash flow to continue. This mill employs in the neighbourhood of 100 people directly and half of those people are native Indians who are totally dependent on the income they receive from it.

When I arrived in that town I expected the attitude to be one of gloom and doom. I expected to be hit with all of the problems the town was facing and demands for me to come up with solutions that I would not be able to provide. It was exactly the opposite. I went to that town and met with the native leaders, the leaders of the town, and the people from the mill. I did hear briefly about some of their problems.

However, the people spent more time talking about some of the solutions to those problems. They spoke of how the community like it never had before, natives and non-natives alike, was pulling together to try to resolve the economic and social problems it faced. That is an example of one small town in Cariboo—Chilcotin that is a model for all of us in Canada to follow.

My last point is to indicate again how small town Canada can help to show us the way. We have heard much said about the intolerance of Canada, especially as it pertains to the new situation concerning the RCMP officer who recently graduated. That graduate is going to be serving his first duty in a town in my riding. It was with great pride that I read several articles in the paper, one editorial in particular, which indicated that in this small town of the Cariboo we were going to be able to show the public of Canada what real tolerance, tolerance at the street to street, block to block, neighbour to neighbour level really means. It is going to be happening in Quesnel, British Columbia.

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for speaking up for rural Canada in this House and letting us know a little bit about the views and ideas of his constituents.

I have a similar rural riding to his. I too have been through my riding asking my people their views on Canada, the future of Canada, and where we are going as nation. Some of the issues they talk to me about, I am sure he also runs into in his riding.

I am wondering if we could exchange notes. Possibly we could share and talk about some of the solutions put forward by his constituents.

One of the important matters concerning rural Canadians in my riding is the economic situation of rural Canada and the effect that the high Canadian dollar and high interest rates have had on rural Canada, especially the agricultural industries. I also have some ginseng growers in my riding, as does the hon. member. My riding is mostly tobacco, ginseng, cash crops and supply managed crops. My agricultural constituents are really concerned about the effects the high dollar and interest rates are having on all their products and the uncertainty in the international community regarding the GATT negotiations.

• (1150)

Another of the areas that many of my entrepreneurs and small businesses talked about were the effects of the GST on them doing business. Even talking to students going through the schools, the first thing they brought up was the effect the GST was having on them buying certain materials they need not only for their schooling, but in their day-to-day lives.

The other thing that was talked about a lot in my riding was the closing of rural post offices, rural post offices being the significant spot in many of our rural communities where the federal government is represented. What rural Canadians were saying on the post office issue was that they wanted fair treatment with urban Canadians in terms of having a postal service in their communities.

These are some of the issues being brought up in my community, and I am sure the hon. member heard these same concerns in his riding.

In terms of native issues, I have a large native constituency in my riding: the Six Nations, the Mississaugas and the New Credit. They were really concerned that no action had been taken in some time regarding the issue of land claims and Indian self-government.

I want to have the member's comments on these areas. Maybe he could tell us some of the solutions he has come up with.

Mr. Worthy: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for the positive way in which he has actually brought his questions out.

It is interesting that we both represent rural communities but, in many ways, there are differences from one rural community to another. I will try to highlight some of them.

The impact of the U.S. dollar, the high value of the Canadian dollar versus the U.S. dollar, is of critical importance to the people of Cariboo-Chilcotin. Obviously most of our economy is based on the exporting of softwood lumber and it is based in U.S. dollars no matter where we sell it in the world. It has been a problem for some time. Of course the critical problem with the lumber industry is world trade and the world markets. They realize that. The demand has to be there. When you get into times like we are in now, that does have a critical impact.

I have explored for many years any ways in which we could, as a country, try to influence the dollar. I had an economist address it for me recently. I asked him specifically if there were more things we could do to reduce the dollar. The answer I got was: "You could do minor things, but basically the reason why we have a high dollar is because the people in this world have confidence in the Canadian dollar as an investment." It is foreigners investing in the Canadian dollar that is driving it up. I do not think that is something that you and I would really want to change overnight, even though the high dollar is critical to us.

I agree with your point on the high interest rate. The high interest rates there have been over the past year has affected the people in my area, not nearly as much as it did a few years ago when the interest rates went out of control, but they definitely have affected them. However, I really believe that we should not be talking about high interest rates right now. Our interest rates now are very reasonable. We have the lowest interest rates now that we have had for years and years. There is not an industry in the country that would say we cannot exist or compete with the interest rates we have now.

Our job in this House and as a government is try to ensure that we retain those low interest rates. To do that, we have to follow with the restraint program that we are following and, of course, take all of the steps that are possible and necessary to keep the inflationary heat out of our economy.

Another issue you hit on was the GST. It was brought up in my visits to my constituency. In the opinions I received, it was not critical to any of the industries in a negative sense. It was a frustration adapting to.

There are still many things that we have to do to make it work better.

Most of them, especially in the business communities, recognize the reasons for it. We are a province that has to export, and exporters realize that the manufacturers' sales tax did hurt us and that the goods and service tax, no matter how annoying it is, is there to make us more competitive, to help us in our world trading.

I have 60,000 square miles of rural Canada in my riding. Obviously, I have many, many post offices, some the normal variety of post offices run by Canada Post, but many have been modernized and turned over to free enterprise. In a few communities some people are terribly upset with the situation. Most have accepted it, and feel in many cases they are doing a better job.

Some communities resent terribly not so much what has happened but the way it has happened. They have not had a chance to have the input that they would like. But in most cases the post office, which is a critical element of every one of these small communities, is functioning well in my area. We had problems a year or so ago, but basically they seem to be not only happy with it but in many cases are indicating that some of the changes that have taken place have, in fact, made the service better, better in a way they had not realized before.

You closed on the issue as it pertains to the native Indians in your riding and in mine. Of course in British Columbia we have never had, except for a few isolated examples, any treaties. So within British Columbia the issue of Indian land claims, Indian title, Indian rights, is a critical issue today. I spent many hours last summer at blockades in various parts of my riding. They were not as large as the ones you encountered in Quebec and central Canada, but no less critical to us out there. The issue is one about which the native leaders that I met with are cautiously optimistic with respect to the role the federal government is playing now. They see the negotiation process taking place in British Columbia and they see that they have their involvement in it.

I would say that scepticism is still there, but they are cautiously optimistic that we are dealing with their issues in a proper manner now.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, today is the final day of the special debate on the throne speech which was presented on May 13, 1991. We have had six days of debate on the speech, but there has been nothing said so far by the Prime Minister or any of his ministers to try to explain or justify its contents that changes the essential reality. The Speech from the Throne is an admission by the government of just how precarious a situation we have in this country, a situation that has been created in large measure by this government.

The Prime Minister says the problem is that Canadians are lacking in patriotism and they should be more enthusiastic about their country. Well I say that Canadians are not lacking in patriotism or in enthusiasm for their country, they are lacking enthusiasm for this government and its policies, which are undoing the very fabric of our nation.

It is difficult for a lot of Canadians to have faith in the future of their country when they are uncertain about their own economic future.

In this throne speech, the government appears to have finally realized that there is an important link between the economy and national unity.

[*Translation*]

My party and myself have been saying for a long time that a strong economy gives a boost to national unity and that Canada can only achieve its maximum potential in an increasingly competitive global economy as a strong and unified nation.

• (1200)

[*English*]

Unfortunately, the government has not provided a clear and meaningful economic agenda in this throne speech. Three months ago, Canadians hoped this government would provide a new plan for economic recovery in its February 1991 budget. In fact, Liberals called for such a plan. It was nowhere to be found then and it is nowhere to be found now.

At the time of the February 1991 budget, just three months ago, the government said that inflation is economic enemy number one and must be kept in check with high interest rates. However, in the throne speech on May 13 we were told, and I quote: "economic recovery depends on reducing interest rates".

This latter day conversion may signal that the government is finally willing to recognize that economic damage is caused by fighting inflation solely with high interest rates and by making the fight against inflation a higher priority than job creation and economic growth. It may signal that the government is ready to consider other ways of dealing with inflation, ways that will not have the disastrous side effects of massive job losses and a shrinking economy produced by this government's present policies.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, Canada is not the only country to want a low and stable inflation rate but it is certainly the only one prepared to achieve this goal at any cost!

The Economic Council of Canada has been keeping a close eye on the experience of countries such as Austria, Norway, Sweden, West Germany and Japan which have managed to control inflationary pressures somewhat without a drastic increase in their level of unemployment.

[*English*]

The Economic Council of Canada, the government's own advisory body, identified in the other countries I have listed what it called a "social partnership" among business, labour and government. This social partnership, the council said: "seems to offer the key to controlling inflation without creating an unacceptable level of unemployment".

The partnership is based on compromise among the three players on a wide range of economic policy issues and, the council adds, it must begin with a political commitment on the part of the government to full employment. There has been no such commitment from this government, not in the budget and certainly not in this throne speech.

Without consultations on economic goals with all of Canada's economic stakeholders, we must fear that the Bank of Canada, with the support of the government, will continue to fight inflation principally with the blunt instrument of high interest rates and ignore the economic and human costs of lost jobs and lost business activity.

This means that the government would be relying on the very policies that got us into the recession to now get us out of it. That simply does not make much sense.

In the throne speech the government says it wants to create 2.5 million jobs by the year 2000, nine years from now. At first glance, that looks pretty good on paper. However, on closer examination it is clear that the government has set its sights extremely low. Even the finance minister's own department confirms that between 1970 and 1979, more than 10 years ago, the same number of jobs, 2.5 million, were created in a much smaller economy. In that nine year period, from 1970 to 1979, economic growth averaged 4.7 per cent, significantly more than the 4.0 per cent growth rate for the period up to 1995, as predicted in the budget of last February.

[*Translation*]

This government also failed, Mr. Speaker, to mention in the Speech from the Throne the other economic factors to be considered to get to this 2.5 million jobs figure. Without any indication of the projected population growth or labour force involvement, for instance, the job creation forecast by this governement in the Speech from the Throne is not of much value.

[*English*]

For example, Canada could create 2.5 million jobs by the year 2000, but still have double digit unemployment of more than 10 per cent. Would this percentage level be acceptable? The government's answer cannot be found clearly stated in the throne speech. However, by setting out these targets, it looks like a 10 per cent unemployment level would be acceptable to this government.

I am sure the answer of Canadians is that this level is simply not acceptable. They would not want this to be the target of the government. They would not want this goal to be in effect 10 or 20 years from now. The government should realize that simply setting as a goal something that could happen anyway is just not good enough. Canadians deserve better.

What about the nearly 1.5 million people who are looking for work and need a job right now? What about those people who have lost their jobs permanently through plant closings? What about the job requirements of a growing population? If the government had wanted to back up its words on job creation, we would have seen a commitment to full employment in the throne speech. The 1.5 million Canadians now looking for work deserve such a commitment. This government has an obligation to provide this commitment and to work at starting to carry it out right now.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, government policies must ensure coordination among the various factors which will put us in a competitive position—interest rates, tax system and other policies—if we want to achieve sustained economic growth.

[*English*]

The throne speech identifies the importance to Canadians of being able to compete effectively in international markets. Speaking of guaranteeing our economic future, the government says we should begin by "equipping ourselves to compete with the best."

These are beautiful words, but they ring hollow when they come from a government that has decreased its own spending on research and development as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product—the over-all size of the economy—every year since 1986, especially after the Prime Minister had promised to double the level of spending on research and development in this country.

The former Minister of Finance, now the Minister for International Trade, has admitted that: "Canada's investment in research and development has been low by the standards of the main industrialized countries". It was his own budgets that in effect cut spending on

research and development and science and technology programs.

The Canadian Manufacturers' Association says that Canada's ability to compete with its major trading partners is only 85 per cent of what it was in 1980, with most of the reduction occurring in the last half of that decade since this Conservative government came to power. Canada, which relies on exports for almost 30 per cent of its prosperity, has lost 20 per cent of its share of world markets in the last five years and its share of world export trade fell from 5 per cent to 4 per cent.

Fundamental to any country's ability to compete are its exchange rates and its interest rates. Business leaders in our export sector, one of the cornerstones of our economy, continue to identify the high Canadian dollar and high interest rates as key contributors to Canada's declining competitiveness. In addition to helping bring down the value of the Canadian dollar, lower interest rates would also make it easier for companies to make the capital investments necessary to bring about higher productivity and to become more competitive.

Other factors in becoming more competitive include a country's tax system and the quality of its human capital—its people. Government policy must ensure that the ingredients for becoming more competitive are co-ordinated with business and labour to help achieve long-run productivity growth.

• (1210)

The throne speech waxes eloquent about the need for Canada to invest in its people—its human capital. The government already had an opportunity to do something about it three months earlier in its February budget. What did we see? Not only no new programs to help Canadian workers gain the skills they would need to compete with skilled workers from other countries, but we saw that the government actually cut $100 million from its Canada Jobs Strategy. The throne speech did nothing at all to make up for that omission.

[*Translation*]

Of course, Mr. Speaker, even before we can become internationally competitive, we should take a close look at our national stakes. In the Speech from the Throne, the government was forced in fact to admit that "regulations [—]make it simpler for producers to ship their products abroad than to sell them in neighbouring provinces."

[*English*]

The throne speech calls for an end to interprovincial trade barriers by 1995. This is a worth-while objective but the government set out no clear plan of action on how to reach it.

In 1987, before the government concluded its free trade negotiations with the Americans, Liberals called for a reduction in interprovincial trade barriers within Canada. We believed then as we believe now that our first priority should be free trade here at home—right here in Canada. Why should we embark on discussions for a trade deal with Mexico before we have created conditions for free trade here in Canada?

The same high interest rate policy of this government which has helped undermine our ability to compete has also helped drive up the Canadian dollar to its highest level in years. This, in combination with the GST and other tax policies of the federal government—not to mention the higher gasoline and other taxes imposed by the new NDP government in Ontario—is helping to create an unprecedented exodus of Canadian shoppers to the United States.

It is estimated that in Ontario alone cross-border shopping will result in about $1 billion in lost retail sales this year, representing up to $80 million in lost provincial tax revenues and corresponding, or perhaps larger amounts in federal tax revenues.

I am told that in Kingston, Ontario, a community of about 100,000 people, a report for its Chamber of Commerce by the accounting firm, Ernst and Young, says that cross-border shopping will cost the area 500 jobs and cost local merchants $78 million in lost sales. Kingston is about one hour away from the nearest major American city.

Let us take a look at Windsor, Ontario, 10 minutes away from a major American city. A recent study by the University of Windsor suggests that Windsor and the surrounding Essex County could lose as many as 4,600 jobs and $281 million from their local economy this year alone, all due to the direct and indirect effects of cross-border shopping.

The number of Canadians making day trips to the United States increased 30 per cent in 1990 and is expected to increase even more this year.

In Windsor, this past March, more than 25,000 people paid duty at the bridge and at the tunnel. That is an increase of more than 500 per cent from April 1988 when just over 4,000 paid duty. In spite of this increase, the president of the Customs and Excise union local in Windsor says that at times the customs officers are so swamped that they just wave through passengers in cars who would otherwise have to stop and pay duty on their United States purchases. Sometimes as many as six in ten cars are waved through.

This government has not only created the cross-border shopping problem with its policies. It willingly allows thousands of dollars in duties and taxes to go uncollected every day. Canada Customs must be given the resources to properly staff border crossing points. The idea here is not to have some kind of border police force, but rather to make it smooth and efficient for those Canadians who shop in the United States to pay the duties and taxes they owe. It is only fair because these duties and taxes are in effect collected on the same kind of goods when they are sold right here in Canada.

The fact that the provincial sales tax is not collected upon entry into Canada also adds to the uneven playing field that presently exists.

The Minister of National Revenue tries to say that this cannot be done, that collecting two kinds of retail sales taxes on two different sets of items is too complex. He says he will collect the Ontario tax only if it is changed and harmonized with the federal GST, that is, if it is imposed on all the same items in the same way. This is nonsense.

All the minister has to do is go to any store in Ontario and he will find clerks with relatively little training and experience who are dealing with these same two taxes in their current form day in and day out, calculating them and applying them to the right products in the right way. If these retail clerks can do it so can our more highly trained Customs officers if our Minister of National Revenue will tell them to do it.

After all, our Customs officers are already collecting provincial taxes for the Ontario government on liquor brought in by individuals without any problem and without these taxes being first harmonized with federal taxes on liquor.

Why is the Minister of National Revenue hesitating? I think it is because he wants to use the issue of the provincial sales tax at the border as a form of political blackmail designed to get the Ontario government to bring in its own form of GST. That is wrong. The federal GST is already enough of a burden without the minister and this Conservative government trying to create more GST at the provincial level.

Furthermore, the federal government and the Government of Ontario should not be so quick to dismiss the idea put forward by border community mayors of differential gasoline taxes in areas close to the American border. After all, a system like that has been operating with provincial gasoline taxes in Quebec for many years. This would certainly go a long way toward making the playing field level for Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. Your time to address the throne speech is over unless you obtain the unanimous consent of the House. Does the House agree?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by saying that with respect to the current concern about negotiations with the United States on the matter of trade with the United States and with Mexico, we know that in order to get approval from the Congress for fast-track negotiations President Bush promised that before any deal with Mexico would be signed there would be adjustment programs for workers who would lose their jobs because of a new trilateral free trade deal involving Mexico. He promised that companies would not be able to use any trade deal with Mexico to get around tougher environmental and labour laws in the United States.

There have been no such commitments from our government and there should be. Adjustment programs were promised by the Prime Minister during the debate over the last trade deal, the one with the United States. After the deal was signed he backed down on that promise. We now see the resulting economic damage in terms of lost jobs and closed plants day after day.

• (1220)

No wonder we in the Official Opposition question why Canada should be at the table with Mexico and the United States at all unless and until these questions and uncertainties are clearly and positively dealt with.

I say by way of conclusion that it is not good enough for the government to talk in its throne speech about how great the economy will be eventually. This talk has to be backed up by policies that reinforce our national institutions and by policies that help create strong and swift economic growth.

In order for Canada to remain united it is important that Canadians have confidence in the economic future of their country. That is why we Liberals have been calling for policies that will help us restructure and modernize our firms and retrain our work force.

These steps are truly needed to increase our competitiveness so that we can have strong companies and strong growth in both jobs and output all on a long-term continuing basis.

There are some Canadians who say that at present we should focus only, or at least mainly, on the economy and on developing and implementing those government policies that would help get it moving again. However, Canadians cannot expect to get help from their national government unless we continue to have a country, one united country, from coast to coast to coast.

Therefore, along with giving priority to our economic problems, we must at the same time pay attention to concerns about national unity. Let us also recognize that we cannot have an effective united country without an effective national government.

By strengthening our economic base and our unity as a country, we will be making the best possible preparation for the challenges of the future.

This throne speech does not help us to make such preparations and, therefore, deserves to be rejected by this House and by the Canadian people.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, I was most pleased to listen to my colleague from Windsor West stating the case for Windsor with respect to the question of cross-border shopping with emphasis on the number of Canadians who are shopping in Detroit which, if you time your entry into Detroit correctly, you can get there in five minutes rather than ten.

I wonder if my colleague would elaborate a bit not just on the issue of Canadians going into Detroit but on the effect of government policies on the movement of Americans into Windsor and the impact there is on the retail trade and recreational establishments in Windsor which a few years ago were doing quite well with tourism.

To pursue a quite separate and distinct issue with respect to the throne speech, I would be interested in hearing my colleague comment on an omission from the throne speech.

In spite of the suggestion of targets for education and training there was no mention whatever of research and development targets, in spite of the promise of the Prime Minister in 1983 that the percentage of the Gross Domestic Product expended in Canada on R and D must be doubled.

There is also the fact that in other contexts it is widely reported that the government has abandoned all targets whatever for R and D, so I would like to hear his comments on the impact of that significant policy omission and policy change with respect to economic development.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has raised an important point.

There is a very substantial hospitality industry in the Windsor and Essex County area catering to Americans who come over to shop, to dine in our restaurants and to spend a day touring our various places of interest. This industry has been severely damaged by the GST and earlier by the high dollar.

These additional costs have been discouraging Americans from coming over as they have been for years to dine in our restaurants, to shop in our stores, and to visit our tourist attractions. These are mainly day trips.

They are further discouraged by the high volume of traffic at the bridge and the tunnel which causes them to have to wait in line for several hours, sometimes, before they can get across.

This is another reason why we need more staff at these major border crossing points and why there have to be provisions, as we find in a number of international airports outside Canada, where people, like Americans coming to Windsor to shop or to dine who have nothing to declare should be dealt with separately and differently

from people who are returning and have to be examined for purchases they made and for duties they owe.

This is an important aspect of the whole problem of cross-border shopping. The government needs to take action on this problem before more permanent damage is done to the economy, not just that of Windsor and Essex County but of all Canada. Most of our population lives within a short drive to the American border. The whole economy is affected by this problem being allowed to drag on without more effective action being taken.

Furthermore, if this government is interested in making Canada more competitive, then the throne speech should have set out some clear targets and objectives for improving the performance of the economy when it comes to research and development and science and technology. All we have so far are the cutbacks in recent budgets by this government of support for private sector and university initiatives in research and development and science and technology. This is not the way to make this country more competitive.

I regret that the throne speech has not corrected the errors of past budgets in this regard. I hope there will be action taken before long, because our country needs to work together, with business and labour supported by government, to improve the level of its competitiveness. That means new and improved government policies when it comes to research and development and science and technology.

Mr. Brian O'Kurley (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour and a great privilege to rise today as a participant in this historic throne speech debate.

This debate is about the future of a great nation. This debate is about a vision of a stronger Canada for our children. This debate is about building a better Canada for all Canadians from sea to sea to shining sea.

The Speech from the Throne serves as a foundation and is a critical element in the success of our nation. It demonstrates the commitment of our government to Canadian unity, prosperity and responsiveness.

The issue of Canadian unity is an important one. Canadians are now at a turning point in their history. This country is a great nation. We have constructed a country with generations of men and women determined to make a home for themselves and a future for their children. Tolerance and fairness, courage and compassion, individual enterprise and neighbourly co-operation have always succeeded in overcoming obstacles and erasing doubt.

Now is the time for us to use these skills to strengthen Canada so that it can meet the challenges of the 21st century.

While we know that a country is more than just a constitution, we also know that a constitution should unite a nation. Canadians across this country should see themselves and their hopes and aspirations mirrored in their constitution. That is not the case today. Therefore, no other task is more crucial than making the constitution more relevant to the citizens, the peoples of the various regions of this country.

Many agree that the final constitutional product is vital for Canada's success. However, it is becoming increasingly more clear that what is also important is the constitutional process. All Canadians must have the opportunity to participate in this process. All Canadians need to get involved so that our way of life can be preserved and enhanced for future generations.

• (1230)

Federal, provincial and territorial governments are now engaged in consulting Canadians on different aspects of making changes to the Constitution. At the federal level, the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future was created to bring Canadians together to talk about the fundamental values and characteristics of Canada.

Parliamentary committees will continue to consult Canadians to find better ways of making constitutional changes. Through these mechanisms and processes Canadians are now developing a consensus about the basic values and aspirations that should underlie constitutional reform.

All of this contributes to an increased understanding among Canadians of how much we have in common as well as an awareness of what we stand to lose. Once we have heard an as broad as possible range of views, and only after receiving and considering the summations and reports of the public commissions and parliamentary committees, the government will propose a plan for a renewed Canada to the people of Canada.

Our government is committed to Canadian unity, but the job of attaining that worth-while goal is not a task for government alone. Canadian unity will be achieved only through a combined effort of all Canadians working together for a better future. Canadian unity will be realized when Canadians recognize and accommodate each other's differences while at the same time focusing and building on our similarities. Together we will build a better Canada.

Our government, in addition to being committed to Canadian unity, is also committed to securing Canada's prosperity.

Canada has one of the highest standards of living in the world and a quality of life second to none. There is no guarantee that such progress will continue. Simply relying on the things that have helped us succeed in the past will not be enough to improve further our material welfare and quality of life.

Restoring economic growth is essential. We must go beyond this to attain economic prosperity. Canadians must work more effectively together in a partnership for prosperity to meet Canada's competitive challenge. As the world economy becomes increasingly more competitive, Canada has been falling behind its trading partners in its ability to compete in the global marketplace.

The most telling indicator of Canada's future economic challenges is its productivity performance. Unfortunately, our productivity performance—how efficiently we produce goods and services—has been deteriorating.

The 1984 agenda for economic renewal outlined the competitive challenge facing Canada and subsequent actions helped to provide a better framework for restoring productivity growth. Today Canadians are increasingly concerned about their ability to compete. These concerns range from broad economic issues such as inflation, interest rates and the exchange rate, to problems with our productivity performance like the effectiveness of investments, the burden of government and the business climate.

Governments have a responsibility to create an environment that encourages the growth of competitive and successful enterprise. The 1991 budget announced actions to restore fiscal balance and move toward price stability. This will lead to a stable broad economic environment, increased confidence in the Canadian economy and will strengthen Canada's ability to compete in a touch economic world.

Boosting productivity growth and prosperity is far more than a job just for government. The private sector must take full advantage of the opportunities created by the actions of governments. In order to maximize productivity growth, the quality of investments in infrastructure, machinery, equipment, training, education and research and technology must be scrutinized. As well, consideration must be given to private sector spending in the areas of training and research, and to other areas such as education where, by international standards, Canada's level of spending compares well but its performance does not.

Prosperity and competitiveness are not only issues for business, labour and government. All Canadians can help to strengthen Canada's competitive ability by identifying and developing an awareness of the problems. Only then can they be a part of developing solutions.

I would like to conclude by discussing another very important issue to Canadians, and that is Canadians and their environment. Canadians do care about their environment and are concerned that it is preserved and protected. We are all taking action to protect it and are personally involved in finding solutions.

Canada's green plan is a comprehensive $3 billion action plan which expresses this government's commitment to work with Canadians to manage our resources prudently and to encourage sensitive environmental decision-making. The green plan is proof that the government is listening and responding to the environmental concerns of Canadians. It was developed as a result of extensive consultation with Canadians from all walks of life. It is timely, responsive and sensitive to the needs of Canadians. The government has forged a series of environmental partnerships beginning with individuals and ranging through special interest groups and the private sector as well as municipal and provincial governments. Environmental partnerships extend to the international level as well.

Canada's green plan provides Canadians with information to help them make informed decisions about the state of the environment and to help them understand what we as individuals and as a nation can do in addressing the problems. We realize that unilateral action in itself will not solve all environmental problems. Solutions require everyone's involvement and everyone

has a part to play so that we may live in a clean and healthy environment now and in the future.

In conclusion, the Government of Canada in its Speech from the Throne has demonstrated and reaffirmed its commitment to national unity, to economic prosperity and to responsiveness to Canadians. The challenges that the country and the government face are serious challenges and they are challenges that are not unknown in other counties around the world. When we look around the globe, we see other challenges in countries like South America and the Soviet Union, countries having difficulties with violence. When we view all of that and we consider the situation in Canada, we recognize that we do live in a great nation but that we have a lot of room to grow and the challenges are great. These challenges will not be met with an ununified effort.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. Your time is over. Questions and comments, five minutes, the hon. member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by congratulating the hon. member on a well done presentation.

In his speech he spoke a little bit about the comparative position of Canada internationally and he stressed the importance of education and research and development as a means of improving competitiveness. These are very good comments, they are excellent comments.

I would like to add one dimension to this whole debate and that is the productivity question, which has been coming up on a regular basis in discussions. I might suggest that you can put all of the money you want into education and research and development but productivity by itself is not going to improve. Productivity will only improve in Canada if we are able to remove all of the barriers between the provinces and if we are able to ensure and secure a market for corporations and companies which produce goods.

The reason I say this is because one of the reasons Canadian goods are more expensive than American or other goods is because many of the companies that produce those goods have short runs on those goods. For example, a company that manufactures chairs, plates pens or pencils will produce for a local market. If the market can bear 100,000 pens or 100,000 plates, the company would produce that quantity, while other corporations might enjoy bigger markets and perhaps produce 500,000 or 1,000,000.

• (1240)

As a result of that, the unit price will be reduced and the consumer will get the benefit of that reduction.

I want to hear the comments of my colleagues on the question of removing the barriers between the provinces and the target of 1995, which is very far off and should be moved up.

Mr. O'Kurley: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Ottawa for posing such a thoughtful question. Indeed, the trade barriers between provinces are certainly an obstacle to increasing our economic growth. There are a number of things that can be done to address that concern.

We could eliminate a number of things. We could eliminate the policies that favour one province's suppliers over lower cost producers from other provinces. We need to eliminate regulations that often make it simpler for producers to ship their products abroad than to sell them in neighbouring provinces. We need to eliminate hiring policies that give preference to provincial residents over those from other provinces. We also need to eliminate occupational standards that restrict work opportunities for residents of other provinces.

One recent estimate put the number of barriers to interprovincial trade in Canada at approximately 500. The government's goal is to see barriers to interprovincial trade, services and investment come down by 1995 to allow Canada to become a single integrated market.

The savings to taxpayers and consumers of creating such a market could be as high as $6 billion, about $1,000 a year for a household of four. Further, today investment and technology flow with ease across international boundaries, markets for goods and services are specialized, and decisions on production are made on a world-wide basis.

I agree with the hon. member that one of the major issues that the Canadian government should address is interprovincial trade barriers.

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to rise and say a few words on the throne speech. The throne speech is an occasion for members to give some of their personal views and their advice to the Prime Minister and the cabinet.

I, first of all, would like to commend the Prime Minister and his cabinet, as well as the government caucus, for taking some very tough decisions over the last six years and sticking with them. The government needs to be commended for its goals in this throne speech: to emphasize national unity—on which I will say a few words—and to talk about maintaining our high Canadian standard of living, and indeed increasing it.

The fact of the matter is that, even with all of the problems that we have, when we look at Canada *vis-à-vis* all the other countries of the world, we come off very well. There are two external measures which we should never forget about. The first measure is the tens of millions of people trying to get into this wonderful country as refugees, often at great personal risk to themselves. There are many thousands each year who are drowned in boats and killed trying to get to safe haven countries like Canada. As well, there are the tens of millions who are trying to come as immigrants. That is an external measure of how well we have done in this country.

I often think that it is the result of the media which constantly are stressing the negative, constantly stressing the very legitimate points of conflict between our ethnic communities in Canada, between our federal government and our provincial governments, and between our regions. That is constantly emphasized by the national media and, indeed, is constantly emphasized here. The problem is that once we permitted television in the House, these conflicts were aggravated because we all play to the television, rather than address the problem. As a result, people tend to forget that Canada is really doing a lot better than we realize, and the immigrants are proof.

The second external measure is the recent study by the United Nations. Nobody can claim that the United Nations is trying to help Prime Minister Mulroney and his cabinet, but the fact of the matter is that when it measured the human development index for 160 countries of the world—which measures such things as literacy, life expectancy and personal basic disposable income—Canada finished second out of all the countries in the world. That is an external measurement which tells me that as a nation we are doing far better than we are prepared to even give ourselves credit for.

My comments concern that. Frankly, I think Canada has proven itself. I cannot imagine why we, as a people, would permit any group of extremists, whether they are in Quebec or in western Canada, to break this wonderful country up. The one thing that is crystal clear is that if we break this country up we will all be substantially poorer and, for many years, will have an enormous problem trying to redefine ourselves. If Quebec separates then the natives might separate from Quebec and the Outaouais might separate from Quebec.

In the west, southeastern B.C. has often wanted to be part of Alberta and in the Peace River country there are similar pressures on the opposite side.

When my eastern European constituents come up to me, they say: "Mr. Thacker, don't mess around with your borders because once you start doing that it is a never-ending process." We could break right down into individual cities wanting to be separated. We cannot have that. This is a wonderful country and we have to work together to keep it together.

The Prime Minister deserves more credit than he gets for the leadership he has provided to this country. The courage he has shown and maintained is really quite extraordinary. He deserves credit because he has his cabinet and his caucus behind him. The government caucus deserves credit if we look at reality.

In 1984 we came to power with a certain set of policies. People, whether from the C.D. Howe Institute, the Economic Council or the Department of Finance, have done extrapolations. If we had carried on with those policies from 1984 to today, the deficit would be over $70 billion and the national debt would be well over $500 billion. Obviously there had to be changes.

The opposition has opposed every tax increase, every cut in spending and, yet, had it been in power it would have had to make similar types of choices. The opposition might have acted slightly different, but we could not have permitted the policies of 1984 to continue because we would have a 50 cent dollar. Anybody who thinks their nation is richer when its dollar drops in value just

does not understand the reality of economics and does not know the examples of many other countries which have tried to lower their dollar. It might help for a month or two, but beyond that it is a disaster. Countries have to face up to their basic underlying, structural problems. they have to meet the world economy as it is rather than as they think it ought to be. That is the real problem for so many countries, they have not faced the world as it is.

I believe the Prime Minister deserves a lot more credit for the free trade agreement, the GST and, in this throne speech, the comments concerning education.

We know that education is entirely a provincial jurisdiction, but it is also clear that if the Fathers of Confederation were putting the country together today, they would have given power to the federal government over post-secondary education because that is an area where we are not getting enough specialization and graduates to cope with the world. The reason is quite simple, we have 10 countries with regard to post-secondary education and there is enormous overlap and duplication. We need to have a much stronger Canadian hat *vis-à-vis* education. Unfortunately, the Constitution does not call for that, but we as a national Parliament have to provide leadership. That is what this throne speech does.

Also, for the first time, the national Parliament is starting to say: "Look, provinces, you have turned this country into 10 separate nations *vis-à-vis* provincial economic development and provincial rules on regulation of industry." We have more barriers to the free transfer of goods and people and commodities in this country than they do in Europe where they are separate nations. Imagine Europe, where they were killing millions 50 years ago, now have fewer barriers to the transfer of money, capital, labour and educated people than we do in this country, which is supposed to be a common market.

• (1250)

I blame this Parliament and I blame past governments, most of whom were Liberal, because the national government should have been stopping these provincial rules that have blocked this nation from being a common market.

Section 121 of our Constitution clearly sets out that Canada is a common market. This Parliament should have been blocking these rules by using the power of disallowance, for one thing, to keep goods and capital flowing freely across this country. We must start to address that problem and it will take a few years to work it out.

My last point is *vis-à-vis* the Constitution. Mr. Speaker, why are we in this position? It is because in 1931, Canada became a sovereign nation in every respect except one, the amending of our Constitution. Our previous leaders in this country could not agree on an amending formula. Every Prime Minister since then has tried to patriate the Constitution and come up with an amending formula; whether it was Mackenzie King, St. Laurent, Diefenbaker, Pearson, or Trudeau in the 1970s. When they could not get unanimity, they all properly backed off because the country was being built, it was growing and we still had the second highest standard of living in the world.

Mr. Trudeau decided in 1980, when he got his last majority, to change that. He virtually forced through a patriation of the Constitution as well as a Charter and both have turned out to be disasters. It would have been wiser to have backed off, but he did not. Now we are into this mess. He forced the patriation. Quebec did not sign. After six years of being out, the ten provincial premiers came together representing all three parties in the country and said: "We have to have the Constitution patriated. We have to get Quebec in to sign", because the business of the nation was being hampered. So, in 1986, all ten premiers agreed to have a round. That is what led to Meech Lake.

In Meech Lake, we had all four political parties, all premiers agreeing to it, and then it failed because of the opposition parties in a couple of provinces, as well as a weak Conservative government in Manitoba did not have the courage to stand up and speak for the nation. So we are into it, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to be able to comment on the Supreme Court of Canada and its decisions. The other thing Mr. Trudeau did in 1980 was to transfer massive power to the Supreme Court of Canada. The court, in a couple of

decisions on abortion, on Bill 101, have caused a malaise in the country. Formerly these matters were always settled by way of political adjustments and political compromise. But the court has the power to come down with a hard ruling and that has caused enormous malaise in this country. We are a long way from working it out.

I regret that my time has expired. I need at least 20 minutes to get through what I would like to say.

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today on this final day of throne speech debate to put forward some of my comments and some of the comments from people in my constituency with reference to the plans of this government for the future and the plan that the government seems to have put in place for the past.

On the first page of the throne speech the words jump off the page:

> This session will be a turning point in Canadian history.

There are many turning points and we are at a turning point in Canadian history. As I travel throughout my riding, as I travel across Canada into various provinces and territories, I find that there is a good deal of dismay at where this country has been taken over the last six and a half years, both socially, economically and politically.

It is interesting that in looking at our thrust toward unity of the country the Prime Minister would be so callous as he was the weekend before last, when he said that Canadians are not patriotic. Those types of comments simply are not helpful when we are trying to bridge the gap between Parliament and the ordinary Canadian voter. I object to that type of statement as do the people in my riding and I am sure across Canada.

One of my constituents, Mr. Jim Miltimore of Summerland, phoned me and I spoke to him again on the weekend. He vehemently opposed this. He and I feel proud to be Canadians. We are patriotic in our own way. We as Canadians are not necessarily demonstrative. We are not chest beaters. We are not flag wavers. We believe, or have up until now, in our country.

It is unfortunate that the Prime Minister, while talking of the turning point in Canadian history, talking about unity of the country, participation in prosperity, and a responsive government as he has in this throne speech, at the same time he slaps the people of Canada with a comment like that. Those types of comments are not helpful.

I have spoken of the three main tenets of this throne speech, Canadian unity, participation in prosperity, and changing the way that Ottawa works—that is a responsive government. I want to speak first about Canadian unity and how the members of my community see some of this, and what I have seen in my participation in the finance committee, in the past public accounts committee, and in various travels across the country and throughout my riding.

Unity goes much further than simply talking about constitutional matters, it goes into economic and social well–being. If we look at some of the occurrences across Canada over the last few years, we have watched some of the things that people see as unifying forces being eroded. VIA Rail is an example. Sir John A. Macdonald made the agreement with CP Rail. The Canadian National Railway followed as a unifying force, making Canadians from coast to coast feel as if part of each other.

We have other modes of transportation. We have better highway systems, better air links, but the fact is that many of the small communities, rural Canadians, depend upon the railways, and railway service has been eroded. Our branch lines have been cut. Essentially the whole rail system has been lost in my riding alone. The Kettle Valley Rail Line has been abandoned and they are now in the process of taking it out. The section from Spences Bridge through the Okanagan, through Merritt and Princeton, have also been abandoned approximately a year ago and will soon no doubt be removed.

This is the type of thing that has unified Canada in the past, and with upgrading can unify Canada again. But they are not the only things. The attack on CBC radio and television by this government has been a terrible thing for rural Canada. In my riding alone I have had many petitions and letters of objection. People listen to the CBC for programs such as that hosted by Peter Gzowski, *Cross Canada Checkup*, *Double Exposure*. I can go on and name many radio programs listened to by many people in my area. CBC programs in all areas of Canada are always listened to and watched. A good

strong national television and radio network has a unifying effect upon Canada. That has been eroded.

Another matter which was debated in the House on Friday on a New Democratic motion is the funding of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. This is a major factor of unification within Canada. I would like to quote from a study and a submission made by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities to the government in summarizing the federal benefits of the RCMP.

• (1300)

I will quote directly from its fourth point: "The contribution to national unity is beyond dollars and cents.

What price does one put on the presence of the RCMP at our council inaugural meetings or the ever-present white and blue cars on our highways and streets?

It is incumbent on the federal government to sustain the image of national unity. In western Canada the RCMP provides policing and the federal government derives a great benefit to the national identity. The federal government is greatly underestimating the contribution of the RCMP to national unity in these negotiations."

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police is a part of Canada's heritage. It is looked upon as a unifying factor by many people within Canada. The former Solicitor General proposed to substantially increase the cost to the extent where municipalities in my riding began talking about other options to RCMP.

It does not help to unify Canada when we erode some of the very systems that have brought this country together. Let me give some examples of the problems of passing on taxation from one level to the next level to the next level. Ultimately it comes out of the same pockets: the taxpayer's, the property owner's and the ordinary, middle and low income earner's.

In Penticton, with a population of approximately 25,500 people, the increase the former Solicitor General has proposed, under the present system, would be almost $176,000 in increased policing costs for that community.

That passes on a major cost to the municipality. In Summerland, with a population of approximately 8,400 people, the cost is staggering: $72,663 extra under the new formula. In Merritt, also in my riding, with a population of approximately 6,100 people, the cost would be $118,831 in addition to what it is already paying.

The hon. member from Brant, the New Democratic Party Solicitor General critic, has written letters to the Solicitor General pointing out the importance of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the unfairness of adding this extra tax burden to the local taxpayers and the major place that the RCMP takes in Canadian unity.

I implore this government to rethink the cost of policing and to rethink passing those costs on.

I would like to quote from a letter I received. It was a letter to the right hon. Prime Minister from Mr. R. J. Shewfelt, the mayor of the municipality of Summerland. Let me quote two sections of that letter to point out the feeling in our area toward the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and toward the anticipated increases in cost. The mayor says:

> —we are— a level of government picking our tax dollars from the same tree, the taxpayer, and we find the shifting of responsibility to this degree completely unacceptable and unthinkable. We beseech you to please rethink your application to this agreement as we find it absolutely deplorable.

Mayor Shewfelt goes on to say:

> If this action were to come to fulfilment, it would only further alienate the west and we feel this is a very real danger. We feel the west is a trading partner, and surely, we are entitled to the same consideration being given to the third world countries to develop and implement trade.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police is a real part of British Columbia, a real part of national unity. We in our communities in the Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt riding want it to remain as the main area of law enforcement in our area.

Let me move on to another area. The government has spoken in the Speech from the Throne about more funding for education, et cetera. What we have seen in

Bill C-69 and in the last budget is the cap on the Canada Assistance Plan and the cap on Established Programs Financing.

It is interesting that some of this is just getting out into the various ridings and they are coming to realize that once again it appears to those in the west and to those in the east, those who are being hit by bills such as Bill C-69, that we are being treated differently. We are being discriminated against for the fact that we live out of the golden triangle of the east. The capping of those funds is because right now we happen to be doing reasonably well economically in comparison, for instance, to Ontario throughout this recession.

Let there be no mistake. There are problems and there are many bankruptcies, but people are realizing that the tax burden is simply being shifted down. Although perhaps the taxes will remain the same at the federal level and they may even remain the same at the provincial level, the municipalities must balance their budgets. In balancing their budgets, they have to come up with the tax money to cover these various expenditures. Taxes are passed on to the property owner who lives in the municipality.

The boundary country has some 200 signatures attached to a letter from Mrs. Thelma Drinkwater of Greenwood, British Columbia. I would like to quote this letter, recently received by my office. It says:

> Please find enclosed a petition signed by more than two hundred voters. We protest the passing of Bill C-69. Our taxpayers are already paying out more of their income than they can afford to cover the cost of the Social Services Programs. If we do not receive our fair share of Federal support it will either mean a raise in taxes or a cutback in this service.
>
> Neither of these options are acceptable. We therefore plead with you to make our feelings known on (this) subject.

I speak out, as I have on Bill C-69, to point out to this House that here are 200 people from areas such as Greenwood, Grand Forks and Midway who are speaking out through me in objection to the passing on of taxes to property owners in these areas.

Another thing that unifies this country and assists rural Canada is our telephone system. Before the CRTC right now is an application by Unitel to break down what is known as a monopoly. It may be thought that it is a little bit unusual for someone from the New Democratic Party to speak out for a monopoly. In this case it is very clear that if we deregulate to the extent that Unitel wishes or let Unitel in on the long distance telephone responses, we are going to run into major problems, problems that certainly Unitel does not want to talk about.

Right now we all know that there is a subsidy of somewhere between $23 and $39 a month for local telephone services. We also get though this our telephones installed for a very limited prices and all of our servicing done for nothing. We do not pay for our local telephone calls. This is at the expense to some extent of greater long distance rates; a way of equalizing, if you will, the difficulties that rural communities have in communicating with each other.

If we allow Unitel to break in to the lucrative long distance market and drop those prices, we are going to see what happened in the United States seven years ago when the cost of local telephone service will go up substantially on every one of our bills. Those people now in the lower income levels who barely get by on the little amount of income they have will no longer be able to afford the luxury of a telephone. Telephones are so essential in keeping in contact with each other in rural communities and so essential for emergency services in rural communities where transportation of a public nature is unheard of. I am worried about this sort of thing happening.

Mr. Speaker, you have indicated that my time is up. My understanding is that I had 20 minutes of time. I still have two minutes of time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Canada Post in the rural areas has to be built up and it is being broken down.

Let me move on briefly to the area of participating in prosperity.

• (1310)

Some of the other members have referred to cross-border shopping and the difficulty for the small business community. We cannot knock people for wanting to get the best value for their dollar.

Right now, they see a problem with what is occurring in Canada. They want to get the best value for their dollar, but they are also protesting the high taxes they see as a problem in this country. The GST, the high interest rates, the high dollar and, to some extent, the free trade agreement all have something to do with people going across the border and buying their goods.

It is interesting to look at the free trade agreement as it affects communities such as Osoyoos where I live. Right on the border in Osoyoos, one of the local retailers there, Super Value Store number 36 owner Keith Sheardown, has written me a letter in which he sets out the problems he has just in the area of milk, cheese and what not.

He points out that a Super Value store some 30 miles further from the border is able to sell its milk at a substantially higher price than he does.

While he charges $4.45 for a four-litre jug of milk, across the border that same jug of milk is $1.99. He cannot sell the milk at the same price and this causes problems. It costs jobs and bankruptcies. We are certainly seeing an increase in the number of bankruptcies in Canada and in British Columbia, partially caused by the problem of cross-border shopping.

The throne speech sets out so many things in such glowing terms, but if we look at the history of this government and if we look at what is happening to Canada under this government, it is deplorable. I have one word for this throne speech as a result of that history. That word is: "hypocrisy".

Mr. Dave Worthy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, part of my riding bounds on the riding of the hon. member who has just spoken. We both have large, beautiful but rural areas. Many of the comments he made indicate that the message he is getting from his constituents is the same message that I am getting from my constituents regarding CBC, RCMP and education.

I guess it is part of the filtering process that this House and the members provide. Many people in my constituency and his constituency give a totally opposite side of that story. I guess that is where the different political parties serve their function, in doing this filtering and in trying to decide what the different solutions are.

It is interesting. Somebody on the weekend from his riding spoke to me about the CBC and felt it was absolutely ludicrous that as a government we are continuing to subsidize this national network to the tune of $1.4 billion.

They agree that this is a good function to perform in Canada, but is it necessary to subsidize it at that level?

In fact his constituents are encouraging me, and I am sure him as well, to try to retain the value and the benefits of CBC, but to continue to cut the deficit and our subsidies to it.

The same message could be had for the others. One area on which I have to stand firm with my colleague from the Okanagan is his concern for the potential problems for rural Canada as a result of the possible breakdown of the current monopoly situation regarding communication.

I can see as a former businessman the potential for competition by not only businesses but people who live in the ribbon across Canada where 95 per cent of Canadians live.

For rural Canada, it will create a real problem. My question to the hon. member is this: Does he, through his thinking and dealing with this problem, have any potential solution? If Unitel is successful, is there some way that the people in the rural areas of his riding and mine could continue to receive the assistance and the assurance of service that they do now under the existing monopoly system?

Mr. Whittaker: I thank the hon. member for his question.

I will deal with the Unitel situation first of all. In examining what has happened in the United States as a result of the deregulation of the telephone services, in some states it has become massively difficult for lower income people to get service because of the increase in prices, as I pointed out earlier, on existing service. Those are provided. It appears right now that, from the Unitel application as I understand it, Unitel simply wants to get in on the long distance, it does not want to service the smaller communities.

If that is broken, experience in the United States shows that we in the rural communities are in for added cost. We are going to end up taking the lumps for the break up and deregulation of the telephone services.

As I understand it, in British Columbia B.C. Tel, although objecting to Unitel's application, at the same time has put in an application to the CRTC to be able to charge those various rates. That is my understanding. I

am not certain how solid it is, but that is my understanding.

It is an indication that the gears are in motion to increase the cost of telephone services if this goes through, particularly to those of us in rural Canada who depend on the telephone network in order to network, whether it be in business, socially or for emergency services.

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my good friend from Okanagan—Similkameen— Merritt and it is with respect to the Kettle Valley. I have often wondered, being from Lethbridge, why Kettle Valley was closed down many years ago, because it seems to be a more direct route to the coast.

I am wondering if he might comment on that. I know it was cut by the previous government and that was many, many years ago.

With respect to the RCMP, the people who have approached me are always surprised when I give them some additional information. For example, when they find out that the federal government is paying 25 per cent of the RCMP costs, I say to them: "Why should that be? When the Quebec Provincial Police are funded entirely by the Quebec taxpayer and the Ontario Provincial Police are paid for entirely by the Ontario taxpayer, why should the people in those two provinces pay extra taxes to cover the RCMP who are, in effect, the provincial police force in our respective provinces?" When they see it from that point of view, they often admit: "It is true. They should not be paying for it. We should pay more to handle our own policing."

As for the CBC, when we came to power it was getting $800 million. Today it is $1.4 billion. That is an absolute increase of enormous proportions. It is cutting back for the same reason other media outlets are having to cut back, because there is less advertising as a result of the recession. Why should the taxpayers make up that difference, rather than the CBC having to cut as the other media outlets have had to do?

Mr. Whittaker: First of all, I will deal with the specious argument that Quebec and Ontario are not benefiting. If we look at where forces are placed, although we are getting municipal forces in, say, British Columbia, in Ontario and in Quebec we have the Canadian Law Enforcement Unit, CLEU, which deals on a broader basis with drug law enforcement and major crime enforcement across Canada. We have many benefits accruing to both Quebec and to Ontario as a result of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

In 1951, for instance, British Columbia had a provincial police force. As a result of the unity question, to some extent because of the idea that bigger is better and the new technologies that had to be kept up with, it was felt in British Columbia at that time that the better route to go was to dismantle the provincial police and go with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

• (1320)

As we have seen in some major investigations, it has probably proven to be somewhat of a good move, especially when we watch the various municipal or provincial police forces keeping information in an investigation to themselves instead of sharing it resulting in two or three ongoing investigations. There is a definite benefit to all communities and to Canada as a whole from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Let me move on to the CBC argument. In Canada, as a young nation, we have something that I think the members opposite are ignoring to some extent, and that is the cultural aspect of Canada. We are a young country, 124 years old. Our subsidies to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation gave opportunities to programs like Tommy Hunter and Don Messer in the maritimes. People such as Anne Murray received their big break on CBC. If it was not for groups like this and symphony orchestras, for instance, presenting major productions on the CBC, we would not be as far ahead right now in Canada culturally. It services that which is not served by the private sector.

I am sure my friend from Cariboo—Chilcotin was probably talking to a broadcaster about this.

Mr. Worthy: No.

Mr. Whittaker: He indicates he was not. Without the CBC we would not have had the type of cultural progression that we have had over the past 124 years in Canada. That is something that is beyond money. It is something that we, as Canadians, have to cherish and encourage in order to assist our own cultural communities, whether it be the visual, the spoken or the audio arts.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I was going to comment earlier that the member for Cariboo—Chilcotin had a faulty filter, but I was able to get that in anyway.

Mr. Fisher: Do it again.

Mr. Butland: Do it again? Okay.

I have a question for my colleague concerning the throne speech. I will not go as far as he did and say it is hypocritical, but it may be and I respect my colleague and know his opinion is very commendable. This is a time when the country needs direction. The wondrous words of the throne speech have no direction for Canadians.

A lesson that I have learned from the hon. member, and I think we should all take it, concern his comments about specifics from constituents in his riding and reports to the House. I think the government should take note of that. He quotes from real people and real situations.

The government has a throne speech that gives us a formula for the future, but it has absolutely no ingredients. I would ask the member to elaborate very briefly on that comment.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that if we look at this throne speech and at the past throne speeches since 1988, we do have many of the same ingredients. We do have some of the same wonderful words.

If I can simply quote the conclusion of the throne speech as an example, it says:

> My government will work with Canadians to achieve its goals of unity, prosperity and responsive government so that all Canadians feel themselves a part of this country, so that all Canadians have an equal opportunity to share in its bounty—

We have seen in the legislation over the last couple of years an attack on the unemployed through the UIC bill, an attack on average Canadians through the GST, and an attack on the environment through cuts in the environmental bill. Yet the government talks about the wonderful things it is going to do. Actions speak louder than words.

In this particular case, the government's actions belie what it has said in this throne speech. That is why I say this is a hypocritical document.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pronovost): I thank the hon. member for Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Outremont.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to speak through you to my constituents and Canadians on what our Prime Minister has presented in the Speech from the Throne.

I understand that I immediately follow our colleagues from the NDP and that there are ideological positions that seem fairly firm to us. They seem to be saying and do say that the Speech from the Throne is a rehash and presents nothing for immediate action. If we really look at the Throne Speech, and I believe I do not do so in a partisan or aggressive way, we realize that before finding the recipe, we must again identify some ingredients and especially the pillars on which a society that is developing extremely rapidly must build its future—and the future is now.

Coming back to the Speech from the Throne, we see three basic points in it. Therefore the government's plan is in three clearly identified parts. First comes unity. As we say in the Speech from the Throne, a united country is the best guarantee for the survival of our way of life. Psychology, sociology and a knowledge of society and nature are the basis for this statement. There is no doubt that to have diversity, common projects are necessary and unity must be a prime consideration. Without unity, there is chaos. The government therefore wanted to put first and foremost this basic concept of national unity, a united country, and to do so, as other speakers have said, the government will set up some committees that are necessary, not superfluous, to determine more precisely the pith and essence, the thinking, needs and dynamics of individuals and the population as a whole.

The second part, as was said, deals with prosperity. For an organization to prosper, it must have unity of thought, action and direction, as teachers of management know. Prosperity is a result of this unified approach. The government is not afraid to say that it wants this prosperity under certain conditions and identifies very specific objectives: participation in the creation of 2.5 million new jobs. This is a concrete goal, a goal that can be reached since the Conservative government, from

1984 on, has been constantly faced with goals difficult to attain, but identifiable, identified and reachable.

• (1330)

So, 2.5 million new jobs and an increase of at least 25 per cent in real income by year 2000 are a necessity. The last few years we have heard talks about an apparently vanishing middle class in our society, which would have only richer and poorer people. There is no need right now to discuss this argument. But there is no doubt that, with an increasingly fast development in our society, this so-called middle class is having difficulty ascertaining its future, and that is why the government, conscious of its responsibilities and conscious of the evolution of society, has decided, on top of creating jobs, to increase by at least 25 per cent the real income of people. This will allow society to develop more in terms of well-being.

The third point: the government, as always but in a more immediate way, wants to be more responsive to the concerns of the people. The priorities of the citizens are, as they should be, the main concerns of the members of this House. This is the third element of the Speech from the Throne and I am, I repeat, very glad to be able to comment on what our government is doing in that field.

If you allow me, Mr. Speaker, I will quote broadly from a document submitted to the Bélanger-Campeau Commission. For reasons only it knows, the Commission did not make much use of this submission by the Professional Corporation of Psychologists of Quebec. The paper is entitled: "Collective identity and evolution of Quebec society". It seems appropriate, in the context of the Speech from the Throne, to pick and read to you a few quotes.

Almost at the very beginning it says: "—the increase of mental health problems is isomorphic with the severity of the social problems encountered the last few years." Psychologists often use expressions— You are motioning to me, Mr. Speaker, that I have only two minutes left when I have not even started. I will go faster.

Quebec has one of the highest rates of suicide among young people in the Western world. Overconsumption of tranquilizers and sedatives—the reason why it is said we are going through the tranquillizing revolution—problematic relations with the ethnic minority groups—which were again illustrated by the native crisis—an aging population, all of which do not hang well with the shaky integration of our youth on the job market, the overall modification of the family structure, an impoverishment of social groups most vulnerable to the economic slowdown, and, lastly, as is often reported in the newspapers, the growth of openly demonstrated forms of domestic, family, urban and racial violence and others.

I must cut my comments short, because I do not have much time left. But, Mr. Speaker, if the psychologists, with all their conscientiousness, inscribed this statement at the very beginning of their document, it is essential that our societies come back and take up this notion of a united country.

Let me conclude—Do I still have time left, Mr. Speaker?

I would like to read you an extract from an article. I am quoting myself if I may: "In the past, Quebec's history often merged with that of Canada. This cannot be otherwise because we are part of Canada. Quebec's importance on the federal political scene gives us a good indication of the influence we have always had on the orientation of Canada's destiny. The importance of Quebec in the Canadian entity can only grow bigger, if such is our wish. We are, today, in a position to play an even greater part than ever before. In a not so distant time, the Quebecers will be considered by the rest of Canada as the ones who sounded the alarm when it was still time to do so.

I would have liked to tell you that Sir Wilfred Laurier, twenty years after Confederation said, as the Prime Minister mentioned—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pronovost): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member for Outremont, but I have already given him more time than was allowed to him.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Bourassa.

Mrs. Marie Gibeau (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his presentation.

I would like to ask him a few words of explanation. As a psychologist, when he was talking about the concerns of the citizens, which are, by their very own nature, individual concerns, how does he think that, as a government, we can reconcile individual priorities with government priorities, which are to insure the collective

well-being and, consequently, the well-being of the majority?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for asking such a relevant question. There is no doubt that individual and collective needs can go together, provided that this concept of unity is put forward, as is indicated in the Throne Speech.

Within a concept of unity, individuals can find some sort of personal satisfaction through the fulfilment and the development of the whole group. As a matter of fact, you can find autonomy in the recognition and acceptance of your reliance on others. It is only through this recognition of your reliance on others that you can find autonomy. It is only through its reliance on others that Quebec can find its own autonomy and at the same time recognize that it belongs to a bigger whole, Canada.

But I repeat in concluding, Mr. Speaker, that it is this first theme, which is exciting, and which is presented in the Throne Speech, this fundamental concept of unity, a united country, which is the best guarantee of the survival of our lifestyle.

[*English*]

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, I regret that I cannot ask my question *en français* but that will come in time.

The hon. member talks about collective rights and the issue of unity. I would like to know what his feelings are on the collective aspirations of aboriginal people within Quebec and throughout Canada. How do they fit into the scheme of constitutional reform and the effort to achieve unity in Canada? How do the aspirations of aboriginal people fit in with the prevailing Charter of Rights and Freedoms and other considerations?

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pronovost): The hon. member for Outremont has 60 seconds.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer in French, if I may.

I think this question is absolutely relevant, fundamental and necessary. It is one that has to be brought up in the debate. It is rather easy, I would say, for a member from a minority group such as I am to understand the fundamental needs of the group you belong to. As I said, we can only recognize someone else's need once we have come to terms with ourselves. There is no other way. I would say that both Quebec and Canada are going through a maturing process right now and the more the country and the people will get to know themselves "from within", the more they will be able to integrate and involve minority groups which should have their place among us because it is through such groups that Canada can grow. I hope that we will—

• (1340)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pronovost): I thank the hon. member for Outremont. Unfortunately, his time is up. On debate, the hon. member for Lévis.

Mr. Gabriel Fontaine (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, on May 13, 1991, the government formalized the major national concerns of the Canadian people and outlined what the main themes of the federal legislation and administration will be for the next few years. In view of the present constitutional concerns of the Canadians, it was normal to define this constitutional context in the Speech from the Throne. But we also know that, as important as national soul-searching might be, it will never prevail over quality of life, the preservation of our social programs and the protection of our environment in the eyes of the Canadians, all of which depends on the productivity of our capital and human resources. The Speech from the Throne, of May 13, 1991 stated:

> Increasing economic prosperity is first and foremost an issue of people.

We are entering the age of knowledge and how well Canadians live will depend on how well they learn. To face this particular challenge, the government announced the forthcoming release of a work paper on education.

The federal government is wondering if the $11 billion it spends every year on education is well spent. The results are not convincing: "Three out of ten students drop-out of high school before graduating. Four out of ten adults cannot read or do math well enough to perform everyday tasks."

Included in the Speech from the Throne are the following education goals for the year 2000: cutting illiteracy rates in half; ensuring that ninety percent of Canadians attain high school diplomas or the equivalent by age twenty-five; doubling the number of post-secon-

dary graduates in mathematics, the sciences and engineering; and quadrupling the training provided by employers to their employees.

Mr. Speaker, I think we should find innovative means to help us achieve those goals, at a minimal cost. In Canada, education is financed by the school boards with property taxes, and by the federal and provincial governments, mainly through taxation and loans.

Consequently, almost $11 billion are transferred from the federal to the provincial governments, where those $11 billion are eaten up by various provincial bureaucracies, major education institutions, universities, school boards, et cetera.

All those institutions try to anticipate our collective education needs, that is the number of students opting either for humanities or sciences, the number of elementary schools, the number of colleges and universities, the various services provided to students, the curriculum, the option systems, the credit systems, students' preferences and the demand.

At one end of this planning pyramid, you will find schoolchildren and students who often have to attend schools not of their own choosing, travel by more or less adequate means, and specialize in hard-to-define areas because of the very large number of options available. Too often, the only reason students stay in school is to meet the criteria set by the experts and in the end, get a diploma in whatever subject, also certified by the experts.

Mr. Speaker, I think our education system has lost its focus which should be our students. Our education system does not realize that we live in a market economy. To change the system, the bureaucracy will have to give way to the laws of supply and demand, and to achieve this, all levels of government will have to change their funding programs for education.

Instead of letting public funds, as so often happens, serve the interests of huge bureaucracies, they should be channeled directly to the beneficiaries, in other words, the students.

Governments will have to start implementing a system that provides students with study qualification certificates.

With these certificates, students will be able to choose their subjects, schools, teachers, and so forth. The qualification certificate system could initially show a preference for science and engineering, since those are the areas where the need is greatest and where we have the most catching up to do. The system will encourage private and public educational institutions to compete and also give those institutions an incentive to be more market—and efficiency—oriented. This system would also be a major incentive for the big bad unions, which, unfortunately, are often so concerned about the vested rights of their members that they tend to overlook the needs of young people and the labour market.

The qualification certificate system would do away with a burdensome bureaucracy that has not always proved to be worthwhile. Transfers to lower levels of government must be replaced with transfers to the users themselves.

Mr. Speaker, Canadians must be able to make their own decisions on their future. It no longer makes sense to have bureaucrats decide what careers our young people will choose and how they will prepare for those careers.

In fact, President George Bush recently suggested that U.S. federal funds for education be made directly available to the parents of young Americans, so it would be up to parents and their children to choose their schools or other educational institutions.

Mr. Speaker, in our discussions on educational reform, we should take a look at some examples on the other side of the border. The city of Milwaukee, in Wisconsin, has made qualification certificates available to enable its young people to choose the schools where they want to study.

Similar programs have been implemented in Iowa, Arkansas, Utah, Ohio and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, this concept of channeling transfer payments to young students will form the nucleus of my representations to those who govern this country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pronovost): Questions and comments? Resuming debate. The hon. member for Cardigan.

[*English*]

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, as members of Parliament begin the third session of

Parliament, it is appropriate to look back over the last two and a half years since I was elected to serve the Cardigan riding.

In the period of time since I was elected, I have learned many things and I have met many people. The most important thing I have learned is that serving the hard working people of eastern Prince Edward Island is one of the best jobs I could have.

I thank the people of Cardigan for the trust and respect they have placed in me. As I listened to the Speech from the Thone, one thing kept entering my mind, and that was the government record. For my constituents, the people of Prince Edward Island, it is difficult to find much good in the record over the last seven years.

While this government has presided over the six best years of economic growth, the disparity between Atlantic Canada and the rest of the country has grown. While the economy was booming in central Canada, the fishery was failing. While the government was talking about jobs, jobs, jobs, it was jobs leaving Prince Edward Island. An example is the closure of the CFB in Summerside.

• (1350)

This government has had six years of expanding revenue and still has failed to control the deficit. In all fairness, the record of the government is bad. With a record like this behind it, it is hard to believe any of the vague promises in the throne speech.

Much of the throne speech is concentrated on the constitutional crisis that we are now facing. I would like to make perfectly clear that Quebec was not left out in the cold when the Constitution was brought home in 1982. Quebec was led by Rene Levesque, a man who was dedicated to Quebec's separation. Then Prime Minister Trudeau could have offered Levesque the moon and the stars and he would not have signed. Only one thing would have been acceptable to the PQ government in 1982, and that was Quebec's separation.

The situation grew worse when the Meech Lake Accord died last summer. I will not get into the argument of whether Meech Lake was good or bad. Today that is not important. What is important is why the accord failed.

The one person responsible for the failure of Meech lake was the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister pushed and pushed until people were backed into a corner. Most people react negatively when pushed into a corner. With his famous "roll the dice" comment, the Prime Minister destroyed much of the goodwill in the nation.

The decision now is: Where do we go from here? We in the Liberal Party do not want to play politics with the country. That is why we support the principle of a new constitutional committee to evaluate the concrete constitutional proposals. However, we disagree strongly with the timetable the government is trying to impose.

The new committee is to start work in September and is to complete work by January 1992. The framework is simply too short. Because the committee is to develop the government's negotiating position, it will just leave a few short months before the proposed Quebec referendum.

The Prime Minister is painting the country into another corner where he could roll the dice again and lose again. To avoid that situation, the government should put its cards on the table by June 1 and have the committee start working thereafter. Anything that would save time certainly should be considered.

I would like to share with you, Mr. Speaker, what I think should go into a renewed Constitution. Any constitutional change should reflect the importance of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. All Canadians have a strong attachment to the charter. The preservation of our fundamental freedoms is supreme, and no amendment to the Constitution should change that.

We should also look at writing an inspiring statement of the nature of Canada. The statement should outline all those things that make Canada the best country in the world. It should state the values that we share, commitment to our two official languages, recognition of our diverse cultural heritage, recognition of the distinctiveness of Quebec society and recognition of the role of the aboriginal people.

When the Fathers of Confederation wrote the Constitution of Canada in 1867, they divided the powers, giving to each level of government the powers they felt appropriate. What was appropriate in 1867 may no longer be

appropriate today. After all, the world has changed a lot in 124 years.

The fundamental principle must be that the power should rest with the level of government that can handled the matter best. The focus should be what is best for the people, not governments, bureaucrats or politicians. In many areas the federal and provincial governments could co-operate. An example is the environment. The federal government should be able to set up guideline legislation stating national standards, leaving it up to the provinces to adapt these national standards to regional and provincial realities.

Historically the federal government has used its spending powers to enter into areas of provincial responsibility. The problem in the past has been how to reconcile the limitations of the spending power with the needs of national standards.

With a change in the division of powers, it becomes possible to achieve a constitutional limitation of the federal spending power without compromising national standards.

Over the last year much attention has been paid to the problems facing Canada's aboriginal people. There is a broad consensus and understanding in Canada of the need to deal with their status, rights and claims. A constitutional reform package must enshrine the rights of the aboriginal people to self-government.

As it stands right now, most areas of the Constitution can be amended with the 7-50 formula, with seven provinces and 50 per cent of the population. However, for many Canadians this is not acceptable. A new amending formula should recognize the basic equalities of the regions of the west, Quebec, Ontario and Atlantic Canada. Each region should have a veto on any constitutional changes that are not in the interests of the people living there.

These are the things I would like to see in our new Canadian Constitution. The stumbling block is our attitude, because in many ways we are our own worst enemies. Canadians are often too harsh on themselves and other Canadians, and that has to change. Far too often we get caught up in the small problems of life. We get caught up in the rat race of life and do not take time to consider how good we have it here in Canada.

With all our problems, and there are many, it is difficult to look under the grey tarnish at the sparkling silver underneath. It is often said that Canadians envy Americans because they are so patriotic and proud to be Americans. The time has come for each and every one of us to say that we are proud to be Canadians. I am proud to be a Canadian.

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague for a very insightful speech on the Speech from the Throne.

I do believe it is a time for all Canadians to look deeply within ourselves to come up with the solutions to the unity problems that confront us. If we cannot resolve these problems, then we cannot continue with this wonderful life created for all of us.

If the member has a moment, perhaps he would like to spell out some of the economic problems and consequences of this government's actions and whether he feels this throne speech answers any of them.

Mr. MacAulay: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her question.

There are numerous economic problems. The disparity between the Atlantic region and the central part of the nation has increased over the last number of years.

One of the areas I am involved with is fisheries. The lack of the government's initiative to put funding into wharf repair has been a major problem for the fishermen of Cardigan.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pronovost): I am sorry but I have to interrupt the hon. member. It being two o'clock p.m., the House will now proceed to Members' Statements, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 31

[*Translation*]

MEDIC-ALERT

Mr. Gaby Larrivée (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to point out to this House and all Canadians that the Medic-Alert Foundation has designated the month of May as the Medic-Alert Month.

The Foundation is a non profit organization that has helped protect some 600,000 Canadians in the last 30 years. Those Canadians enjoy not only a distinctive identification bracelet recognized in Canada and across the world, but also a 24 hour a day health emergency information service. This service is particularly important to inform health professionals in cases of sudden illness or accident.

The theme selected this year for the Medic-Alert Month underlines its role: "Medic-Alert speaks for you".

I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate that excellent organization for their efforts, and to formally support their statement designating the month of May as the Medic-Alert Month.

* * *

[*English*]

SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, on Friday the Department of Fisheries and Oceans announced that it would not be honouring a contract with Georgetown Shipyard in my riding worth $7.5 million and over 100 jobs, a contract that had been signed for 15 months. Because of the signed contract, the shipyard could not seek other work or pay penalties to the federal government.

This contract cancellation is yet another blow to the people of Prince Edward Island. Crumbling wharfs, increased lobster sizes, and now this.

When the new minister was appointed, the people of P.E.I. had hoped for better treatment than they received from his predecessor. Sadly, this is not the case.

I urge the minister to take action now. He should restore the contract now. Failing that, he should provide compensation to the shipyard to help preserve the jobs of 100 people whose UI has run out.

* * *

SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, once again the lack of a comprehensive shipbuilding policy is rearing its ugly head. Instead of there being adequate work for all shipyards in all regions, and instead of government work being assigned on the basis of ability of the shipyards, it has apparently been assigned on the basis of who has more clout in cabinet.

How else can the weekend's announcement of the withdrawal of a $7 million fisheries patrol boat contract from the Georgetown shipyard on P.E.I. be explained. They obviously have no clout with cabinet.

Canadians want fairness. They want the frigate contracts awarded to the region or regions which need the work most. They want the work done in yards that know how to build ships at a cost Canada can afford. What they do not want is a contract awarded on the basis of the minister of defence having been a former vice-president of one of the two competing companies.

Canadians want fairness. Hopefully for the people of Pictou, Halifax, Dartmouth, Port Weller, Thunder Bay, and Georgetown, this and other contracts will be awarded fairly, not by the politics of fragmentation.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Laval-East): Mr. Speaker, this week is National Access Awareness Week and I would like to invite my colleagues to support those men and women, in their ridings, who try to help people with disabilities participate more fully in the socioeconomic life of our country. In just four years, this national week has allowed us to create an impressive network of partners from coast to coast. Today, thanks to this partnership, people with disabilities can hope to have equal access in areas such as transportation, housing, employment, recreation and education.

This strategy supplements other measures taken by the government in order to promote equality of opportunities for the disabled, including a review of legislation concerning the disabled, the 1991 post-censal survey on disability, and tax measures announced in the February budget.

Mr. Speaker, it is true that considerable progress has been made with regard to the integration of people with disabilities. It is also true that the Decade of Disabled Persons, declared by the United Nations, has had a positive impact on our national week, but we should not stop there. We must keep going and not be afraid to

innovate because, as is said in this year's theme, "Access is a right".

* * *

[*English*]

ETHIOPIAN JEWS

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the world witnessed an incredible humanitarian exercise by Israel for its lost and isolated tribe, the Ethiopian Jews—called Falashas, which means outsiders. They brought home 14,500 men, women and children in a family reunification exercise of great daring that ended their exile of 3,000 years. In a dramatic airlift, expeditiously carried out over 36 hours with complex logistics, there were at one point 28 aircraft filling the sky winging their way home.

The importance of this undertaking at this time in the history of Israel, while coping with high unemployment and the integration of an overwhelming Russian immigration, is of particular importance. It is a message of hope from a small democracy where neither race nor colour nor creed will stop them from responding to their brothers and sisters, wherever they might be.

This is an important message in today's uncaring world. I ask all to ponder what other nation would, could and would want to undertake such a mission. May this success bring personal enrichment and fulfilment to all. Yasher Koach.

* * *

CFB CALGARY

Mr. Al Johnson (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, Canadian Forces Base Calgary plays a major role in maintaining Canada's defence capabilities. It should not only remain as part of our strategic defence network, but it should be improved and strengthened.

As our defence needs evolve, it will be increasingly important for Canada to have strategic forces concentrated and well positioned to respond quickly and efficiently to national and international requirements.

Canadian Forces Base Calgary, at the centre of western Canada, is particularly well suited to provide immediate response in our region. The city of Calgary provides first-class infrastructure and community support for the base. This allows the base to focus on its operational requirements and makes it one of the most efficient in the country.

I urge the Minister of National Defence, if and when he is considering base consolidations, to recognize the importance of Canadian Forces Base Calgary to western Canada, and particularly the mutually beneficial relationship that it has with the city of Calgary.

* * *

COAL MINING

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): The Westray coal mine in the Tory provincial constituency of Pictou East is the home of the premier of the Province of Nova Scotia, the Hon. Don Cameron.

The Westray coal mine has entered a contract with the Nova Scotia government whereby it will supply 300,000 tonnes of coal for a 15-year period.

This particular operation has been supported by the Government of Canada. It is one of the best examples of the free enterprise system. There are 300,000 tonnes of coal going from a coal mine which is in direct conflict with the Cape Breton Development Corporation situated on the island of Cape Breton.

What is disgusting about this particular operation is that this 300,000 tonnes of coal is guaranteed by the Government of Nova Scotia even if they do not mine it out of the ground. What a wonderful free enterprise exercise by the federal Conservatives of Brian Mulroney and the premier of Nova Scotia. Shame on both your houses.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, handling of immigration cases has repeatedly been in the news of late.

Last week in Manitoba, the CBC aired an investigation report concerning allegations concerning the conduct of an immigration consultant in the city of Winnipeg.

As a direct result, it appears that we have three subsequent investigations being conducted into activities of three individuals around this case.

But, there are no rules or regulations governing immigration consultants. As a result, many immigrants and potential immigrants may be taken advantage of due to their frustration with the immigration system here in Canada and by their fear of becoming a victim of others.

I urge the minister of immigration to communicate with his provincial counterparts to instil some order to this widespread chaos.

* * *

BURMA

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, today a rally of Canadian friends of Burma reminded us that one year ago today, the people of Burma elected an opposition party to 457 seats, more than 80 per cent of the Parliament of Burma.

This amazing democratic victory was blocked by the military supporters of the former dictatorship of Burma, according to Amnesty International and the U.S. State Department.

The military refused to allow any of these opposition members to be seated in Parliament and imprisoned more than 70 of them, along with many hundreds of leaders of the parliamentary opposition.

Nevertheless, Canada continues to recognize this unlawful and violent military regime. Petro-Canada, of which the Canadian government is the sole shareholder, has a contract to develop oil in Burma for the enrichment of the military.

I call on our government to condemn publicly this military attack on parliamentary government in Burma, to recognize the lawfully elected government, to withdraw recognition of that military dictatorship and to cause Petro-Canada to abandon its contract with that dictatorship.

* * *

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

SOCIÉTÉ RADIO-NORD INC.

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, the Société Radio-Nord in Abitibi—Témiscamingue is going ahead with a restructuring proposal for its AM radio network and news service.

People in the great region of Abitibi—Témiscamingue will lose their local news bulletins on television during the summer.

The company rejects a work-sharing proposal for all employees. The union was ready to make concessions representing some 20 percent for all employees.

Mr. Speaker, the Abitibi—Témiscamingue region will lose its right to express itself on television and on the Radio-Nord Inc. AM network.

* * *

[*English*]

ENERGY

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, last week's decision by the National Energy Board to limit Ontario Hydro's application to export electricity to three years instead of the requested fifteen years is good news. Ontario Hydro could not tell the board how the energy will be generated and what the environmental impact would be.

The National Energy Board made the right decision. If our economy becomes more and more dependent on the export of electricity, we will continue to damage and even destroy the environment in Canada to satisfy the insatiable energy appetite south of the border.

Instead, we should support like-minded Americans who are pressing for energy self-sufficiency through conservation, efficiency and the development of renewable resources of energy such as biomass. We should do the same in Canada.

* * *

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, at a time when most provinces are doing their best to control spending and reduce the burden on taxpayers, the Ontario NDP government has chosen to spend $9.9 billion it does not have to artificially stimulate economic growth.

After long months of fighting the war on inflation through prudent fiscal management, interest rates are beginning to fall and many economists are predicting the recovery will begin in the second half of this year.

At a time when most provinces are doing their best to control spending and reduce the burden on taxpayers, this budget threatens to bring back high interest rates. It will not be just the people of Ontario who will suffer as a result of this wanton spending. If the economy grows too

quickly, inflationary pressures and high interest rates will return and choke growth in provinces such as New Brunswick where the economy is not as strong or diversified.

* * *

OPENING OF EMBASSY IN JAPAN

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I have here a draft copy of the menu used at the extravagant buffet reception hosted by the Prime Minister at the opening of the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo. At one table there was loin of muskox with pheasant cocktail sausages, and another with wild turkey brochettes in almond nuts. If that didn't suit your palate, you could visit another table of smoked char with dill mustard sauce. To say nothing of the dessert tables featuring delights of peach crêpes in whisky or wine jelly in tulip lattice.

Only a few privileged people attended this feast. In contrast, last fall 225,000 Canadian children had to use soup kitchens, food banks or breakfast programs. Do they understand why this government feels the Tokyo extravaganza was a better use of taxpayers' money than reducing child poverty? The 6,671 Canadians who went bankrupt in April were not among the lucky few at our Tokyo palace. They and their families can look forward to meals that will definitely not compare to the Prime Minister's buffet.

Canadians are not pleased at all with this government's version of "let them eat muskox".

* * *

NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK

Mrs. Edna Anderson (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, this is National Access Awareness Week, a time to recognize the contribution of Canadians with disabilities to the life of our country. It is also an opportunity for Canadians from all sectors of society to join together in partnership and to recommit ourselves to breaking down the remaining barriers to full participation, both physical and psychological.

The theme for 1991 is "Access is a right". People with disabilities have the same right as their non-disabled fellow Canadians to become full and active partners in our country's social and economic life.

The federal government is profoundly aware of the need to ensure equality of opportunity for Canadians with a disability, a rich human resource we cannot afford to ignore.

In 1985 the Prime Minister issued Canada's declaration on the United Nation's Decade of Disabled Persons. Since then, the government has built a solid record of leadership on issues affecting persons with a disability.

As the decade of disabled persons declared by the Canadian government draws to a close in 1992, it is reassuring to note the government's continued and unwavering commitment. I call on all Canadians to join the government in pursuing the goal of full participation and equality for all citizens.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

In Quebec, the number of people looking for work rose from 346,000 in March 1990 to 468,000 in March 1991. During the same period, Mr. Speaker, the official unemployment rate rose from 10.4 per cent to 13.9 per cent. As a group, young males were the worst off, with an unemployment rate of nearly 24.4 per cent.

What does the Conservative Government intend to offer in the way of concrete measures to help half a million Quebecers who are desperately seeking work?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises a matter that is important for young students across the country.

This year, under Challenge 91, we intend to spend more than $28 million to encourage the private and public sectors, since both have a responsibility in this area, to help our young people with summer jobs.

And that is why this year, $28 million will be invested in the student employment sector to help these young people find jobs.

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the same minister, who probably received this aggressive pamphlet against the recession, published by the Confederation of National Trade Unions.

On the weekend, on Friday, the Quebec Liberal caucus met the CNTU to discuss the recession. Does the minister realize that although the same pamphlet was sent to all ministers in the Tory government and all Quebec members, they have yet to respond and meet the CNTU? The unemployed don't want vague promises. They want a concrete and specific program to deal with the unemployment crisis.

Is the minister prepared to implement the CNTU's six concrete proposals for dealing with the recession in Quebec?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am not in a position to comment on the six proposals mentioned by the hon. member.

However, I can inform him that if we here in Canada want to try to achieve the kind of economic recovery that will help create jobs so that the young, the not so young and in fact everyone will have a job in this country, we first have to deal with the structural problems in our economy which were addressed in the last budget brought down by my colleague, the present Minister for International Trade and Minister of Industry, Science and Technology.

It's all very well to let people believe the problem can be resolved by throwing money at it, but during the past few years, this government has proved that structural measures are needed to ensure durable employment for everyone in the future. And that is what we intend to do, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I think it is quite clear from the minister's hesitant manner that his government has been marking time, especially since the free trade agreement was signed with the Americans.

On the weekend, people at the CNTU told us that Montreal was like a war zone, with the number of industries in major sectors that have been closed as a direct result of the free trade agreement with the United States.

About 7,602 jobs have been lost in Montreal as a direct result of free trade. What does the minister intend to do about this and how is he going to get jobs for those 7,602 workers who were directly affected as a result of the implementation of the free trade agreement with the United States and have received no help whatsoever from this government? What are you going to do, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is arguing for a return to local employment initiatives and creating nebulous jobs to make people believe that everything is okay we are not going to do that.

The Canadian Jobs Strategy introduced by this government is aimed at helping our workers adjust to market changes.

The hon. member is fond of telling the world that these lay-offs are a direct result of free trade. On the other hand, I could give a list of economic activities that could also qualify as a direct result of free trade.

Listen, Mr. Speaker, it's like being in a storm, and of course the Prime Minister would like to tell the wind and the waves to stop, but that won't stop them. We cannot, unilaterally, try to prove that the real situation is different.

He knows exactly what I mean, and that is why we intend to keep implementing existing programs to help our workers, not further the political aims of the hon. member.

* * *

• (1420)

[*English*]

TRANSPORT

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Transport.

Hapag-Lloyd, a major international container shipper, has announced it is pulling most of its business from the Port of Halifax because of the intolerable rail rates charged by the CN monopoly.

This move will result in the loss of hundreds of jobs and over $20 million annually to that local economy.

I ask the minister if he is prepared today to take the necessary steps to have CN lower its rates, and will he instruct the National Transportation Agency to conduct a full inquiry into CN's rate setting structure in Atlantic Canada, or will we have to sit back and wait as the Port of Halifax is allowed to die and drown in a sea of government indifference?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the premises to the hon. member's questions are inaccurate. The situation that is causing a problem for the Port of Halifax is the problem of over-capacity on the high seas between the various shipping lines. It is not a problem of railway rates from Halifax to Montreal.

Those shipping lines have made a business decision based on ocean economics. In fact, a Halifax port official has stated that even if CN had reduced its rail rates to zero, it would not have prevented this move by Hapag-Lloyd and ACL to shift certain business in the way that they have.

We are working with the Government of Nova Scotia and CN to attempt to overcome these problems, including discussions on a double-stack container service which would give certain cost savings. We will continue to work to see if there is an answer to this situation, which we certainly regret and intend to attempt to overcome.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about reducing CN rates to zero. It might be a nice idea if they would give it a try.

My question is for the Minister of Transport. Canadian Pacific has long enjoyed massive funding from the federal government which has helped it, among other things, to purchase the Delaware and Hudson Railroad in the United States. This railroad lures business from the Port of Halifax to the ports of New York and Philadelphia because they have better freight rates.

When is this government going to create the atmosphere that gives Canadians a break? When is it going to change the tax structure? When is it going to finally create a truly level playing field for the Port of Halifax?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, every time the government has attempted to change the tax structure in Canada, it has met with vicious and sustained opposition from the members of the opposition. It is certainly a change to see that one member of the opposition wants the tax system changed.

Another problem, of course, that makes the situation more difficult is the problem of geography, which is a significant factor. Halifax is further from mid-Canada and U.S. markets than New York, and that is another factor we have to contend with. The situation that we are now attempting to resolve in Halifax was not brought about by government action. It was brought about by a surplus of shipping space on the north Atlantic, and that is a fact that no government can overcome.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is for whoever is Acting Prime Minister today. The Prime Minister has touted this trip to Asia as a mission to increase trade in Canada. Recently in the Throne Speech the Prime Minister exhorted members of Parliament to be more non-partisan. Yet, on the first trip out after the throne speech, he performed the magnificent Kreskin trick, he reads the minds of Chinese businessmen and he dumps on Ontario. My question for the Acting Prime Minister is this: Why is the government jeopardizing trade investment in Canada by bad mouthing Ontario, which has suffered most from this government's economic policies?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and Government of Canada did not write the budget of Ontario. We simply reported it.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): He did more than report the budget of Ontario. In fact, what he did was he read the minds of Asian businessmen and came up with the conclusion that the deficit in Ontario was the most important problem on the minds of Asian businessmen. Mr. Nakawasa, the head of the Japanese Businessmen's Association, said: "No, that is not true." Mr. Tom d'Aquino said he had been there for 24 hours and he had not heard Ontario raised once. So my question to the Acting Prime Minister is this: How does he reconcile this blatant political partisanship with the government's reported statement time and again in the throne speech

that we ought not be so partisan in our comments in this House and outside the House?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Lo Yuk Sui, identified by Julian Beltrame no less, as a local businessman in Hong Kong said, and I quote the article: "Lo was also critical of Ontario's recent $10 billion budget deficit and said he might not have invested in the regal property if he had known the NDP government would raise taxes".

I think it is important for us all to understand that actions that we take in Canada are going to have consequences internationally.

[*Translation*]

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. This trip is characterized by the Prime Minister's bad jokes about refugees, by his attacks on his own country, by extravagance and sumptuous living. Will the Deputy Prime Minister agree that taxpayers do not have to pay for a trip whose sole apparent purpose is partisanship?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): That was not the purpose of the trip. That does not characterize the trip.

[*English*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Acting Prime Minister and it is on the same subject. The Prime Minister claimed that he was going to the Orient as the chief salesperson for Canada. What he has succeeded in doing, deliberately, in a political way, is besmirching the reputation and the name of a province which happens to have the largest manufacturing base in Canada and which is hurting desperately. Yes, there is a question. My question is, why is the Prime Minister, at a time when there are thousands upon thousands of Ontarians who need jobs, using cheap political purposes to besmirch the economy of Ontario?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is that he is not.

• (1430)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, we know that the Prime Minister himself told a lie in Japan and Hong Kong. He claimed that business men and women—

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: Will the hon. member please put her question. I am not going to have preambles like that.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Copps: So here is my question: Why does the Prime Minister pretend that Ontario's economic policies are hurting Canada's development when he knows very well that what is hurting us now is the economic policies of the Government of Canada?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, part of Canada's problem is its reputation, which can affect foreign investment, a problem created by the Ontario government's budget. I believe that it is fair for the Prime Minister to mention this reality among others he mentioned in a series of conversations to promote Canada.

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to raise questions on the same topic with the Secretary of State for External Affairs, who also happens to be a member of Parliament from the province of Ontario, which presently has over 500,000 people unemployed.

Considering that the Prime Minister's statements were totally and completely rejected by the Japanese officials with whom he met, is the Secretary of State for External Affairs prepared to issue a denial of the comments made by the Prime Minister of this country while in Japan?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): No, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the minister's constituents will be very pleased and surprised to know exactly how much this minister represents their interests.

I want to ask the minister this question again. Considering the Japanese officials plus the Canadian business people, like Thomas D'Aquino, head of the Business Council, confirmed that this issue has not been raised in these discussions; that this matter can and is creating a major problem for investment in this country, what does the minister intend to do to correct this very serious mistake, this flub, this foolish mistake of our Prime Minister?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I was in Hong Kong and Japan last November. I talked to investors in both places and they were quite positive on the policies that the Government of Canada had been following, policies to get the debt problem under greater control, policies that led to the free trade agreement, the goods and services tax which will make us more competitive as a country for investors looking to invest in Canada; the range of policies on improving our trading capacity, improving the regulatory environment, privatization, all these policies are very highly respected by investors in Hong Kong and Japan. That was the subject of the Prime Minister's speech in both places.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): My question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

Knowing full well that Asian investors are looking at Canada very favourably, that Japanese investors are investing heavily throughout all of Canada—particularly on the west coast—does he think it is appropriate, and in spite of all these other yahoos yelling right at the moment, do they think it is appropriate that the Prime Minister of Canada goes out and purposely bad-mouths one of Canada's major critical regions?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, that is not what the Prime Minister was doing.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question, in response to that answer, is this. Is it not appropriate to expect the Prime Minister, when he goes abroad to promote trade with Canada, that in spite of perhaps some of his personal priorities, he considers himself to be representing all parts of Canada?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate for the Prime Minister when he is abroad to represent all parts of Canada, which is what he does. It is also appropriate for members of this House of Commons, when they are commenting on activities of the Prime Minister or, indeed, of others abroad, to get their facts straight and not to try to play partisan games here on the floor of this House.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister. Half an hour ago I watched the Prime Minister on national television indicating that the Japanese were very preoccupied, very concerned with Ontario's annual deficit, that it was a major deterrent to Asian investment in Canada. I watched immediately thereafter Tom d'Aquino, travelling with the Prime Minister, indicate there had been no such discussion of Ontario's deficit. I watched the senior Japanese trade official say that the matter had never been raised and was not a concern.

I have a serious question to ask the minister. Why has the Prime Minister of Canada suggested publicly and in Asia, in front of potential investors in the Canadian economy, that this matter is indeed a preoccupation and a deterrent to investment when in fact we have been told by officials, both Canadian and Japanese who were in the room, that there was no such discussion of the matter? Why is the Prime Minister acting this way?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, everyone in this House who has had any experience with international investors will know that particularly after a series of measures, the Foreign Investment Review Agency, the national energy program, a steady accumulation of a national deficit, there was very real concern in Japan and elsewhere about the investment climate in this country.

One of the things that this government has done—and it has been difficult, controversial and opposed by members on the opposite side—consistently through the last seven years is try to turn around that reputation so that

this country can continue to merit the confidence of investors around the world.

That is critical to provinces like his, it is critical to provinces like mine and it is critical to this country. So it is naturally appropriate that a Prime Minister, who was elected to try to encourage people in other parts of the world to share confidence in this country and to invest in it, should continue in that practice when he is abroad, which is what he is doing.

I would hope that hon. members in the New Democratic Party and their allies in the Liberal Party who are trying to defend the Rae budget will take a look at the broader picture of what the Prime—

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, members of this party are not interested in defending the Rae budget. We are interested in defending the 1.5 million Canadians who are looking for jobs.

We find it shocking that a Prime Minister, the country's chief salesman, would tell investors to stay away from Canada.

I want to ask the Acting Prime Minister a very straightforward question. Would he concur with the Prime Minister of Canada in recommending to Asian investors that they avoid Ontario, avoid Canada as an investment opportunity? Does he concur in that shocking advice by Canada's Prime Minister?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I concur with the Prime Minister's actions consistently since his election as the head of this government to improve and to establish a strong reputation for Canada as a stable economy that can attract investment from at home and from abroad precisely to allow us to continue to create jobs in this country, a process at which this government has one of the best records in the history of this nation.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister. He still has not given a clear and convincing explanation as to why the Prime Minister in Japan said, and I quote: "Obviously the question of public finances is the single most important factor in any judgment the Japanese make", when the head of the huge Keidanren Japanese manufacturers' association said this is definitely not the case and they are more interested in their own profitability.

Will the Acting Prime Minister give an explanation of this. He has not done so so far.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I believe that the hon. member in earlier incarnations met with the Keidanren. Certainly they knew of him and of his works. I have met with them and my colleague, the minister of industry and of trade, has met with them. We know, as the Prime Minister does, that there is a profound and continuing concern about the investment climate in this country among the Japanese.

• (1440)

He will know that as a result of changes this government introduced, in part to deal with the Foreign Investment Review Agency, which he introduced, there were at least two major investment missions carried out here by representatives of the Keidanren and others in Japan precisely to assure themselves about the economic climate in this country. Of course they are interested in this climate. All of their activities and all of our contacts with them over the last several years including, I am sure his own, indicate that.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister; if the Japanese are so interested in the question of public finance, can he explain why the Prime Minister had to admit that at the dinner they had with him, they did not even bring up the subject. That does not show much concern, does it?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what on this Monday afternoon has caused the two opposition parties to come—

Ms. Copps: The 1.5 million unemployed Canadians.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Yes. We are interested in the 1.5 million Canadians in search of jobs too. We know that requires an investment climate in this country that will attract investment from abroad, and that is what we are seeking to achieve.

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade. Union and administrators of the Canadian steel industry are in Ottawa today. We all know that the Canadian steel industry is at peril.

The minister is no doubt cognizant of the fact that the American share of the Canadian market has tripled and our share of their market has been cut in half in the last couple of years. Here is an opportunity for this government to help Ontario, rather than bad-mouthing it.

Will the minister demand that the American steel producers voluntarily restrain their exports into this country, as we did into their country in 1986? Will he demand they reciprocate?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, as I am sure the hon. member is aware, I will be meeting with this group later on this afternoon. I imagine this, among other things, will be raised by our friends from the steel industry.

I want to caution my hon. friend in taking the steps that he has proposed. While there are difficulties at this point with increased exports from the United States into the Canadian market, it is largely related to the extensive strikes that we had during the summer and early fall last year. We are hoping to be able to get that market share down. In that regard we are quite pleased to hear that Stelco has announced a recall of 1,500 workers over the course of the next month or six weeks, which is an indication of a growing market penetration for the Steel Company of Canada.

If we are to take the path that my hon. friend is suggesting, we also must realize it is a two-edged sword. We have been fighting voluntary restraints in the United States market and I would expect that my hon. friend would support us in continuing to do that.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the sword only has one edge and it is always against Canadian steelworkers.

The United Steel Workers of America are pursuing the possibility of an employee buy-out of Algoma Steel, a concept now commonplace in the United States.

Will the minister endorse the concept of employee buy-outs and recommend to his colleague, the Minister of Finance, any fiscal actions to promote such an initiative.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): As one individual, I am supportive of employee share ownership. I think it is a very positive element in the operation of any company. In principle I have no quarrel with that at all. Whether my colleague the Minister of Finance would support that with tax incentives or other things along those lines, is a question I put to my friend the Minister of Finance. He may wish to respond to my colleague opposite.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, given the Prime Minister's lack of knowledge of government policy, we would like to continue on a different subject. Given the Prime Minister's solemn promise to accept thousands of new Vietnamese refugees, is the minister of immigration going to increase the quota of government sponsored refugees, and will the minister now increase funding for that program?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister said last week, refugees are a world-wide problem and we all have to do our share. Canada is a leader in refugee resettlement and under the five-year plan which the Prime Minister was referring to we will continue to be a leader and we will continue to do more.

If the hon. member would recall the five-year plan which my predecessor brought forward in this House it called for more immigrants to Canada and that is what the Prime Minister was referring to.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, the only thing the Prime Minister has done right so far in his trip abroad is that he has not lost his luggage.

The minister will remember his predecessor announcing just last November in this House that the government would be accepting 13,000 government sponsored refugees. However, according to statistics of arrivals for the first five months of this year, the government is not meeting the humanitarian responsibilities it defined for itself. How can the minister of immigration expect to bring in thousands more new refugees, government

sponsored refugees, as promised by the Prime Minister when this government is ordering cutbacks on its current quotas and current funding? The minister has some explaining to do.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, is it fair to Canada to picture us as reducing when in fact he knows that this year we have 13,000 government sponsored refugees targeted to be brought into Canada.

Mr. Keyes: You haven't met the quota.

Mr. Valcourt: Well, it is not the end of the year if you would care to check.

* * *

EDUCATION

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister for youth. In view of the fact that the government has cut back in its transfer payments to the provinces for education and therefore the students will have to pay more for tuition, and in view of the fact that because the GST is in place, these students will have to pay more for their books, will the minister increase the annual budget for student summer employment and will he reinstate immediately the five student employment centres which were closed last month?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Minister of State (Youth) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the budget for this year's Challenge program was increased.

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold): Mr. Speaker, the Challenge program cannot be said to be a great success. In many areas of the country we have unemployment rates for students which are double and triple the annual average over the past few years. Specifically I want to deal with the high school students.

Will the minister implement a program specifically designed to help high school students get summer employment because many of these will be going into our universities and they will be facing a very bleak future if they do not get these jobs.

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Minister of State (Youth) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I recommend that my hon. colleague look at what the government has done. We do have a program to that effect exactly, where priority is given to high school students. Recently I announced the opening of more that 400 student centres for summer employment, particularly aimed at high school students.

* * *

TRANSPORT

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed in an interesting way to the minister of fisheries who answered questions for the Minister of Transport, who is sitting in the House, directed by the member for Halifax and the member for Dartmouth. I hope the minister of fisheries in his capacity for ACOA was answering the question. Otherwise I think we had better have some points of order at some stage as to what is going on.

Even though the Minister of Transport was sitting here in the House, assuming that the minister was answering on his behalf of ACOA and admitting in part some of the answer of the minister about the world-wide situation, is the minister aware, as he was being briefed by the member for Halifax West, that three years ago the Halifax Court Commission brought up their proposal and warned the transport committee and other relevant ministers about the situation in the port of Halifax *vis-à-vis* New York, Montreal and/or container shipments?

• (1450)

Will the minister responsible for ACOA let this House know what ACOA is prepared to do in diverting ACOA moneys to help finance the bridging problems for the double stacking? How close is the Crown corporation and CN agreeing with the Government of Nova Scotia concerning the double stacking and help for Halifax?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I am more than pleased to have a question to answer from a former colleague on this side of the House who, as usual, has asked the only relevant and pertinent question in the House today.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Crosbie: The situation with respect to the transportation of container traffic through Halifax to Montreal and points west is not something that has come up overnight.

The possibility has been known about for some time, and discussions have proceeded between the Government of Canada, CN, the Government of Nova Scotia and interested persons in the port of Halifax itself to try to see what can be done either to avert or overcome that problem. It is still being worked upon, particularly with respect to the question of double stacking of railroad cars.

In addition, I have been reminded that on several occasions when attempts were made on this side of the House with respect to Coast Guard operations and the use of ice-breakers in keeping certain rivers open and the question of user fees, tremendous opposition has come from the Official Opposition side of the House.

At one point, there was a filibuster actually undertaken by the member for the west coast of Newfoundland, Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte. He began a filibuster to prevent such user fees being charged. On another occasion, the member for Kingston—

Mr. Speaker: I think we are getting away from the question. The hon. member, a short supplementary.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Very short, Mr. Speaker.

I would have been interested in hearing what the situation was in terms of the discussions that had taken place several years ago about the diversion of ACOA moneys to help in the financing for the bridging problem with the double stacking.

Since my hon. friend brought up the question of user fees, I would hope that either he had talked to the Minister of Transport to make sure—he can check the facts on this—that the fees for the pilotage of the Atlantic Pilotage Authority where it is now recovery is treated on the same basis as the Laurentian Pilotage Authority which is not following the government direction.

Would he or perhaps the Minister of Transport, who is the real minister here, please give a report to the House on that?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): I know, Mr. Speaker, that I am addressing a real member with respect to that question.

On the question of these port charges, I will have to check into that and get the hon. member a report on what exactly has happened.

With respect to the question of ACOA, if it can play a useful role in this situation, it will as it always does in Atlantic Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

RAILWAY TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of Transport.

The railway routes in remote areas are presently the subject of a comprehensive study examined by Transport Canada and the relevant provincial governments.

My question is as follows: Can the minister tell us today when this study will be publicly released and when it will be completed?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I repeat that I admire the hon. member for Abitibi for his perseverance in dealing with this important issue. I want to assure him once again that we have indeed received the study that he is mentioning and that we have also received an interim report from the Royal Commission on Passenger Transportation.

The Royal Commission is making interim recommendations concerning this type of routes and we will certainly be able to answer the question of the hon. member within a few weeks.

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

This week 20,000 truck loads of contaminated and toxic soil will be removed from the Expo site in Vancouver and dumped on federal land belonging to the Fraser River Harbour Commission, only one kilometre from the Fraser River.

This decision was made behind closed doors without any consultation. A toxic dump on federal land next to a key fishery is unacceptable. A toxic dump next to prime farmland on federal land is unacceptable.

Will the minister immediately stop this proposed dump and start an environmental assessment review process? Further, will he announce his plans in the green plan for the clean up of the Fraser River?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to find out that the New Democratic Party has become fans of the green plan lately because that was not the case before.

I will be very happy to consider the request made by the hon. member. On the specific issue she brings up in the House, my understanding is that the Fraser Valley Harbour Commission is doing an initial assessment. Out of that initial assessment, which I will be happy to look at, we will then determine what course of action is the best considering whatever the assessment would come up with.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, the trucking of this toxic and contaminated soil is to start this week. There has been no assessment. If this soil is too bad to have residential development on it and has to be trucked out of the Expo lands, why is it fit for soil dumping one kilometre from the Fraser River, next to a very important fishery, right next to prime agricultural land in the metropolitan area of Vancouver? Will the minister stop the dumping this week and start the EARP today?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat what I have already said. My understanding is that the Fraser Valley Harbour Commission is doing an initial assessment of what this soil contains. I will be very happy to look at that report once it will have been forwarded to me and to act upon it.

* * *

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

Last Friday, in response to a question regarding CP Rail's possible diversion of trains through the United States, which could result in the elimination of at least 200 trains per year going through Manitoba, thereby hurting Winnipeg, Brandon and other western communities once again, the minister said: "It is not up to government to make business decisions." Agreed.

Does the minister know that CP Rail has received and continues to receive hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money in subsidies to improve east-west transportation links? Will the minister intervene immediately? Will the minister meet with the CP president now in order to save western Canadian jobs?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the hon. member would be consistent in his examination of this situation. He mentioned in his question that CP Rail is getting some grants from the Government of Canada. We determined, very long ago, that we wanted all business enterprises in Canada to be self-supporting and to reduce the burden of grants that are given by the taxpayers through the government to transportation companies.

At the same time, we want these companies to be competitive. We are working in close co-operation with CP, CN and the other transportation industries to make sure that they are capable of meeting the competition.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I take it that the minister is removing subsidies from grains.

Through policies such as privatization and deregulation, the government continues to destroy the trucking and rail passenger industries. Why is the government doing the same to the railway freight system?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the member does not seem to have understood. We want all the industries in Canada to be competitive. We are taking all the necessary measures to make sure that they become competitive. It is only by being competitive that they will remain in business and will provide jobs for Canadian rather than having subsidized jobs.

* * *

• (1500)

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of members the presence in the gallery of a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association delegation, led by the right hon. Lord Carlisle of Bucklow.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

QUESTION PERIOD

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, earlier today some of the questions that we heard from the opposite side bordered on personal attack and were very close to imputing motives to certain ministers.

It seems to me that some of these questions were not in spirit of this House, nor in the spirit of what is prescribed by Beauchesne and certainly not in the spirit of what we have pledged as a new order of conduct in the House of Commons. I would hope that hon. members in the future would choose their words more carefully because I know that they would want this House to reflect well in the public eye.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ACTION BROUGHT BY BERNARD ROY

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of personal privilege to inform the House about a matter concluded this month, which began in 1988 when I was sued by Bernard Roy, who was then the personal principal secretary of the Prime Minister, on the grounds of slander for statements that I made about him outside this Chamber.

I would like to inform the House that in the past few weeks the action was dismissed and my lawyer's costs were paid.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 1991–92

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting Estimates for the financial year ending March 31, 1992, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by Mr. Speaker to the House.

On a point of order, the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, there are some difficulties on this side. I do not believe the minister's microphone was turned on. Some people would say that the minister's lights have been out for quite some time. I would not say that.

Perhaps the hon. minister could rise while the microphone is being turned on and speak slowly so that his colleagues in the front and members opposite may hear.

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the provisions of Standing Orders 81(5) and (6), I move:

> That the Supplementary Estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1992, tabled this day, be referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

[*Translation*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

TABLING OF FIFTEENTH REPORT OF THE CANADIAN SECTION OF THE AIPLF

Mrs. Nicole Roy-Arcelin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the fifteenth report of the Canadian section of the *Assemblée internationale des parlementaires de langue française*.

* * *

PROCEEDS OF CRIME (MONEY LAUNDERING) ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)) moved that Bill C-9, an Act to facilitate combatting the laundering of proceeds of crime, be read the first time and be printed.

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

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-208, an Act to amend the Department of Agriculture Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill seeks to amend the Department of Agriculture Act.

[*English*]

The purpose of the bill is to delete the section of the act which permits the Governor in Council to assign powers or duties to the Minister of Agriculture. These powers are currently used to create new agricultural programs. The report of the Auditor General of Canada tabled in this House, I believe in 1989, recommended that this power be deleted from the act. This bill carries out that purpose and will require the minister to come to the House if he seeks to establish a new agricultural program rather than create it on his own without proper authority.

That is the purpose of the amendment to the act. It is a short and very simple act which I hope will commend itself to all hon. members.

[*Translation*]

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

* * *

• (1510)

[*English*]

PETITIONS

SALARY INCREASES

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition sent to me recently by a number of Public Service employees of Agriculture Canada, the Summerland Research Station in particular: "Whereas the government has introduced a new budget which outlines the need for fiscal restraint in this time of recession; and whereas the government has imposed a zero per cent wage hike ceiling on federal public employees for 1991; and whereas the recent 10 per cent total pay increase given to members of Parliament should be rolled back in keeping with this policy of restraint, wherefore, the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to implement the aforesaid request."

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and honour to present a petition on behalf of a number of citizens from the great city of Logan Lake, British Columbia, who are concerned about the government's decision to cut back on Royal Canadian Mounted Police funding.

They point out in a number of ways how this has affected their community, how this may result in increased levels of lawlessness throughout the region and are asking the Government of Canada to reconsider its funding cuts to the RCMP and provide the police force with a mandate and the ability to continue its role as the only visible police force for many British Columbia communities and a viable symbol of Canadian unity.

NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, it has been over two years since I started working on a project that calls on the federal government to introduce national education standards.

We have circulated petitions across Canada and I am happy today to introduce one of those petitions in the House. The people who signed it come from the provinces of Quebec, Ontario and others.

Today I will introduce this petition, pursuant to Standing Order 36, calling on the government to promote and encourage the institution of national education standards in consultation with the provincial and territorial governments and in consultation with educational and professional industry, labour, parents, youths, volunteer organizations and individual Canadians.

CANADA POST

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present 59 petitions with over 1,500 signatures from the residents of Mabou, Nova Scotia, who are fighting to keep their post office alive.

Mabou has been a thriving community since the 1820s and its post office, serving 410 households, is located in and represents the very heart of this proud community. The petitioners protest the closure of the their post office and petition the government to (1) reverse the decision, and (2) ensure that residents have a say in how postal service is provided to their community, before any decisions are made.

The government can no longer ignore the voices of rural Canadians.

CHILD POVERTY

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present a petition from constituents from my riding who are addressing the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This government has declared its intention to ratify this convention, but the political will must be there. These petitioners are very concerned that we have one in six children in this country who presently live in poverty. They are asking that this government now, even before final ratification, institute programs which will help and support those children who are presently living in poverty.

CANADIAN FLAG

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present yet another petition, signed by residents of Kingston and The Islands, protesting the desecration and destruction of the Canadian flag and calling upon this House to pass a law making it an offence to destroy or desecrate the flag of this country.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition on the goods and services tax. This particular petition was signed by my constituents living on Black Creek Boulevard, at 250 Scarlett Road, on Sandcliffe Road, on Cayuga Avenue and on a number of other streets within my constituency. They are urging this government to finally come to its senses and to realize that the goods and services tax is destroying this country and to rescind it immediately forthwith.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition wherein the petitioners humbly sheweth that this government has cut back millions of dollars to RCMP services throughout Canada, resulting in a multi-million dollar loss to British Columbia, and the consequences of these cuts have been the reduction and erosion of service and effectiveness of police protection.

The results of these cuts have been the reduction of training, patrols and travelling expenses for the RCMP serving our communities. We, the undersigned, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to urge the government to consider restoring proper funding to the RCMP so that it can fulfil its mandate and role as the visible police force for communities across British Columbia and remain as a viable symbol of Canadian unity.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

[*English*]

Mr. Hovdebo: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Certain items on the Order Papers die on prorogation, including all the questions that are on the Order Paper.

This House has agreed to revive certain government bills. One of them, in fact, was passed last Thursday.

I was wondering if the government might be willing to revive certain Order Paper questions, particularly question 501 which I tabled last April 11 and would run out today in the ordinary course of events.

The question asks the government to give us information regarding its cuts to CUSO, OCSD, Canadian Teachers' Federation, Canadian World Youth, Canadian Crosswords International and CECI, and what the specific criteria was.

I was wondering if the government would consider reinstating these questions as part of the process of allowing things to go past prorogation.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member raised the question. In fact, we have on the Order Paper right at this very moment a motion to reinstate a number of government bills.

Perhaps the hon. member would want to speak with his House leader to see if there might be agreement to pass that motion on a nod.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Pronovost for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his Speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago I rose in this Chamber to participate in the debate on the proposed changes to the rules of the House. In that speech, I pointed out that there is a breakdown in our parliamentary system.

I also attempted to show the principles behind our parliamentary system and how important it is that members of the government recognize those principles in order for our democracy to work.

My comments have clearly fallen on deaf ears. Today I rise to participate in the debate on the Speech from the Throne. The Speech from the Throne is the cause of summons. Simply stated, members of Parliament are summoned here to Ottawa to consider legislation and taxation which the cabinet claims it needs in order to govern. Our mandate as elected members is clear. We have been sent here to Parliament to represent our constituents' interests when we consider the cabinet's requests.

The reason there is such ceremony surrounding the cabinet's request is to symbolize for all Canadians—including ourselves, members of the other place, and ministers of the Crown—the supremacy of the legislature over the executive branch.

On Monday, May 13, we heard several reasons why we were summoned here to Ottawa. One of those reasons was to consider proposals from the cabinet to once again change the way we operate in this Chamber and I quote:

> My government will propose further reform so that all Members of Parliament can better fulfil their obligations to their constituents.

What right does the executive branch have to interfere in the operations of this Chamber?

Another of the reasons we were summoned to Ottawa was for the cabinet to inform us that it intended to establish a parliamentary committee to study the proposal to amend the Constitution.

• (1520)

This committee will, according to the Speech from the Throne:

> Travel in order to hear the views of men and women across Canada. In each jurisdiction it visits, the committee will be mandated to meet in public session with its counterpart provincial or territorial legislative committee or, where no such committee exists, with counterpart legislators.

How could the cabinet announce that we will be establishing another committee when the original committee has not yet even reported? I do not ask this question to be facetious. The Speech from the Throne said:

The respect of the people for a Parliament and for Parliamentarians is essential for a healthy democracy. But the appearance, and sometimes the reality, of excessive party discipline—

—among other things, has—

—eroded that respect in Canada.

The only way the cabinet could have included it in its Speech from the Throne and announced that there will be a committee of Parliament is if it intends to use party discipline to force us to establish it. The hypocrisy of it all.

I would remind the government once again that the committee to amend the Constitution has not yet reported. There is an inherent flaw in logic for the government to pre-empt the work of one parliamentary committee on the grounds that it believes the work of parliamentary committees to be essential. If it respects parliamentary committees, it should be waiting for this committee to recommend how to proceed. If it has no respect for the parliamentary committees, then it should not use them as a mechanism to amend the Constitution.

On May 13 we heard more of the reasons why we were summoned to Ottawa. The cabinet wishes us to consider legislation that it believes will improve unity, prosperity and government responsiveness. On Tuesday the hon. Leader of the Opposition pointed out that the government's policies in the last seven years have resulted in the unequivocal loss of the Canadian public's confidence in the government's ability to run this country effectively.

I agree with the Canadian public and with the Leader of the Official Opposition. However, it is important that the people of Canada realize that it is not the political system that has failed them but the Conservative government that has failed them. Why should the Canadian people believe anything this government proposes in this next session?

The truth is that this government has not honoured the public trust which empowered it to form a government. It has not provided effective legislation. It is time for this government to take some real initiative. This government is a non-committal government. It is not committed to its social policies. It is not committed to its environmental policies. It is not even committed to Canadian unity.

How can we possibly believe that the government is, in any way, committed to the Canadian public.

The cabinet's agenda of some weeks ago confirmed this government's lack of commitment to the Canadian public. It confirmed this government's lack of substance and it confirmed the lack of any effective plan to launch Canada into the 21st century.

The only thing this government is committed to is double digit unemployment, the GST and economic disparity.

I remind the House that at a time when it is imperative for Canada to increase its competitiveness in the world economy, funds have been slashed for education, training and research and development. The very foundations of our economic competitiveness and prosperity are being deliberately and systematically eroded.

Further, while the government eloquently espouses its vision of restructuring the economy, the only vision this government is providing Canadians, after seven years of economic brutality, is that of workers standing on street corners or in unemployment lines. The government has not provided programs to deal with the impact of the free trade agreement. The government has not provided relief for the 1.4 million unemployed Canadians. Nor has the government protected low income Canadians from the GST.

What the government has provided is the first ever made-in-Canada recession, record bankruptcies and government policies directly responsible for an increased deficit. A strong economy is the basis for a united country.

I do not understand how this government can put this country's constitutional crisis on hold again. Why is this government waiting for another committee report? I would suggest that the government is stalling for more time.

They have tried unsuccessfully in the past to resolve these matters. Why would Canadians have confidence in the record of these successive failures? We must solve the constitutional problems immediately so we can move on to the other problems this government has created.

One more item in the throne speech was a commitment to reduce trade barriers between provinces, something that this government has talked about for years now, and still no real solutions have been developed. How can this government be concerned with interprovincial trade when every initiative it has taken since its

initial election has worked against that goal? In 1988, it finalized the free trade agreement with the United States. The free trade agreement works against the concept of cross-Canadian interprovincial trade.

This government talks about education, but how can the government expect provinces to pay for the education cost, to pay for regional development, to reduce illiteracy and to reduce the number of unemployed when it systematically cuts transfer payments? How can we educate with no money? How can we create jobs when every day more and more people become unemployed directly as a result of this government's untenable employment policies.

If there is a lack of productivity in this country, it is due to cutbacks in research and development, cutbacks in transfer payments, cutbacks in education funding and cutbacks in retraining and training programs. How can the government demand Canadian workers to increase its productivity when it ties the hands of these workers behind their backs?

If I may quote from Senator Hubert Humphrey's last speech in 1977, he said:

> The moral test of government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped.

How can this government believe it has the moral wherewithal to govern?

The Speech from the Throne spoke of non-partisanship as essential for Parliament to operate. The Prime Minister asks that the opposition recognize its dual role as partisan politicians and parliamentarians.

I would suggest in closing that if the Prime Minister would recognize his dual roles as an elected member of Parliament and as an appointed head of the executive branch, his government would be well on its way to achieving unity, prosperity and government responsiveness.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his analysis of the Speech from the Throne. I thought there were some perceptive comments, and I would just like to ask a question or two.

Last Friday he was in the House when I detailed some of the cuts to western Canadian provinces undertaken by this government. Many of those he has mentioned here today. These have also ravaged the Atlantic provinces.

I was particularly concerned about the increases that the government is intending to demand of western, northern and Atlantic Canadians with respect to the RCMP contracts.

Today in the House I mentioned how the government was pursuing, possibly by not intervening, the support of CP Rail's potential plans to route trains to the U.S. rather than to Canada, thereby eliminating Canadian jobs and thereby not collecting on fuel taxes, which would be a blow to Manitoba and other western provinces. The government has pursued and continues to pursue policies that are devastating to the whole of Canada.

My question is a very simple one. Can Canadians truly believe that a Speech from the Throne such as the one that was just brought before this House will make any difference at all to the unity problems we are experiencing in this country, to the serious economic problems that Canadians are exposed to?

Mr. Proud: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for the comments and the question that he has put forward.

Again I just want to reiterate what I have said so many times in this House. What has happened over the last number of years, deliberately or otherwise, to the regions of this country is that there has been the whittling away of the institutions that we came to regard as part of our Canadian system. No longer do we see these transfer payments coming, and I say this because I mean it. I believe we would like nothing better in the regions where we live than to get away from this transfer payment system. Until something is put in place we are not going to be able to do that. We are not going to be able to do it in Atlantic Canada, in western Canada or in northern Canada.

• (1530)

I believe some days that this government deliberately does this to our regions of the country, but hopefully not

so. We talk about Canadian unity, but if the standard of living is not the same in the regions across this country as it is in the central part of the country then definitely we are not going to have Canadian unity. We are going to pair one part of the country off against the other.

We see another issue on the east coast where the container ports are moving to central Canada because of the rates charged by CNR. I believe this government and any other government in this country still have to play a role in such vital areas as transportation. They have to bring subsidies to bear in some instances so that we can get the goods and services to the markets of this country.

I believe that as long as we keep pitting the regions against one another no matter how many committees we have going across this country we are not going to have unity.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to thank my friend and colleague for his excellent speech in the House. His constituents are well represented. Indeed, since his election in 1988 he has been an outspoken advocate, not only in our caucus but in this House, with respect to the best wishes of the people of Prince Edward Island.

I would like to ask the hon. member, in terms of government policy over the last six and a half years since this government has been in office: Would he consider that the lifestyle or standard of living in his native province of Prince Edward Island has improved, or are Islanders worse off than they were in 1984?

Mr. Proud: Mr. Speaker, I want to make one brief mention of the University of Prince Edward Island today. When the students return to the classrooms this fall their tuition fees will be going up 15 per cent. That says quite a bit because we have seen a great reduction in the transfer payments in this area of the country. I believe that if there is some way to get away from having these transfer payments eventually, there will be no one happier than Prince Edward Islanders and Atlantic Canadians in general.

We have not reached that area yet. This government has continued to erode and cut back these payments, and certainly the unemployment rate is up. The money for job training or job training itself has not yet come to pass, so many Prince Edward Islanders and I have seen that things have certainly not improved in the last number of years.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Resuming debate. The hon. member for Jonquière has the floor for 10 minutes.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, I must say that I appreciate having this opportunity to take part today in the debate on the recent Speech from the Throne. It probably was the most important in modern Canadian history, as it deals with three absolutely fundamental issues.

These are national unity, prosperity and government efficiency. I believe it is the most important made in Canada in the twentieth century because, as we know, Canada could well split up in the next 18 months if no solution is found to settle the national unity issue.

Since the Constitution was patriated in 1982, Quebec has been excluded from the present Constitution and has refused to participate in any constitutional conference, even more so considering the outcome of the last attempt, with the Meech initiative.

So, Quebec, more than ever, feels cornered and is not participating in any conference, hence the potential for a split within 18 months. I mentionned I was happy to take part in this debate, Mr. Speaker, because, while my government and our Prime Minister were preparing the Speech from the Throne, my colleagues on the Beaudoin-Edwards Committee and myself were travelling all over the country in an attempt to find a way out of the present constitutional deadlock.

As a matter of fact, we have a four-point mandate to answer the following questions: Should we or should we not hold a referendum? Does the existing constitutional amending formula meet our needs? Should it be changed and, if so, what should it be? Finally, should a constituent assembly be set up to solve our constitutional problems? Add to that the issue of public participation. Let us not forget that Canadians do not want a rerun of what they have seen on television during the Meech episode, with individuals making decisions behind closed doors on what the Constitution of Canada should be. Now, the Canadian people want to take part in the process.

So, the importance of the Speech from the Throne is clear in relation to national unity which is linked to prosperity. Constitutional problems of course cannot help this country's economic situation. We can see what is happening with the unemployment level still climbing. I don't think anyone likes the economic situation we are in and we must strive to find ways to bring that level down, to ensure that more jobs and opportunities are available to the Canadians people.

That being said, I would also like to talk about prosperity, Mr. Speaker. We have set targets. By the year 2000, we want to have created 2,5 million new jobs. We are also going to try and raise the real incomes of Canadians by 25 percent. But all that is linked to the issue of Canadian unity. Unless we come up with an answer within the next 18 months, nothing will do. On the contrary, times will be tough for Quebec and all of Canada.

The Speech from the Throne also mentions an important subject, education; our government talks about national objectives for education. That startles many people, since education is under provincial jurisdiction, especially in Quebec. But basically, in the present debate, the whole question of power sharing under the Constitution must be reviewed. Is it good and desirable for Canada to set national standards and ask the provinces to apply them in accordance with their own particular characteristics? Let us take health as an example. The central government sets standards and objectives for health and tells the provinces to apply them on the basis of their needs. Quebec has its own health care system of which it is proud.

Of course, gradually things must change. We must evolve on the basis of our society's present needs. Quebec wants some changes. Should national health standards be reviewed and updated? Why not?

The same thing applies to education. Ideally, instead of each province setting its own standards in a disconnected way from the others, is it not time to think that it might be much better if we had national standards for education?

We talk about free trade and economic exchanges among the provinces and section 6(2)(a) of the Constitution says that all Canadians can settle in any province of the country. If your child leaves a province with its own education system and goes to another province where things are completely different and there are no national standards and no unity in all this, is that good or should we not review this thoroughly to see how it could be changed? But the federal government must not say, "This is the true standard and how we will apply it." It must not be done unilaterally but in cooperation with the provincial ministers and coordinated with them. They together should consider what national standards we should have. Furthermore, these standards should be reviewed periodically because it is no use having standards, an unreachable ideal, if the provinces do not have the money they need to reach those standards.

So when we talk about constitutional reform, with the coming changes, we must review all that.

• (1540)

Mr. Speaker, I still think that Quebec will be part of the next Constitution—and I am sure there will be a new one. It will not be perfect, but if we manage to change the amending formula in order to get rid of the unanimity rule, then, even flawed, our new Constitution would at least enable us to make future changes.

I would like to make an important point, Mr. Speaker, because I heard some of my colleagues talk about equalization. I happened to read in *Le Réveil*, a local newspaper from my constituency of Jonquière, an editorial written by Mr. Marcel Martel, who was saying: "Per capita, the Tories give out $548 to Quebec and $1,652 to Newfoundland. Thanks to his Conservative buddies, Clyde Wells must be having a good laugh. Try to figure this one out."

Mr. Speaker, that shows how people do not understand how transfer payments work. There are three kinds of transfer payments: the Established Programs Financing, the equalization payments, and the Canada Assistance Plan.

What is the Established Programs Financing? It is funding given to the provinces for health care and post-secondary education among other things. In 1991-1992, the Established Programs Financing totalled $20 billion, of which $5 billion went to Quebec. Equalization payments are the second most important type of transfer payments to the provinces. Out of $8 billion given out in equalization, Quebec received $3.8 billion, and Newfoundland $938 million. That is what we mean, Mr. Speaker, when we say figures can be misleading. To

say Quebec receive only $548 per capita, while Newfoundland get $1,652 is like saying Quebec is not getting any subsidy. Now, wait just a moment! Newfoundland has a population of 560,000 people; if you multiply 560,000 by $1,652 and then 6.6 million by $548, you will see that Quebec is receiving a lot more than Newfoundland. You have to be cautious when you use these figures.

Quebec is among the provinces receiving more equalization payments than others. In fact, three provinces get no equalization payment at all, Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario. Other provinces receive payments because they are not as prosperous. That is called equalization. Rich provinces pay for poorer ones. It could very well be that 30 years from now, Newfoundland, thanks to an extraordinary find, will contribute more for British Columbia or Quebec. That is the way our country works. Rich provinces should contribute to help poorer provinces. That is nothing to be sad about. It is the very basis of our country and of equalization.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important Speech from the Throne with three themes: unity, prosperity and government responsiveness. Those are three essential issues. We have to find a way out of the constitutional impasse in the next 18 months.

Our Beaudoin–Edwards committee will report to this House by the beginning of July and other committees will try and solve the problems of Senate reform, division of powers and aboriginal rights.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Questions and comments for a five minutes period. The hon. member for St. Boniface.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the comments made by my hon. colleague with whom I sit on the Beaudoin–Edwards Committee and with whom I worked a lot and expect to work even harder in the next few days.

He mentioned, if I understood him well, that Canadian unity had an economic dimension. Personally, I believe it. Without "economic harmony" across this country, can we have unity? I do not think so, and that is more or less what my colleague from my party just said.

But the question I want to ask, and I do not mmention it out of spite, is why this government, for example, might allow CP Rail to reroute its trains through the United States? It seems to me that could entail possible job losses for Manitoba, for Winnipeg, Brandon and other Western provinces. Allowing such a move, to my mind, would worsen the economic situation and tear the country apart even further, and destroy the bonds already established. That was my first question.

Now a second one. He talked about national objectives, and I really appreciated his remarks, because I believe that we can have national objectives provided they are set in a cooperative way. They should not be imposed by a level on another one; I believe that we have to work together in order to improve the economic situation, national unity, etc.

Does he believe that a new federalism would be fundamentally based on the principle of cooperation?

Mr. Jean–Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, in response to the first comment or question of my hon. colleague, I would like to remind him that, in the last few years, the government has endeavoured to expand our market in the world.

Canada cannot do business only within its borders, since it exports 30 per cent of its production. Trade between Canada and the United States is a $200 billion a year business. If we look at the provinces, Ontario's exports to Quebec, for instance, total $21 billion annually, whereas Quebec exports to Ontario amount to $17.9 billion.

In that context, and that also applies to our Crown corporations in the transport industry, we must look to foreign markets, among which is our closest partner, the United States, and Mexico, with whom we are working on a free trade agreement.

Moreover, one must not forget that, as of next December, we will have to compete with an economic union composed of 12 European countries. We will then have to face international competition.

That also explains why it is important, in the field of education, that Canada improve its record as regards technology. We are presently not performing well enough in that field and there is room for improvement. The same is true in the field of education, of course, since those two fields are directly related.

What will be the outcome of the next constitutional conference? What will be the powers of Quebec? Will the situation be completely different? It is too early to tell; nobody knows yet, but it is clear that federalism

must be changed and renewed. Yesterday, I was pleased to see your leader, Mr. Chrétien, say that Quebec should have a right of veto. This is an issue that our committee has discussed on numerous occasions, namely that Quebec should have a form of protection enshrined in the next Constitution.

That being said, let's wait and see. First, there is the report that will be tabled by our Beaudoin-Edwards Committee, and then the Spicer Commission report will be tabled by July 1st. There is another joint commission of members and senators, that will travel across the country and meet their provincial counterparts. Following that, the government will be in a position to put forward a new constitutional proposal aimed at making sure that Quebec can again be part of the Canadian family and prosper within that context.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Resuming debate. The hon. member for Terrebonne.

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have this opportunity today to take part in the debate on the Speech from the Throne.

I would like, Mr. Speaker, to share some thoughts with my colleagues regarding the intention expressed by my government in the Speech from the Throne to set national goals in education.

If I get into this subject, Mr. Speaker, it is because it appears to have been misunderstood by some members of this House. You know, over the last few days, we have heard some members of this House complain about interference. Others hide behind the curtains, Mr. Speaker. Why? Because the government wants our young people to have access some day to a lucrative and rewarding job. And why, Mr. Speaker? Because this government wants to give future generations of Quebecers and Canadians, men and women, an opportunity to enjoy an even better quality of life.

Why do members hide behind the curtains and shout "murder"? Because our government reacts when our country is about to miss the turn towards an increasingly competitive global economy.

• (1550)

Mr. Speaker, they shout "murder" and they hide behind the curtains. It may be the best way for them to avoid speaking on the issue when they have nothing sensible to say. But, nevertheless, there are facts that deserve that we go beyond partisan politics.

Thirty per cent of our students drop out of high school before graduating. Is that acceptable? No, it is not acceptable. Should we remain silent when the demographers predict that Canada will soon be a country with hardly no manpower? Should we keep doing nothing when we know that half of all the jobs that will be created between 1990 and 1999 will require more than five years of training after high school? Should we close our eyes on the fact that today, only 60 per cent of our workers graduate from high school?

Mr. Speaker, should we not at least react when we learn that Canadian employers spend half of what our neighbours to the South spend for the training of their employees, and eight times less than what the Germans spend? Should we give up all of our responsibilities because we know that our future prosperity depends on the knowledge and the skills that Canadian men and women will have acquired? Should we keep our eyes closed? No. The world and the global economy are going through a phase of radical change. Borders are opening up. Economical and political blocks are emerging. Competition is constantly increasing. We cannot afford to miss the train. We must adapt. We must train our manpower. We must prepare our workers for the future. That is the challenge we have to face and that is what is proposed in the Speech from the Throne.

Quebec found its identity in the early sixties. At that time, Quebecers really took their destiny into their hands. That is the period that was, and still is, called the Quiet Revolution. That revolution that put Quebec on the way of a new prosperity didn't come about by itself. Around the same time, the Parent Report led to a reform of the Quebec education system. That is almost 30 years ago.

Today, when a revolution is already under way in the world economy, it seems more and more that results achieved in education will be clearly insufficient to guarantee all Canadians a prosperous future. To benefit

from this revolution, we must go back to the drawing board, rethink our approach to education and, instead of missing the whole point, we must discuss the question together and find solutions to the problem.

In spite of all this, Mr. Speaker, there are still members in this House who are opposed to the fact the government wants to prepare Canadian men and women to face the challenges of year 2000. For what reason? Because they say that education is a provincial responsibility. But we have always recognized this and we still do. It is written in black and white in the Speech from the Throne and I quote:

> My government recognizes that education is a provincial responsibility under the Constitution and respects that fact.

I think it is very clear, Mr. Speaker. The Premier of Quebec himself, who strongly defends Quebecers' interests, said, and I quote:

> We must discuss some form of cooperation for common goals. We do not see why we should refuse to discuss.

Mr. Speaker, after the Meech Lake failure, the Premier of Quebec stated that his province would have discussions with Ottawa only if Quebec's interests were directly concerned. I believe this is the case.

Quebec is an integral part of the Canadian economic union. It largely benefits from its trade with other provinces since it sells more goods and services in Canada than on foreign markets. It's by opting freely for the federal system, while asserting our distinct identity, that we were able to create our prosperity. That is a system where the provinces are sovereign in their respective jurisdictions, but in which all Canadians have their say on matters which concern the entire country.

Besides, the Bélanger–Campeau Commission Report, that some hon. members in this House should read entirely, states with good reason that: "Federalism, as a political organization principle, is characterized by the flexibility of the arrangements and structures that it makes possible".

So, Mr. Speaker, this government always believed in recognizing the regional diversity of the country. By meeting the demands of Quebec in the Meech Lake Accord, this government was recognizing, not only the distinct identity of Quebec, but also the right of the provinces to opt out of national programs, with compensation, when they thought they could administer more effectively these programs. That was the spirit of the Meech Lake Accord and it is still implicit on this government's actions. So, the discussions that this government will have with the provinces as far as education and training are concerned, will be consistent with this spirit.

Since 1984, our government has taken a lot of initiatives to prepare Canada for the challenges of the year 2000. When we came to power in 1984, you will recall that our country was dangerously mismanaged and heavily in debt. We have not taken the easy way out and we have put in place tools to garantee our prosperity.

A more responsible management allowed us to slow down the growth of deficit. The Free Trade Agreement, taxation reform, privatization initiatives, government spending cuts and a new labour force development strategy are all contributing to a potential enhancement of productivity, flexibility and adaptability, which will be critical to ensure a remarkable quality of life to all Canadians in the Twenty–First Century.

Our initiatives have given results. Since 1984, Japan is the only country that has known a growth higher than Canada's. As regards jobs creation, Canada has been one of the most performing countries of the G–7. But our future also depends on our ability to train workers with more instruction and who are more and more skilled and specialized.

I know that my time is almost over, Mr. Speaker, but if you will allow me, I would just add that quality of life of Quebecers and Canadians is not only a question of exclusive competence or a question of jurisdiction. Quality of life is everyone's concern and it is the responsibility of everyone without exception.

As you know, my Francophone Liberal friends of Quebec talk about the problem of Constitution which has to be solved as soon as possible. They talk about unity, national consensus, but they have signed the repatriation in 1982 without Quebec, a mistake which we have been trying to rectify since then.

The Liberal strategy, Mr. Speaker, must have something machiavellian because the party of the hon. member for Beauséjour has adopted this weekend in Sherbrooke a constitutional position copied from Meech Lake Accord.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, because I know that my time is almost over, our mission is clear. We are going to continue to work so that the Canadians can continue to be able to benefit from a competitive economy. We have never changed our goals since 1984 and we will not change them in the future. The Speech from the Throne shows that we are determined to reinforce the Canadian unity and our prosperity because both are linked.

By taking maximum advantage of the individuals and the richest education systems in the world, we will be able to compete with any country. The sustainable prosperity that will result will ensure the unity of our country for the benefit of all Quebecers and of the entire Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Questions and comments for five minutes. The hon. member from Welland—St.Catharines—Thorold.

[*English*]

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold): Mr. Speaker, my colleague made a very interesting speech, and I firmly believe that he believes everything he is saying. However, the fact of the matter is that in 1980 the Constitution was repatriated to Canada. Mr. Levesque, then premier, and Mr. Laurin, one of the negotiators for Quebec at that time, stated publicly and subsequently wrote in books that the province of Quebec, for which they were negotiating, would not have agreed to any form of repatriation of the Constitution or any form of the charter of rights.

• (1600)

I have two questions: Was the member aware of that, and what comments would he have to make on this statement?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. But, I would like to correct an important detail. First, the patriation of the Constitution did not take place in 1980, but in 1982. In 1980, it was the referendum.

Second, of course, Mr. Laurin made some statements at the time, but I think my honourable friend should rather stick to facts instead of paying to much attention to the statements of Mr. Laurin, at the time. Here are the facts, Mr. Speaker. At that time, Quebec was sitting at the table for the patriation of the Constitution and everybody will remember very well that Quebec and all provinces were about to find a constitutionnal arrangement. Anyway, for his information, I would refer my honourable colleague to the book written by the former Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Trudeau, and more specifically to the chapter written by his present leader, Mr. Chrétien. If he refers to these passages, his present leader, the member for Beauséjour, says it clearly. You will remember the famous night of the long knives and the ploy of the present leader of the Liberal party and member for Beauséjour to prevent an agreement that was about to be made. Really, six or seven provinces were in agreement with the Quebec requests and were ready to conclude an agreement with the other provinces, Mr. Speaker.

Then, when my colleague referred us to the statements of Mr. Laurin, he should also refer us to those of Mr. Lévesque, Morin and several other democratically elected representatives of Quebec who often referred to this night of the long knives. I think it is of public knowledge. You know and all Quebecers know, that against tremendous odds, there was a will, at that time. At the time of the referendum, Quebec had said no to separation, but yes to a renewed federalism. That renewed federalism was never delivered, Mr. Speaker.

At that time, did Quebec see the Constitutionnal Accord of 1982, the patriation of the Constitution, as a renewed federalism? I do not think so. And rightfully, Mr. Speaker, the democratically elected representatives of the time, as well as all Quebecers, did not consider it as the promise that had been made to them.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton-Southeast): Mr. Speaker, could the hon. member, whom I find very sincere, tell us whether he is for or against an elected Senate, that is elected, for instance, by the men and women of Quebec? Is he for or against that?

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, I would remind my hon. colleague that I have unfortunately not addressed that issue in my speech. All I can tell him at this moment is that we must not forget that committees will be struck when convenient to discuss all those issues. And I think that today, not only Quebec's demands, but obviously those of the various regions of Canada must be taken in due consideration. I am sure that, united in their discussions and a consensus, Cana-

dians will be able to find solutions acceptable to Quebec as much as to the rest of the country.

I am from Quebec, and my riding is 98 per cent French- speaking, Mr. Speaker, and I can assure you that we are very open-minded. And the people of my riding, as well as the population of the rest of Quebec, are ready to discuss not only the specific problems of Quebec, but also those of the whole country.

I remain very confident that we will ultimately arrive at a solution acceptable to all.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to have a chance to participate in the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. Although very much has already been said, more needs to be said, mainly about the shortcomings of the Speech from the Throne. I wish to concentrate particularly on matters relating to the free trade agreement with the United States and the proposed North American free trade agreement.

The Prime Minister made the bold statement that "the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement has helped to secure the Canadian economy in difficult times".

He went on in the next paragraph to say:

> My government believes North America-wide free trade is a logical next step and one that would increase the prosperity of all Canadians if an acceptable agreement can be negotiated with Mexico and the United States.

Most Canadians now reject the confident statement that the Prime Minister made in that first paragraph, and therefore they distrust entirely whether the agreement that may be made with the United States and Mexico will be acceptable to Canadians. Whether it is acceptable to the Prime Minister and some of his friends or not is another matter.

As has been pointed out many times, the Prime Minister promised 250,000 new jobs in the first year after the free trade agreement. In the first two years and almost a half we have lost over 400,000 jobs, perhaps not all caused by the free trade agreement but many of them, and we cannot find those new jobs that the Prime Minister promised us.

We have been losing jobs in the food and beverage industry, in the forest industry—not a few jobs here but thousands and thousands—in the clothing industry, in the electrical and electronic products industry. The workers in those industries know where their jobs have gone. For the most part they have gone south, either to the United States or already many of them to Mexico because the free trade agreement is already bringing in Mexican products at 10 per cent wages under the guise of American products.

Canadians have now begun to see the proposed North American free trade agreement as really a bill of rights for the trans-national corporations, nothing more or less, as a way of reducing our wages and reducing the benefits of our social legislation in Canada and for that matter in the United States and in Mexico.

Thousands of Canadian owned small and medium businesses have been wiped out by the requirement that the Canadian government grant the U.S. corporations what they call national treatment and right of establishment in Canada. This means there is no right of our government to carry out its constitutional obligations for equalizing throughout the regions, no right to assist a Canadian corporation in any way that it does not assist or offer to assist an American corporation, no right to buy from a Canadian corporation on any other terms than it buys from the American corporations claiming national treatment and right of establishment, no right to prevent capital created in Canada by the work of Canadian workers, usually on the basis of plant bought with money borrowed from banks holding the deposits of Canadian workers. That capital produced by Canadians can now be much more freely transported away from Canada to wherever the American based trans-nationals wish to use it without any control by the Canadians who created it.

An extension of that kind of free trade agreement is being sought by the United States, not only as it affects Mexico but as it affects Canada. It will hinder the development of publicly owned and democratically managed enterprises such as health insurance. We have a much higher quality of health at a much lower cost than they have in the United States. It will contribute to blocking the development of child care, which is essential to single parents and for many two-earner parent families.

• (1610)

The free trade agreement limits Canada's ability to care for our natural environment by compelling us to continue selling to the U.S. all kinds of energy on the basis of past sales, as a proportion of our past sales, regardless of environmental consequences and regardless of Canada's needs. In fact, the free trade agreement ban on unfair subsidies specifically allows Canada only to subsidize the oil and gas exploration industries in order to benefit the American corporations to which most of the product and most of the jobs will go.

It also allows for a wholesale grab of our fresh water and restricts us from protecting our soil, water and air from pesticides that would be imported from the United States which has a lower standard of protection of the environment.

The free trade agreement, along with deregulation, is destroying our east-west transportation and communication systems. We just had the truckers here a week or two ago pointing that out to us. There are the buslines and the airlines that are suffering in the same way. These east-west transportation systems have been the lifeline of Canada.

What is next? Our sovereignty over our cultural life, our national control over intellectual property and our control over Canadian defence and military enterprises. Canada's few publishing, broadcasting and entertainment industries are already in severe difficulties.

But President Bush is not satisfied. He states that such small Canadian actions as have been taken to enforce investment restrictions in cultural sectors are "irritants" that he wants to see removed in the U.S.-Canada-Mexico talks. We had prescription drug patent rights increased as a prelude to the free trade agreement. They now cost Canadians hundreds of millions of dollars, if not billions of dollars, but Bush wants total control of all such patent rights for the multinational corporations or the trans-nationals.

As to defence, even though generally the free trade agreement is being used to ban Canada from subsidizing manufacturing industries in order to help the poorer regions of our country as the Constitution requires, nevertheless a gracious exception is made that permits Ottawa to subsidize the manufacture of armaments. Many of those arms manufacturers are American owned corporations.

In return for sending our ships and our planes to President Bush's war in the gulf, the Prime Minister is permitted to sit with President Bush and President Salinas in the North American free trade talks to give away whatever parts of our economic, military and political independence he did not give away three years ago.

What did Canada expect to get from the free trade agreement? What did this government tell us we would get? Mostly it would be easier entry into the U.S. market in return for lowering our tariffs and our non-tariff barriers, and that they would be lowered on the other side of the border too.

Did we get it? No. Fifteen of the sixteen disputes that were adjudicated under this trade agreement went in favour of the United States. One of them went in favour of Canada and that is being challenged outside the authority of the free trade agreement through the U.S. federal courts.

The bill they passed after the free trade agreement amends the free trade agreement, in effect, in favour of the United States, but the free trade agreement prohibits Parliament or the legislatures of Canada from taking action that would be contrary to the free trade agreement.

The American corporations and the American government rule Canada in part through the free trade agreement, but it is not a two-way street. In other words, the free trade agreement is not mainly about trade. It is an agreement that was made under duress, as American rejection of Canadian exports was growing more and more painful. This was a deal that was offered and grabbed by the Prime Minister. It is not mainly about tariffs, because our tariffs are already low and coming down. It is mainly an unequal treaty which gives the U.S. control over the Canadian economy that had been growing over the years but had never reached such a point as it did with the free trade agreement.

In other words, the White House holds Canada in trusteeship to the U.S. based multinational corporations.

Another remark by the Prime Minister in the throne speech was even more ironic, and I quote:

> Canada's ability to prosper in a global economy will be determined by the level of Canadians' educational achievement, by the sophistication of our management skills, and by our attitudes to work and to change.

Further down he says:

> As part of my government's new agenda for prosperity, a discussion paper on learning will be published to stimulate and focus discussion on education and training.

And there follows some vague, general promises of vast improvements in our educational system.

The experience by which Canadians must judge this is that the government's pledges to cut illiteracy in Canada just are not matched by its present actions. It has been cutting its educational commitment to post-secondary education and training year by year. It promised a labour force development board or national training board. It was announced in January and has not met yet. We do not know whether it will meet. We do not have any idea what it will do. One thing we do know is that after promising a handsome training project at the cost of the workers' and employers' unemployment payments, at no cost to the government, they took $100 million out of that for the gulf war.

We also know that the Conservative sales tax proposals include, for the first time in our history, a tax on books and other reading materials. So much for the Prime Minister's credibility in promising vast improvements in our education.

The fact is that there is mounting opposition for these reasons to the free trade agreement, and not only within Canada. Yes, in Canada I have participated in labour meetings, in the fall in Vancouver and earlier this year in Toronto, in which there was strong insistence that methods will be found to prevent heedless plant closings like the closing of Caterpillar, a profitable plant closed simply to increase the profits of the parent company by finding a low wage, non-union area in the American south, and demands going beyond that, that the people of Canada should have control over the disposition of investments.

There is also growing opposition in Mexico. For several years there were small meetings between expert people in church and labour to establish some of the comparable facts in the two countries. There was a major conference last fall with Canadians visiting Mexico and alerting Mexican labour leaders, officials of government, unions, universities and churches to the experience of the free trade agreement in Canada, the experience of the job losses, contrary to the promise of job increases.

The Canadians who went also learned more about the suppression of human rights in Mexico and the vote rigging at election time used to maintain the PRI in power, the *Partito de la Revolution Institutional*, the party that has ruled Mexico for 72 years. It is the party under which assassinations of labour leaders and other opposition critics are rarely investigated by the police and almost never lead to prosecution and punishment of those responsible. These are apparently necessary to keep the PRI in power, including the government of President Salinas.

• (1620)

We also learned how the peasants are being forced off the land to swell the many, many millions of unemployed in Mexico. We learned how the labour laws are not enforced. There are five to ten million children under the legal age of 15 working in the factories. Why? It is because the owner of the factory or the manager is allowed to take a falsified photocopy of a birth certificate and because for 22,000 factories there are three inspectors to enforce the law. They might be able to visit every factory once in 20 years.

We also learned of the so-called benefit of industrialization of the 500,000 workers in the new areas of the Maquiladora strip, mostly runaway plants from the United States and Canada. The effect has been that in Mexico as a whole the buying power of people's wages has been cut in half during the eighties. So much for the benefits to be brought to the Mexican workers by shutting down factories in Canada or the United States. In fact, Mexican trade unionists told some of us when I was there in March that what we need is an international bill of rights for labour.

The opposition is growing in the United States. This winter and spring there has been mounting mobilization against the free trade agreement. It has not arrived at the point of stopping it yet, but the opposition will increase, the more people experience what it means.

At a meeting I attended in Chicago and at a meeting two of my caucus colleagues attended in Washington, we found that more and more groups of labour, church and

university experts have been forming a coalition against the North American free trade agreement.

The AFL/CIO has come out solidly in opposition to the agreement presently proposed. There is a new organization formed partly by workers who have lost their jobs in places like Pittsburgh in the steel mills called the Federation for Industrial Retention and Renewal. It is using American legislation, spreading across the country and organizing opposition to the closure of plants. Sometimes they win and sometimes they lose, but the movement is growing.

Of course the North American free trade agreement is not the whole story. President Bush wants to extend it down to Tierra del Fuego as well.

Four years ago, when this sort of thing was just being hinted at, I met the vice-minister of planning in El Salvador and asked him: "What are you doing about unemployment?" He said: "That is why I wanted to talk with you. We want you Canadians to invest in our cheap labour". Those were his exact words. He speaks good English, and I wrote his words down at the time.

"You have lots of wood in Canada. Send it down here. We will make toys and furniture. We will sell them in the United States. We will get the wages and you will get the profits. Cut the pieces of the jeans, send them down here to be sold. Same thing. That is what the Caribbean Basin initiative is all about".

As I was leaving, he said: "Bring my regards to Sinclair Stevens". Apparently his staff had not told him that we have different opinions among different parties in Canada.

I was at a meeting a few weeks ago in the Caribbean with the Socialist International Parties of the Americas. People from the Caribbean, Central America, South America and North America were there. In the south they were particularly working out local integration, as they called it; in other words, means of defending themselves against the onslaught of the trans-nationals from the north. Generally there was discussion of opposing the North American free trade agreement.

There is a growing international movement, and what we need are trade agreements that are fair to labour. Do not force the farmers off the land to create more unemployment. Give education controlled by the people who do the work, need the education and know what they need. The disposition of the capital should be shaped by the workers who created it and who know that we need that capital so they can continue their work and improve on their work. This is the kind of free trade agreement we need, not the kind that the Prime Minister has been promoting in which he gives such fantastic rosy pictures in his throne speech.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, the remarks of the hon. member always pertain to the current situation, and I only wish to add some comments.

Last Friday the Quebec Liberal caucus of senators and members of Parliament, which I have the honour to preside, met with the *Conseil central des syndicats nationaux de Montréal*, at its invitation, to examine the dramatic reality of Montreal's economic situation. The great speeches of a former president, a distinguished Quebecer, the hon. Jean Marchand were brought to mind. He used to say that Montreal's economy was a reflection of that of Quebec. What he was saying then is still true today.

Today, I simply want respectfully thank those who have invited us and organized such an opportunity for exchange in Montreal. Mr. Sylvio Gagnon, president of the *Conseil central des syndicats nationaux de Montréal* and Mrs. Monique Simard, the ever popular vice-president of the CNTU. The whole thing was coordinated by Mr. Bégin, in charge of the agressive campaign against recession led by the Conseil central de Montréal. We will get back to this topic soon when we have the opportunity to discuss Montreal's economic situation.

Together with my colleagues from the Quebec caucus in Ottawa, I want to thank them for the warm reception. I am sure these exchanges will lead to a new co-operation. I want to address a question to the member. Is he fully aware of the dramatic situation of Montreal's economy? This is my first question.

Second, I would like him to try, with his usual sensitiveness but in his own way, to inform Canadians about the differences between Montreal's economy, a city which is the mainspring of the Quebec province, and Toronto's economy, the city he has represented brilliantly such a long time.

[*English*]

Mr. Heap: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the member for Saint-Denis, for his question.

I will admit that I am not as well informed about the economic situation of Montreal as I am of the economic situation in Toronto. I can assure the member that Toronto has not experienced the level of unemployment that we now have since the thirties. It is worse than it was in the early eighties.

Factories have been closed and closed permanently. In my riding a factory that was making washing machines shut down. The announcement was made within a few weeks of the free trade agreement being signed. Those washing machines are now being made at Whirlpool in Ohio. This factory served half the Canadian market in washing machines. Now 600 skilled employees are looking for work. Some have found it, many have not.

That story has been repeated many times in Toronto. Toronto is of course a rich city by the standards of people who only look at the indices of wealth and growth. We can have a rich city or a rich country with far too many poor people, depending on the way the work is organized; who calls the tune and who gets the benefits.

• (1630)

Toronto has not yet approached the level of unemployment of Montreal and I say that with great respect to the working men and working women of Montreal who have been, as the member has said, the industrial and commercial centre or motor of Quebec and are now being desolated by unemployment in many industries.

I do not know the details of the industrial ownership in Quebec. I believe more of it is locally owned, that is, owned by people in Quebec, than is the case with the branch plants in Ontario.

I believe, for example, that the textile industry and the clothing industry of both provinces are being disastrously attacked by imports. About four years ago a plant employing 200 people in Spadina making basketball shorts shut down. I had toured it just a few weeks before at the invitation of management. It was, according to them, a very modern, very successful operation. It was shut down after an equivalent plant was opened in Mexico to produce the same thing at wages worth one-tenth of what the management was paying in Toronto, and those Toronto wages, those Canadian textile worker wages, are no princely or princessly salary.

I believe that the textile and garment industry of Quebec, which is far greater than the textile and garment industry of Toronto, must be suffering the same kind of evil from the imports from countries where the government forces the wages down by legislation and by persecution of trade unionists.

Mr. Prud'homme: You are absolutely right. I want this on the record.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, the speaker, as we all know, is a very sincere person and I wish everyone in the House were as sincere as he. I notice that the magazine *The Economist* last week has Sweden's consumer prices up by 10.7 per cent on a yearly rate. Sweden's prime lending rate is about 13 per cent as of last week. Does the hon. member think that we should have the Swedish model in Canada? If we did, does he not think that we would have even worse problems that we do at the present?

Mr. Heap Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I have never been convinced that I understand exactly how you can compare Sweden with Canada. Sweden was fortunate enough to be neutral in two world wars. Before that, Sweden was fortunate enough from its point of view to export a considerable part of its population and for the last half century it has had a government that undertook to keep the spread between the richest and poorest from being too great. I believe it has done very well at that, but if it is being caught between the trans-national empires of western Europe and the tentacles off the trans-national empires of the United States, I expect it may be in some difficulty.

I never thought that we should try to model Canada's economy strictly on any other country. We can look at certain ideas and borrow them to try them out. One of the Swedish ideas that was half tried out was that contracts should be negotiated, labour management contracts, in which so many cents per hour would be put into an investment fund of which labour would have an equal share of control with management. There would be joint operation of that investment fund. The idea was

not fully carried out but has probably not been very successful.

I think if the original idea had been carried out there would have been higher morale among the Swedish workers. It is very difficult to tell exactly from this distance.

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour for me to participate in the throne speech debate and, as you pointed out, recognize that the name of of my riding is both French and English. Probably not too many ridings in Canada have the distinction of having an English and French name in the title. I suppose there may be a few others but I am very proud to represent Portage—Interlake.

I listened to the distinguished member for Saint-Denis and the distinguished member for Toronto debating with an understanding which is usually lacking in this House of Commons, as well as with the respect that should be given and awarded to other members of Parliament regardless of their political stripe.

We talk about national unity, as the Prime Minister did in the throne speech. Part of the problem with this country is the lack of respect for members of Parliament, the lack of respect from one province to another and the lack of respect for our different cultures. That causes disunity within our country.

The goal we should foster is the reassessment and putting back into perspective the reasons we are so happy and successful as Canadians, and trying to find a way of keeping Canada together as opposed to finding ways which divide us.

We should look at the legislatures of the western world. We all have the opportunity on a very regular basis to look at the U.S. Congress and Senate in action, our neighbours across the line. If you would take a few minutes from time to time as I do, you would marvel at the way the elected bodies of our southern neighbours pay so much respect to the elected positions of each other. We just do not do that in this legislature.

I have sat for almost seven years in this House and watched the deterioration of debate to the point where character assassination seems to be the objective, whether it is from this side to members opposite, or from opposite to this side. That shows that we are not quite the sophisticated and cultured elite as we would like to think. There is a major problem with our whole attitude and it reflects on the way we conduct ourselves in this Chamber.

I have also had the opportunity, as have some others, to sit in the House of Representatives or the elected Houses of Germany, Britain, Norway and even of Taiwan. There has not been the same opportunity of time but somehow in those democratic houses there is far more respect and far more fair and open debate on different points of view without getting into the character of one another.

This is a fault that I see in this House and I hope all members in this room will try to change that attitude. I know we do not now have the filibustering or the ringing of the bells but we had a demonstration of sorts in the Senate that I think was really not necessary. I do not think political gains were made by withholding for almost a year a bill that this government put forward. That did not serve the purpose. It did point out that we have some shortcomings I think we should address.

I often listen to debate in this House and I think Canadians are judging parliamentarians on the basis of what they have been able to see and pick up here. A negative point of view, whether from the opposition or from the government side, is generally sensationalized in the media the next day. Right now I could make such an outlandish statement that there would probably be five phone calls in my office and I would get all kinds of ink. That is the way I could get some media coverage and probably indicate to my constituents that I was actually here and participated in debate. I believe those things happen all too often.

The throne speech brought forward the idea of trying to find some common ground among all elected members of Parliament to find a way of uniting Canada, of keeping this country strong and united notwithstanding some of those differences ingrained for the last 300 years, and that is the job of this House.

• (1640)

Primarily and foremost, I believe within the next 12 to 16 months it is going to be imperative that every one of us elected to this House of Commons put aside some of our political differences, some of our political antagonisms toward one another and find common ground to keep Canada united.

Should it become weaker because of our continual friction—which is mostly created, I may say, by politicians and not the common worker, not the individual who is trying to make a living in this country, not one who is contributing to society, not people like the truck drivers who were here last week, or the tobacco farmers who found themselves in trouble in this country, or the steel workers who are meeting in Ottawa right now, trying to find a way to solve some of their dilemma, their loss of jobs— we must put aside some of our frictional differences that lead us to say: "It is your fault", "It is my fault", or "It is the government's fault" from Mr. Trudeau years ago or Mr. Pearson or Mr. Diefenbaker. It is always somebody's fault.

In my view, today is the day we must sit down as parliamentarians and find out what unites us and work toward that end. That way, this House of Parliament will stay with its 290-some members and, in fact, grow.

All this confrontation must come to an end. I see my colleague from Winnipeg, Manitoba, a very distinguished member of Parliament who has sat on a committee with me. I believe some of the committee work in the past has shown that a lot of great work can be done in non-partisan way for the betterment of this country.

I had the opportunity to sit on the Indian affairs committee when I was first elected. I see another colleague of mine, a very distinguished member from northern Ontario. We sat and worked out a lot of great new ideas which were worked into Bill C-31. It is probably not a perfect bill, but I can recall that one, and so does my colleague.

The whole idea is to get away from the controversy, and I think all members should sit down and examine how we can avoid that. Sure, I like heated debates. The number of hours in this House we spent talking about points of privilege, points of order, and differences of opinion that took up the Chair's time to re-evaluate and reassess—and I see some people nodding their heads—when we could have entertained honest and fair debate about how your point of view or mine may differ, and the facts to back it up.

That kind of good, healthy debate is what we should have, as opposed to saying: "You know what he said about me last week, or in the committee, or so on, and you know that report in the paper". This has to be the goal of this session of Parliament. I believe it is very crucial. We should see a tone in Question Period that is less confrontational. Surely, with an attitude like that, within 16 months or so we could find a true solution to Canada's ills and hopefully by then the recession will be long over and the economy will be booming again.

I support an effort by all members to try and work in a more co-operative way. I would like to present my idea as to what I think the Speaker ought to do when there is a bad practice going on. He should tell those two individuals to go meet out behind the curtains so we can get on with the business of the House, which is debate, debate and debate, good debate, the kind that we see sometimes done by our American colleagues. I sometimes admire them. They seem to have an idea of their land so well in hand that they go after the problems and debate them out there.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank my colleague from the government for the comments he has made, particularly a special thank you for his positive comments about my work in Parliament as a member.

I know that when he pleads for some sort of non-partisanship on the major issues of the day that he is sincere.

I, too, want to do exactly that. When we are talking about the country, when we are talking about Canada and what it has been, what it is and what it can be, surely we need to work together. When we talk about the economic development of this nation, of all regions, and about bringing a greater sense of justice to the workers of this great country, we need to work more co-operatively.

However, there is a problem. I recall just a few days ago when I, in fact, had explained to a colleague from the other opposition party what my leader's position was on the Constitution. I had explained it to him personally because I wanted to make sure that he did not misunderstand. It was with respect to what we were proposing to do. My leader had indicated what his preferred position would be and I had hoped that it would take place without any partisanship. I explained it to my colleague, but he got up and took advantage of the situation by pretending and, in fact, indicating quite clearly that he had not heard it before.

There are all kinds of traps and all kinds of dangers and I hope that the spirit will prevail. Thank you.

Mr. Holtmann: Mr. Speaker, I thank my opposition colleague from Winnipeg for those remarks. Already, I believe, the few words that I introduced into this House are working. If we could just multiply that force, this House will not be such an adversarial place against people's characters and individuals. We may not agree with others' policies, we may not agree whether it was the right decision to spend or not to spend, I will accept that and we will debate that in the House. That is the kind of debate that is healthy, and at the end of the day, well, we will vote on it. However, we must get away from these very personal attacks on an individual's character.

Politicians come here with a little bit of a thick skin generally and are prepared to accept the odd shot. My goodness, I chaired the committee on communications and culture for two years as "that pig farmer". No problem. We had a lot of fun with it and I am sure most others did. My good colleague sitting behind me here recalls some of those times.

My point is that it is all too often taken negatively by the public and can then grow into something that really was not there. We all know that perception is something that we have to live with, but the reality is that it does change from time to time. I am grateful for his comments and look forward to a very aggressive but fair and interesting session of this House this coming spring and summer.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak today on the throne speech, as we get closer to the end of the debate and having had the opportunity over the last week or so to listen to colleagues on all sides speak regarding the throne speech.

I would like to take a few minutes to present my views and the views of many Canadians who come from the regions of the country and their understanding and thoughts on the direction Canada should be taking, as someone who listened to the throne speech and the promise of a united Canada, a strong Canada, a Canada that will be developed into the next decade.

I would like to take a minute out from that side of it, because I believe this country, if we go back in history to the founding Fathers of Confederation and John George Diefenbaker and *Roads to Resources* and Sir John A. Macdonald and the railroad, was built on the pillars of resources which enabled us to build the cities and the future of this country.

In this period of time it is the regions of this country that are going through some very, very difficult economic times.

• (1650)

I refer to regions where 4,000 single industry towns, communities are being jeopardized with pressures from groups of Canadians and people from around the world who do not recognize or understand that the resources are the pillars of this country.

In the throne speech the Prime Minister and this government recognize the fact that literacy is going to be one of the greatest challenges today and tomorrow. The reason I want to pick that section out of the throne speech is because it is reflected in my riding of Timiskaming in northern Ontario. It is also reflected in parts of northern Quebec, northern Alberta, the Yukon and Newfoundland. The country we gather our resources from, whether it is in the mining industry, forestry, agriculture or fisheries, it is the livelihood of individuals which may be third or fourth generation, in which their grandfather, father and now themselves have been able to garner a way of life. There was stability in a resource that no one ever thought would be in jeopardy. These people say, my dad was a coal miner, my great grandfather was a coal miner and I had the opportunity to be one too.

When we look at the over-all picture, and that is basically what Canada has to do at this point, we are in an a period of adjustment in the industrial side, in the cultural side, in understanding each other.

I would like to deal with the industrial side of it because it affects a lot of my constituents as well as a lot of individual Canadians, who through no fault of their own, have now lost or are about to lose their livelihood and what they believed in and what they thought would be their future.

Individuals have worked in the mining community, for instance, for generations. They left school at 14 or 15 because they were big, strapping young men who were able to get the opportunity to work underground. At that time if you were good with a shovel, you had a strong back and strong arms, you made a good dollar. You were able to work. You retired, up until a few years ago, without a pension. Of course, the social network has

changed to ensure that individuals now have the opportunity for some small pensions and some good pensions.

The big problems we are now facing are technology changes. In mining, the price is not set here in Canada but is an international world price. Mines that had been operating for 35 or 40 years have closed. Some individuals who are 35, 40, 45 or 50 years old, who were great at what they did, when they look to be employed in northern B.C., northern New Brunswick or northern Ontario, with the technology changes and new mines coming into place, their skills are no longer required, because they are manual skills.

I think that is the industrial adjustment this country has to face. Unless you come from those regions, you do not understand the human side.

Pressures are being put on by policies, whether at the federal or provincial level, to bring in new legislation that adapts to what is very popular in regions and urban centres of the country. I can relate to the fact that policies that were brought in by a provincial government in the Province of Ontario effectively closed down a community in my constituency, Temagami, because it was popular for urbanites to have a playground in which to be able to canoe, to walk through trails. Never once did they reflect on the damage they were doing to individuals in my area who had made their livelihood from forest products, whether it was in the bush operations or sawmill operations. As I speak, after two years, some of those people still do not have work. Their unemployment insurance has run out, some have lost their homes, some have gone on welfare, some have left the area and, unfortunately, some have a very difficult time being able to fill out an application form for a new job.

That is why it is so important for us to be able to make those adjustments. Whether it is in the fishing community or any of the resorts or smaller regions of this country, we have to give these individuals the opportunity to get the basic educational skills required—reading, writing and arithmetic. As a government—I know in my constituency we are certainly trying—we have to ensure, through the educational system, that we can bring the educational skills of individuals up to a level where they will then be able to challenge in a world that is changing. The unfortunate part of it is that a lot of Canadians will still not accept that it is changing times, times in which governments at all levels have to start dealing with what I believe is the future of this country. I believe the time for partisanship is over. The fact is that we have to be looking at the challenges ahead and be able to deal with them in a manner which Canadians can understand rather than the fact that it is popular to say one thing to get elected, but not deal with the fact that it is individual lives, whether it is in the four basic resources or whether it is in individuals who may be involved and a spin-off from that.

It is difficult for me to understand that individuals from other regions of the country will not allow us to continue on the basis of what this country was built on. I hope more Canadians from the urban centres will start to understand that the wealth of Canada is not in Toronto, Calgary or Vancouver, the wealth of the country and what the country was built on is in the regions of this country. We have to ensure that the regions of this country get the opportunity to be able to move forward with the new technology to ensure and enhance the opportunity for those regions to benefit.

I could go on for a good period of time because it is something I believe in strongly. Before the regions of this country are going to be able to ensure stability, urban Canadians are going to have to understand and give us the opportunity to do so.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, it is now fully two weeks since we had the Speech from the Throne and I have been looking forward to making a few comments about it.

First of all, let me deal with one of the matters raised by my friend from Timiskaming and, before him, his colleague and my friend from Portage—Interlake. I hear them say something that many on their side have said in this debate and it comes through sometimes in responses by ministers during Question Period these last few days, and that is that somehow there is a new credo, the word goes out that there is to be no more partisanship, it is all, from here on, going to be sweetness and light, kind of one party system if you like. That makes for great speechifying, but it does not make for much sense because that is not our system.

Let us be clear what is being said. If they say: "Let us get rid of the adversary system. Let us get rid of the partisan approach to politics," which has served this country very well for more than 100 years, I have to tell the gentleman from Timiskaming and his friend from Portage—Interlake that I cannot go along with that. If, on the other hand, their appeal is to not resort to the petty or the personal, we have never felt that should have been done in the first place. If he can be so good as to sidle up to some of his colleagues who, in answering questions in Question Period, regularly thrive on the personal and the petty, then maybe we are making some progress, if that is the language we are talking.

• (1700)

I suspect he is talking more than that. I suspect he is mouthing the words his Prime Minister has been pushing the last few weeks, that somehow we have to stop being partisan. I have to say to him I do not have any intention of going along with that. I will tell you why.

Our whole system is a partisan adversarial system. It is by criticizing, it is by holding up to public scrutiny the other person's ideas, by their holding up to scrutiny our ideas, that we come up with even better ideas. Our whole system is an adversarial system.

In the rush for sweetness and light, in the rush to find a new millennium, let us not throw out the best strategy of all for getting there and that is making sure that the kinds of ideas we have—whether it is about employment or whether it is about national unity—are held up to the most brutal public scrutiny. In the end these ideas will be so good that they can withstand that kind of scrutiny.

This idea that somehow we are going to put all our disagreements aside just does not wash with me and I suspect is not going to work in any event. Better that the government, of which that gentleman is a supporter, tell us what it has in mind instead of sitting on things until next February in so far as national unity is concerned. Then, if we have a few refinements and a few criticisms to make, instead of asking us not to criticize, the government should put its ideas out now and we can say what we think of them.

Let us get away from this false idea that somehow we are going to have a new millennium, a new credo where it is going to be all kiss and make up. That is not the nature of this place. The nature of this place is that you have some ideas and I have some ideas and we are not going to agree all the time. We are sent here by the public of this country to see to it that the ideas we together advance and legislate to become part of the law of the land are ideas that have been held up to public scrutiny, have been refined, not by putting them under the rug, but by attacking those ideas and in the process coming up with even better ways of doing things.

I agree with him to an extent. Let us do away with the petty and the personal. If he asking in the process that we ought to turn a blind eye to the principles that we stand for, we cannot do that. If he is saying when he talks about doing away with partisanship, that we ought to do away with what separates us, I cannot go along with that. If he thought about it a little more, he would not go along with it either.

This speech has been in the public domain for two weeks today, two weeks since the Governor General came to the other place to deliver it. A lot of things have been said about the speech, most of them fairly harsh and the harsher I think the more truthful. It was my leader, the gentleman from Beauséjour, the next Prime Minister of this country, who put it very well when he said on the day the speech was made public that this speech was a cruel joke for the 1.5 million people who are looking for work in this country.

That best characterizes what we feel about the throne speech. It also, by the way, demonstrates very well what I was saying to you, Mr. Speaker, a moment ago. It is difficult to tell the gentleman from Timiskaming that we are going to have sweetness and light when they perpetrate on the Canadian people this latest cruel joke, the 1.5 million people out there who are waiting for some help, the fishermen about whom there was not a word in the throne speech. He wants me to lie low on that. It is fishermen and plant workers, 17,000 of them that sent me here in the first place.

There was not a word in the throne speech about the plight of farmers, about the plight of the forestry industry. Somebody asked me to kiss and make up. Somebody asked me not to voice my outrage on behalf of those people in Burgeo, in Ramea, in François, in the 158 communities that I represent. If somebody asked me to hush that up and to ignore this government's mandate—

An hon. member: It would be impossible to hush you up.

Mr. Simmons: I am delighted to see my friend, the new parliamentary secretary for fisheries, a gentleman all the way from Fraser Valley East. The one thing he does not have to worry about is any fish plants closing down in his riding. I am nevertheless delighted to have him on board and I look forward to working with him.

He is right. When it comes to the fishermen on the south coast of Newfoundland, it is going to be very difficult to shut me up. I am glad that he knows that much about me already. I am looking forward to working with him.

This throne speech is supposed to be the government's plan of action, the government's road map for the next few months or a year or two, and yet in it there is not a thing, not a thing that would give any comfort or any sense of direction or any hope to those unemployed, to those fishermen, to those farmers, to those forestry workers among others I have mentioned.

Like others who sit in this House I am a politician, and I am proud to be a politician. One of the things I believe all of us in this House have learned very quickly upon becoming politicians is that you cannot be all things to all people but you ought first to listen to what they are saying.

Second, you cannot take them in a direction they do not want to go. That is where this Prime Minister is making one terrible mistake, though I suspect it is not an inadvertent mistake so much as it is a calculated risk which he is blundering on very badly.

The attempt to take people where they do not want to go, by that I have in mind the free trade agreement, the goods and services tax, the shutting down a rural post office, the abandonment of railway lines. People have identified with all those issues and they are having difficulty dealing with now. I am thinking again of goods and services tax, the free trade agreement and other issues.

I realize from your signal, Mr. Speaker, that my time has almost expired, so I will conclude very quickly by saying that this Prime Minister's terrible legacy to this country is threefold. He is perpetrating the shutdown of rural Canada. He has already wrecked the Canadian economy. Now he has brought a once great country to the very brink of collapse. I intended to say more about each of these, but I see that my time is up. I thank you, sir, for your indulgence.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the hon. member's comments. I guess that is the difference between those of us who sit on this side of the House and those who sit on the other side.

This government recognizes that we have to move in a new direction and that new challenges are faced in the world. The hon. member spoke about the GST. The party that he represents was in power for 20-odd years. Numerous reports were sent forward to the finance minister at the time, recommending to him that changes be made so that the federal sales tax, which was an anchor around the industrial community, be changed to a fairer tax. But they did not have the courage to do so.

History will show that the unpopular moves which have been made by this government are the ones that will ensure our young people and our grandchildren have the opportunity to meet those challenges.

Is the hon. member prepared to stay in yesterday's world, in a little cocoon? Is he not willing to move forward to the challenges facing Canadians? With the policies that he believes in we cannot play on an international field. Is that what he has been saying to us?

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, one would have to agree that my hon. friend comes up with wonderfully interesting question. They have very little relevance to what I had to say, but that is completely beside the point.

Let me go back to his earlier point before I answer that question about yesterday. I thought the hon. member illustrated very well the very point I was making.

• (1710)

We remember his speech which he read very well. We must admit that regardless of who wrote it for him, he read that speech marvellously well.

Mr. MacDougall: I did not read a speech. I do not have to read a speech when I want to tell exactly what rural Canada is talking about.

Mr. Simmons: I take it back. He did not read his speech well. I am sorry for saying that.

The point I make is that when he gave his speech he was very forthright about how we ought not to be partisan. Now, as soon as I make a point with which he disagrees, he says: "the basic difference between us is that we are on this side, therefore we are smart, and you are on that side therefore—"

That is the very man who 10 minutes ago was repeating to us not to be partisan. I interjected the point for him that maybe what he ought to think about was not being petty. He did not hear my plea but got up immediately and started being petty.

We are the people, in his words, who do not have the courage, who sit on that side of the House, and all that kind of nonsense. Where is my evangelist now? Where is the man who appealed to me 15 minutes ago not to be petty and partisan? Physician heal thyself, heal thyself. Listen to your own words.

How about yesterday? He asks if I want to go by yesterday's formulas. No, he is dead on. I do not want to. But I appeal to him first not to rewrite yesterday's history.

He and his party have perpetrated the idea that somehow the government of which I was a supporter at the time had shut out Quebec back in 1982. He knows in all honesty that the late gentleman who was then the premier of Quebec was a separatist and he was not going to sign anything. He knows that the people of Quebec were represented here very well by 74 government members and by 8 or 10 members in cabinet.

He wants to talk about yesterday, this nonsense, this rewriting of history, that somehow the people of Canada and the other nine provinces ganged up. What they did was try to deal as best they could with a premier who had no intention at that time of signing anything.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, don't take my word for it. Take the word of the gentleman from Baie Comeau who is now the leader of this government, the leader of this gentleman's party, who immediately after the events of 1982 actually went to the trouble of congratulating the then Prime Minister, Mr. Trudeau, publicly for the way in which he had patriated the Constitution and brought in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I thought that was a marvellous gesture on the part of the member from Baie Comeau at the time. I wish now he would have the intellectual honesty to own up to what he did nine years ago instead of rewriting history all the time.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I am quite pleased to rise and speak to the Speech from the Throne. I would like to use that as a backdrop to the remarks I want to make.

In his opening remarks the Prime Minister, through the Right Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn, our Governor General, stated that:

> This session will be a turning point in Canadian history. Let no one doubt the seriousness of the challenges we face as a country.

He felt that we had the responsibility and the opportunity to forge an historic accommodation that embraces all Canadians, overcomes divisions and discord, and charts a course for prosperity for the generations to come.

Then the Speech from the Throne continues and says in effect after a few other remarks:

> We have been confided the stewardship of this great nation, constructed across an entire continent by generations of men and women determined to make a home for themselves and a future for their children.

There are some things that this government has constructed that in terms of a future for their children have been put much in jeopardy by what I consider to be poorly founded policies on the part of the government opposite.

If this government had not been found wanting in so many areas from an economic perspective, from a social perspective, from an infrastructure perspective, from the kinds of motors of the economy which it has sold off and privatized in a way that has not been helpful to this country, to say nothing of the GST, the free trade and a few other things, I would go into detail in respect to these matters. However, I do believe that before we address the other issues we must address Canadian unity, because without a sense of Canadian unity, a sense of a country that is solid and comfortable with itself, we cannot fundamentally address the other issues, those are the economic ones which can effectively help this country.

The other point that was made in the throne speech is that Canada's history is the history of builders and achievers. Around the world, we all know that we are

number two. It is not bad to be number two in the eyes ofthe rest of the world and to be known as a country to which people would love to come and in which people feel honoured to be a citizen participating in the growth and development.

I just wish that were the way we could go about establishing this country. If you look for a way in which we could establish some process and procedures to meet the discomfort and lack of assurance that we are going to be one country, that Quebec and Canada are going to live together, then we have to look to our leader Mr. Chrétien, who has come forward with some really concrete and positive suggestions for action now.

I could say that it is rather sad, but I would say that it is not so sad but a happy coincidence that this government has taken the ideas that Mr. Chrétien put forward and paraphrased them, you could say, they copycat them. I will not say plagiarize, but I will say that if you look at the throne speech, you will see some very interesting remarks taken almost totally from Mr. Chrétien's presentation.

First of all, our leader called for a Canadian round. What did this wonderful Speech from the Throne say? It said it will be a Canadian round.

Second, Mr. Chrétien proposed a joint parliamentary committee to hold nation-wide hearings on a set of constitutional principles. It just turned that around a bit and in this government's Speech from the Throne, it was announced that there will be a committee starting some time in September—just a delay from June, which Mr. Chrétien called for—and that a decision would be taken by this government after that committee makes its report.

It would suggest new legislation either for a referendum or for a constituent assembly. If Mr. Chrétien suggested that the final proposition be submitted to Canadians in a national referendum, I would say that this is close to becoming a copycat approach.

I do not care that it is a copycat approach. I can tell you that—our Leader said this best—if you want to copy what he has done, please go right ahead and do it. We are prepared in the interests of Canada, far beyond the interest of a single political party, to enable the mechanisms that can help this country come together.

We have so little on which we differ that we have got to find the Canadian way and accommodate.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mrs. Finestone: Our Leader asked the government to consider proposals and not delay the procedures until next February. He presented a whole process for a reform package.

He started by presenting a fundamental concept in November 1990 to the Bélanger-Campeau commission and then those were reiterated a framework of nine principles for constitutional reform on April 21 in a very wonderful speech in Montreal.

He shared that openly with the public and in meetings with the new minister of constitutional affairs. This party and our leader, who is more interested in the evolution of Canada than in partisan politics, want to maintain Canada coast to coast, including Quebec and its particularity. Mr. Chrétien went on to lay out in a more formalistic manner using the Quebec federal Liberal Party Congress, the *colloque* that we had in Sherbrooke this week, a whole proposal for Quebec happiness, which is a must for Canadian unity.

[*Translation*]

Canadian unity, of which Quebec's happiness is a necessary element.

[*English*]

I would suggest that this constitutional proposal is solid. It is an excellent reference point for a constitutional position which could be placed before the people. Then there would be something concrete on which reaction could take place, whether by provincial governments, interested parties or the ordinary men and women of Canada. From there we could go on to step three, which would be an amended principle placed before the people in a national referendum. I think that the process laid out by our leader in response to Canadian unity—far before this response to the throne speech—is a responsible action by the only leader who can truly bring Canada together in the future.

• (1720)

In order that there be no misunderstanding, I would like the general population to know what our leader has said and what the congress of the Liberal Party of Canada Quebec section had to say this past weekend in Sherbrooke:

> Whereas the Liberal Party of Canada recognizes the urgent necessity of profoundly reforming Canada's political and economic structure in order to give the country the dynamism, flexibility and modernism required to successfully face the demands and challenges of the 21st century; (and) whereas the members of the Liberal party of Canada firmly believe that the best option for Quebec remains the adherence to a reformed Canadian federation.

It presents a clear progressive and substantial constitutional reform plan, the fundamental elements of which I would like to lay out for you in terms of national unity and I would call it "our blueprint for Canada".

The first major point is that we reaffirm our faith in a profoundly reformed federal regime as the most capable system of ensuring economic growth, social justice, respect for the principle of linguistic duality, the protection and promotion of the French language and culture, enrichment of multiculturalism as well as respect for minority rights as much within Quebec as in the rest of Canada.

Mr. Chrétien spoke eloquently about respect for francophones outside Quebec and respect for anglophones inside Quebec, and he alluded to the barbecue, the Bloc Québecois under Mr. Bouchard, and the fact that he now is coming around to what Mr. Chrétien said two and a half years ago about the fact that Bill 178 was a totally unnecessary bill. One does not protect French by building a sense of belonging and a sense of participation on the backs or by diminishing other people.

The second point we made was that in the constitutional debate, the joint committee, in its final report, integrate in a non-exclusive manner the following reform elements, and I read them as quickly as I can:

[*Translation*]

> (a) to define major national and international objectives that are desirable for the progress of Canada as a whole and respond to the common goals of Canadian citizens, such as being internationally competitive and improving the quality of the environment and the social well-being of our citizens;

Some of the reforms.

[*English*]

A second point here is that a new division of powers taking into consideration: amongst others (1) the identification of the common objectives of the Canadian totality, (2) the determination of the level of government most capable of adequately responding to the needs of the population according to the well-being of the latter, and (3) the elimination, as completely as possible, of the overlapping and splitting of programs and services within the scope of shared spheres of activity, having recourse, if necessary to asymmetrical agreements;

[*Translation*]

The Third point is as follows:

> (c) incorporation in the Constitution of the distinct character of Quebec, by guaranteeing, for instance:
>
> (i) the powers Quebec needs to protect and promote French language and culture within its territory, while respecting recognized rights and freedoms;

[*English*]

I have two more I would like to do, if I may.

[*Translation*]

Also:

> (ii) in a reformed and elected Senate, the inclusion of the double majority rule for votes on bills and government decisions that may affect the status, protection and promotion of the French language;
>
> (iii) a veto right; [and]
>
> (v) the provinces' right to withdraw, with full compensation, from any federal shared costs programs in exclusively provincial jurisdictions, provided that they establish a program which is compatible with the objectives of the national program;

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Unless I have unanimous consent, I will have to interrupt the hon. member. We now have five minutes for questions and comments. The hon. member for Lotbinière.

Mr. Maurice Tremblay (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the comments by the hon. member for Mount Royal. I wanted to ask a question earlier but I arrived just as the previous speaker was finishing his speech. In the circumstances, I would appreciate the hon. member's comments, since she seemed to be showing full support for what the other member was saying, which was that when Mr. Trudeau patriated the Constitution in 1982, he said that in any case, the Quebec government did not want to sign. He seemed to

say that Mr. Trudeau was right to patriate the Constitution just the same and to include a Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I am sorry, but I disagree. When one of the major provinces of this Confederation doesn't want to sign, for whatever reason, you don't force the issue like Trudeau did in 1982, especially when you are talking about including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. As the hon. member is aware, this was done to destroy Bill 101, because the Charter of Rights and Freedoms included language rights, although language is an exclusively provincial matter, and by putting this into the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, several sections of Bill 101 became *ultra vires*, so that the Government of Quebec passed Bill 178, thanks to the notwithstanding clause.

So the hon. member was in Sherbrooke, and she mentioned that her present leader had given us a set of guidelines. This is the same man who was there in 1982, and who said recently that he wanted a national referendum, but it didn't matter how Quebec voted, because he would settle the matter once and for all with all Canadians. Furthermore, the hon. member's new leader unreservedly supports the inclusion of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms because it intrudes on the Province of Quebec's jurisdiction over language.

So what does the hon. member have to say about this?

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with any of the remarks made by my colleague opposite.

I can only add that his leader at first supported what was done in 1982; secondly, his leader tried to force things through with the Meech Lake Accord and he failed. A Constitution is alive and can be changed along the way, but very carefully. So I do not feel that I need to go on answering, except that I would like to add some comments, some proposals on the motion that was tabled.

[*English*]

I continue about constitutional protection under which:

> —the preservation of the proportionality existing regarding the representation of the Supreme Court judges coming from Quebec; the participation of the provinces in the appointment process of Supreme Court judges; the strengthening of Canada's economic integration which ensures: one, a free circulation of persons, goods, services and capital, two, the creation of an efficient, intergovernmental mechanism of consultation and co-ordination of policies, programs and services, three, an effective regional representation within the Bank of Canada, while maintaining the present independence and authority of the latter; the preservation of the principles of equalization payments; the recognition, the respect and the guarantee of rights of our aboriginal peoples including the principle of self-government.

The members of the Liberal Party of Canada, along with the members from British Columbia have approved this document. We are all very pleased with the fact that our leader has given us a basic document. This government chose to use the words of our leader in its throne speech and in the undertakings that it took and it should accept further advice from him and use this as a basic document which can be amended, starting with public hearings in the beginning of September, rather than going to February of next year.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): A point of order, the hon. member for York—Simcoe.

Mr. Cole: Mr. Speaker, I believe in the spirit of co-operation that we have been talking about today that you will find there is unanimous consent to pass the throne speech on division.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The House has heard the motion moved by the deputy government whip.

[*English*]

Is the House agreed to the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

Motion agreed to.

• (1730)

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify that it was not our intention to cut anybody off from debate but to allow the debate to go to 5.45 p.m. The agreement was that at 5.45 p.m. the throne speech would pass on division. I think that is clear now.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Your attention, please. It seems that there was a misunderstanding. I therefore suggest that the debate continue as agreed until 5.45 p.m. and at that time the motion moved by the

deputy government whip will be deemed adopted, since it just was. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Delta.

Mr. Rocheleau: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for Hull—Aylmer on a point of order.

Mr. Rocheleau: Mr. Speaker, you said that the motion was adopted, but it was adopted on division, if I understand correctly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I thank the hon. member for Hull–Aylmer for asking me to be more precise. Yes, the motion was adopted on division.

I again recognize the hon. member for Delta.

[*English*]

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour and a privilege to be one of the final speakers in this very significant debate. Of all the throne speeches I have read and listened to, this is one of the most significant. Coming at this time in Canadian history, it is all the more significant. One of the prime features of this whole debate and of the throne speech was the subject of Canadian unity.

The speaker immediately before me quoted the paragraph which I would like to quote, as many others have, which says:

> Whatever our background and wherever we live, Canadians share the same basic hopes and aspirations. We are proud of the great country we have inherited. Above all, we are determined to leave it a better and stronger place for our children.

As I thought about our country and about what we would talk about today, I thought that it indeed is a miracle that we are a united country. We see the tremendous size of our country, the geographical differences, the cultural differences, the many different races, the different areas of the globe that we come from, and the tremendous economic disparities that our country has. Some areas are very wealthy and very rich in resources, other areas are very poor with very few resources. Yet we have been able to stick together. However, at this time we are faced with very significant and great threats to our unity.

I have noticed, particularly in the last two months, that when I talk to people on the street, or people phone me up and talk on the telephone, or wherever it may be, I hear more and more that we as Canadians need each other. We cannot allow one section of our country to leave. We need the maritimes. We need Quebec. We need central Canada, Ontario. We need our prairie provinces, and we need British Columbia.

We need to know, as well, the actual cost if this country should break up as has been threatened.

I have never seen any specific costs. We have had our economists say there will be great economic disruption, but I think the greater tragedy would be the loss of our social structures. We would see tremendous psychological damage. We would lose our status in the world community. We have just finished a meeting with the European parliamentarians in Victoria, and they were constantly coming and talking to us about what would happen if Canada should break up.

We have been a world example of a nation that has got along together in spite of differences throughout the country. They have, in many instances, looked at Canada and seen how we, despite our diversity, have been able to unite and work together to create a country that has, compared to its population, a tremendous influence on world affairs.

Another aspect of this throne speech that I would like to just comment on very briefly is the fact that we want Canadians everywhere to participate in prosperity. One of the sources of discontent within Canada is the tremendous discrepancy between the have areas and the have not areas. I come from British Columbia where we have great natural resources. We have a great future.

Then we look at the other side of the country, say Newfoundland, where their raw materials are limited, and yet we, as British Columbians, are anxious that the people of Newfoundland will prosper and enjoy the good things that we enjoy in British Columbia.

Through our history we have seen that various regions of the country have suffered while other areas have prospered. I think that, as it says in the Speech from the Throne:

> There is much more to Canadian unity than amending the Constitution. Our unity is strengthened by a strong economy. And prosperity is enhanced by a united country. But disunity in the face of the global economic challenge invites decline.

We need to very seriously consider that as we consider the next couple of years in our country's history. This government has done some very significant things to

equalize the prosperity in the country. There was a great deal of anger in my part of the country over the very high interest rates, as I know there was in the maritimes. We felt that the outlying parts of the country were being punished by the rapid inflationary processes that were going on in southern Ontario.

As these interest rates have been allowed to decline, and as we have seen the equalization of opportunities to develop new industries across the country, the government is to be applauded for this very positive step. We hope that these interest rates will continue to drop, that we will see more and more opportunity for Canadian business.

As we prosper, as our economy becomes stronger, we will see that gap between the U.S. interest rates and our Canadian rates decline. This has been a great concern to many in business in Canada.

There is another area, also regarding this, that we need to look at very carefully as a government, and that is to reduce the amount of paperwork that we have inflicted upon our Canadian businessmen. Think of all the various government reports that are required. It is all very well to make it financially possible for them to prosper, but I think we also need to look at other areas where we have put unnecessary burdens upon our Canadian businessmen.

As we only have a short while, I will not go into all of the other details. In talking about the prosperity and ensuring that all Canadians participate in that prosperity, I would like to speak briefly about the Canada—U.S.—Mexico free trade arrangement. There was much debate, much controversy about the Canada—U.S. free trade deal. Of course, there is ongoing debate at the present time about a deal with Mexico and how it would affect Canada.

I hope that we will not just be involved in rhetoric in this debate but will see some very sound research done so we as Canadians will know precisely how the free trade agreement with Mexico and the U.S. will affect us as Canadians. I have heard many reports. Just this weekend I had a long discussion in Victoria about how British Columbia will benefit from the free trade arrangement with Mexico.

• (1740)

We need to not just take a public relations person's word for this, but I trust that the government will bring out the facts that will indicate how much better it will be if we have a true North American free trade area. While we were with the European parliamentarians we discussed a great deal of what will happen in 1992.

A tremendous trading bloc will be developed in Europe and it will, of course, be protecting its own self-interests versus North American interests. There will also be discussion of a possibility of an eastern-asiatic free trade arrangement.

These are the areas. While we are talking about economic factors, we need to comment again on the fact that it is essential that all levels of government control their spending tendencies. Just recently, we have seen in the Province of Ontario a situation where a provincial government, flying in the face of all other governments, has raised its deficit at a time when we are trying get these things under control. More and more of our Canadian dollars are being spent to pay off interest on money which we have borrowed from our children. It is grossly unfair.

In my last minute, I would like to talk briefly about the disabled Canadians who are mentioned in the throne speech. In 1986, there were estimated to be 3.3 million Canadians with some form of disability. Some of them are physically disabled. Some have mental disabilities.

We have seen in the last few years how they have become more and more a part of our society. Yet there is so much more that can be done. I would congratulate the government on its initiative of including the disabled in this particular throne speech. We are looking forward to the specific programs which will be announced as the program is outlined.

I would ask that the government look very seriously at those with mental problems. These people have been neglected in the past. We look at people in wheel chairs, the deaf and the blind. Yet people with mental disabilities are the ones who suffer the greatest.

I would implore the government of which I am a member to make sure that we consider the mental disabilities, the schizophrenics, the depressives in our country who need our help.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great deal of interest to what may be the final speaker from the government side talking about this very fuzzy document called the Speech from the Throne. I have had great difficulty with this.

An hon. member: Read it in French.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): I think it would be equally bad in both official languages.

One of the problems that I have with the document is that it is long on platitudes, but the government's actions during the last number of years speak much louder than some of the hollow words in the Speech from the Throne.

One of the things in particular that I find offensive is the fact that this document—the member talks about economic competitiveness—talks about economic well-being being linked to national unity.

In the last number of years, this government has done everything humanly and subhumanly possible—some people might say—and in its power to ensure that we have not just one or two Canadas but that we have a number of different Canadas, all based on the level of input that you can put into society.

The level of economic disparity—he wants to talk about competitiveness—and economic renewal is really what will bring about great national unity. I would like for him to comment for a few minutes about how he could possibly justify the transfer of the burden of taxation from the federal government with its vast taxing powers to the poorest provinces in the country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. It is 5.45 p.m. and I must end the debate. I remind all members that the motion was carried on division 15 minutes ago.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

That the Address be engrossed and presented to His Excellency the Governor General by Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being 5.46 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 5.46 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 28, 1991

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: Tabling of documents. Statements by ministers.

Mr. Cooper: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, I missed my cue. Could we possibly return to tabling of documents?

Mr. Speaker: I just want to say to the House that I am most delighted to be able to ask the House's indulgence to return to tabling of documents for the hon. parliamentary secretary.

* * *

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

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

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

* * *

ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–209, an act respecting the protection and rehabilitation of endangered and threatened species.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this act intends to protect and rehabilitate endangered and threatened species. In essence, it attempts to identify, protect and rehabilitate flora and fauna in Canada which are threatened or endangered by human activity; to develop and implement programs to restore the populations of threatened and endangered species of flora and fauna in Canada to self–sustaining numbers; and to provide legislative support to voluntary programs.

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

* * *

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–210, an act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act.

• (1010)

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill to amend the Human Rights Act is one that was introduced during the last session of Parliament. I am reintroducing it.

In his 1989 report, the Human Rights Commissioner recommended certain changes in the act. In order to support the Human Rights Commissioner in his excellent work, I had drafted the proposals that he put forward in this bill.

Therefore, the bill could be proceeded with. Hon. members can consider the matter when it reaches committee. I would ask that we proceed with the bill at an early date.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour and a privilege to once again present a petition on behalf of a number of petitioners from the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

The petitioners are concerned about the government's decision to cut back on financial support for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. They point out a whole set of concerns such as the possibility of increased levels of lawlessness as a result of the decrease in RCMP support by the federal government.

The petitioners are simply calling upon the government to restore proper funding to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and privilege to present a petition signed by about 70 Canadians.

These Canadians come from diverse communities such as Surrey, Vancouver, Edmonton, Thorhild, Alberta, Burnaby, Redditt, Ontario, Kamloops, Kenora, Kitimat and Calgary.

All these petitioners are supporters of rail passenger services. They call upon Parliament to support the NDP plan to restore VIA Rail service which was cut on January 15, 1990, maintain and, where appropriate, upgrade remote service on which many Canadians rely, provide a legislative mandate for VIA Rail and make available to VIA the resources which it needs to become a modern passenger rail system in a class with those throughout the rest of the western world.

The petitioners want to put Canada back on track.

[*Translation*]

PAY SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to table a petition I received not long ago from a number of employees with Employment and Immigration Canada in the riding of Drummond, and this petition concerns the Pay Supplement Program. Your petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to order the government as is its duty, to reverse its unilateral decision to abolish the pay supplement for health insurance, and do so retroactive to December 1, 1990, without loss of benefits.

[*English*]

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

Mr. Murray W. Dorin (Edmonton Northwest): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present a petition signed by residents of Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer and Calmar, Alberta calling upon the government to enact legislation requiring manufacturers to list specific food ingredients and additives used in prepackaged foods and to require restaurateurs and food retailers to provide on demand to customers a list of all food ingredients and additives in prepared foods.

This is a petition I wholeheartedly support. I actively encourage the government to amend the food and drug regulations in order to prevent human deaths as a result of allergic reactions.

CANADIAN FLAG

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present another petition today.

The petitioners call for a bill to be passed by this House to make it an offence to destroy or desecrate the flag of Canada.

This petition is signed by numerous residents of Kingston and the Islands.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the Day.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I have a question on which I would like to have you adjudicate forthwith. My colleague from Kingston and the Islands will also wish to speak to this procedural point, as well as my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier.

We object to this particular motion being put—

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member could stand in abeyance for just a moment.

Thanks to the courtesy of hon. members, I am expecting a point of order. Probably I should ask for Orders of the Day to see what it is.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

REINSTATEMENT OF BILLS

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, we object procedurally to the motion that the government seeks to put before the House.

There are three points that I wish to make, and I believe that any one of them is sufficient cause for you, Sir, to refuse to put the question to the House.

First, the motion is defective in that one of its paragraphs is precisely the same terms as the motion already disposed of by this House. This is the paragraph referring to the Crown corporations bill. It is a well-known procedural principle that a matter, once decided by the House, cannot be reopened in the same session. This point is clearly stated in Beauchesne's fifth edition, which I read:

> 416.(1) An old rule of Parliament reads: "That a question being once made and carried in the affirmative or negative, cannot be questioned again but must stand as the judgment of the House".

The paragraph in question was contained in a motion put by unanimous consent last week. The motion was carried and the bill referred to in the motion has been dealt with by this House. If the government had wanted to proceed with the rest of the motion, it had plenty of time to put down a new notice without this paragraph; but it clearly cannot now proceed with a motion that includes in my view the offending section.

Mr. Speaker: I wonder if the hon. member could help the Chair. What you are saying is that the offensive part of the motion to which the hon. member is referring was in fact proposed with consent some days ago. Is that correct?

Mr. Dingwall: That is right.

Mr. Speaker: But it remains in the existing motion.

Mr. Dingwall: The second grounds for refusing to put this motion is that the motion attempts to place before the House five completely separate and distinct legislative matters which do not lend themselves to being considered together.

The government should have given notice of five individual motions. This motion has a legislative effect and it seeks to do in a speedy way what would never be permitted in the normal legislative procedure. The matters dealt with in this motion would never be permitted to be considered together in one omnibus bill and therefore, I suggest, should not be permitted to be dealt with in one omnibus motion.

It is no remedy to permit the motion to proceed with debate being held as if it were one motion with the question being split for a decision. The motion should be divided into separate parts, each of which, if otherwise found to be in order, should be debated and decided upon separately.

Third and finally, I contend that the motion is in principle unacceptable in that it seeks to circumvent, indeed to subvert, the normal legislative process of this House.

In the past this kind of thing has been done only by unanimous consent. Now the government is seeking to establish an ominous precedent by attempting to force this procedure on the House. This is an offensive and dangerous departure from the practices of all parliamentary bodies and the Chair is, I believe in accordance with Beauchesne's citation 123.(1) and Standing Order 1, required to refuse to put the motion because of its unprecedented violation of the checks and balances written into the rules governing the normal legislative process.

• (1020)

If the government wishes to amend the rules, it should bring in a motion to amend the rules. It knew what it was doing to legislative programs when it prorogued last session. It had had the opportunity before prorogation to deal with those rules. It is entirely offensive for the government to attempt now to subvert the very rules that it claimed to champion only five weeks ago.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that you have the authority to refuse to permit this transgression. On several grounds, three of which I have mentioned, you ought to refuse to allow the government to proceed with this motion.

My colleague from Kingston and the Islands, as well as my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier, would like to make references and interventions on this most important procedural aspect of this motion.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member for Kamloops would defer to his colleagues on the Official Opposition side. I will hear that argument and then move to the hon. member for Kamloops, presuming that the arguments will be brief.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, of course I will be brief. I wanted to refer Your Honour to a couple of authorities that support the propositions put forward by the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond, but I have a couple more points that I wanted to urge on Your Honour in respect to this important matter.

First I draw Your Honour's attention to Standing Order 1 of the House which states that in cases not provided for in the rules or by any other order of the House procedural questions should be decided by the Speaker—I am paraphrasing the rule slightly—whose decision shall be based on the usages, forms, customs and precedents of the House of Commons of Canada. I stress that.

What is happening today is unprecedented in that the government is moving a motion under Government Orders for debate to reinstate bills in this session. I have searched precedents back to 1938 and did not find one where a motion of this kind was moved for debate. It was always agreed to by unanimous consent. Never before has a government moved to suspend the rules in effect and put bills back into their position at the time of prorogation of a session.

If the royal prerogative is to mean anything the prorogation ended those bills. They have to be reinstated in the usual course, but they ought to have been introduced and dealt with as new bills in this session. That is the proper procedure in the absence of unanimous consent.

The usages and procedures of this House have always been that unanimous consent of the House is required in order to suspend the rules in relation to the reinstatement of bills. That is my first and primary point.

Based on the authorities—and I would like to cite the 21st edition of Erskine May on this point—the obligation to determine the procedural regularity of this motion clearly falls on you, Mr. Speaker. The power is a substantial one and it is set out on page 181 of this 21st edition, and I quote from it:

> It is the duty of the Speaker to preserve the orderly conduct of debate by repressing disorder when it arises, by refusing to propose the question upon motions and amendments which are irregular, and by calling the attention of the House to bills which are out of order (and securing their withdrawal).

Those are relevant words. I could go on if I were to take more time and read more of that paragraph. I commend it to Your Honour's reference on this very important point.

Second, I would refer Your Honour to—

[*Translation*]

—Beauchesne's, Sixth Edition, citation 171—I believe this is the first reference in this House to the French version of the new edition—and citation 171 reads as follows: "Foremost among many responsibilities, the Speaker has the duty to maintain an orderly conduct of debate by repressing disorder when it arises, by refusing to propose the question upon motions and amendments which are irregular, and by calling the attention of the House to bills which are out of order. The Speaker rules on points of order submitted by Members on questions as they arise".

This is more or less the same wording as Erskine May, Mr. Speaker. I think this is an important citation which gives a good indication of your authority.

Mr. Speaker, I will now refer to Beauchesne's, citation 566. In paragraph (5) of the citation we read: "Any irregularity of any portion of the motion shall render the whole motion irregular".

The author referred to the Journals of the House of Commons for May 31, 1954, at page 674. I found the quote, Mr. Speaker, and I have a copy here. The Speaker of the House at the time referred to this citation with great enthusiasm but did not follow it in his ruling. On that occasion he made a distinction.

So even if the reference is correct and the citation is favourable, I feel that the irregularity to which the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond referred is an irregularity in the motion, and therefore the whole motion is irregular.

[*English*]

Finally, I would refer to the citation in support of the division of motions to which my hon. friend from Cape Breton—East Richmond referred so ably. There is another serious problem with this motion which I would

like to draw to your attention. That is the part of the motion that deals with the act respecting port wardens.

This is not really a motion to reinstate this bill in this House. The words in that section of the motion deemed this bill to have been passed and read at third reading in this House.

In other words, there is to be no discussion of this bill again. It is not put up for debate; it is not put back on the Order Paper. It is deemed passed by this House. That is completely beyond the scope of what a reinstatement motion can do in this House. It is not putting this bill back on the Order Paper. This bill will never appear on the Order Paper; it will be deemed to have been passed. I presume that if this motion were adopted in this form, the clerks would send a message to the Senate informing it that this House had adopted this bill.

For this House to adopt a bill without any debate, without any discussion at any stage, is completely irregular and improper. There has to be some limit to the powers which can be proposed in this place. The Speaker, as our presiding officer, must be able to say at some point: "This goes too far. This is beyond the ability of the House without unanimous consent".

With unanimous consent we can do anything in this place. However, for the Chair to permit a motion that circumvents all our rules in relation to a public bill is a very serious situation for the Chair to find itself in. Based on the authorities that I have cited, which give great authority to the Chair, there has to be some way to place restraints on what the government could do.

What is to stop the government then from introducing a motion saying: "In respect of the following 20 bills, they will all be deemed to be passed by the House of Commons"? Then they are all passed.

In other words, the government could introduce 20 bills on day one of the session, then introduce a motion on day two and debate the motion for two days and deem all of the bills passed.

That is the effect of this motion and that is contrary to constitutional law. That has never been done before. This is far beyond what is a reasonable limit on reinstatement of bills. I stress in the history of the customs, the usages and the practises of this House for over 50 years, according to my research, there has been no such motion ever introduced and passed in this House, except by unanimous consent. The government itself exercised its royal prerogative on May 13 to bring this session to an end on May 12. The publication has been made of the Governor General's proclamation declaring the session at an end. He started it again.

• (1030)

It was the government's decision to do it. It cannot have it both ways and now bring one of these motions to trample on the rights of this House and in effect prevent us from debating these bills. I request that Your Honour declare the motion out of order.

Mr. Speaker: I made an error. I am quite sure some hon. members noticed it. The hon. member for Kamloops, and I apologize to the hon. member.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I simply want at this point to echo the comments made by my previous two colleagues. That is, to consider this motion to be appropriate would be setting a frightening precedent and would be making in my judgment a mockery out of the work done in a serious way by hon. members in this House.

The government is attempting to do in a two-day debate what this House is charged with doing by other well established and traditional means. To reflect once again the views of my colleague who spoke previously, I ask you to think of the consequences.

The government is attempting by a simple motion to deem a series of bills that are not even on the Order Paper, introduced, approved in principle, studied in committee, concurred in at report stage, read a third time, and passed.

If this motion is in order, then surely other motions to deem other bills passed would also have to be considered in order. Conceivably, to take this to an extreme, the government could accomplish by this means its entire legislative agenda within a two-day debate. That is, as some of us have indicated, a result of the change in the attitude of the government.

If this motion is allowed to proceed, we could compress in a sense the entire government agenda, with all of its legislation passed, in a matter of hours or days as opposed to it going through the appropriate stages.

What could possibly stop this abuse? The only thing that could stop it, Mr. Speaker, is your intervention today.

Are there any precedents on this motion? As my colleague who spoke previously indicated to the contrary, in past sessions the House has unanimously decided to revive certain bills from previous sessions, and it was only by unanimous consent that such motions were adopted. Again, I simply want to say that this has been used in this session. There have been some discussions and yes, as we know, a bill was dealt with earlier in this session because of the unanimous consent that it had received in order to enable it to proceed.

I simply want to say that Beauchesne's is clear on this point. In the fifth edition, citation 167, Beauchesne's states: "The effect of prorogation is at once to suspend all business until Parliament shall be summoned again. Not only are the sittings of Parliament at an end but all proceedings pending at the time are quashed. Every bill must", and I emphasize must, "therefore be renewed after prorogation as if it were introduced for the first time".

May is also clear. In the recent edition he notes that: "Proposals have been made for a provision either by statute or by Standing Orders for the suspension of public bills from one session to another or for resuming proceedings upon such bills notwithstanding a prorogation".

These schemes have been discussed in Parliament, carefully considered by committees, but by various considerations have restrained the legislature from departing from the rule that parliamentary proceedings are discontinued by prorogation.

The most recent publication we have as hon. members is the *Précis of Procedure* of our own House. Obviously a great deal of thought went into the wording to provide guidance to hon. members. It states on page 157 of our own *Précis of Procedure*:

> —any bill of a previous session, in order to be proceeded with, must be introduced again as a new bill. It is possible, however, with unanimous consent, to reintroduce bills in the new session at the same stage they had reached at the old session and to revive committee work in a similar manner with unanimous consent.

That is in our précis. This is what we use to guide us in our deliberations, in our process here. In my judgment the government is simply ignoring this in order to expedite its legislative agenda.

In summary, I just want to make six points. The motion is out of order in so far as it contains a question already decided by this House, as argued very aptly by my previous speaking colleagues.

Second, the government has had the opportunity to remedy this flaw in the motion and has elected not to do so. It is not the Speaker's job to facilitate the government's business by permitting the other parts of the motion to be put to the House now.

Third, the motion is too broad. It asks too many questions of the House. It should at least be divided for purposes of debate as well as for voting.

Fourth, the omnibus nature of the proposed motion sets a very dangerous precedent for the management of government business as it permits the normal, conventional, historical, and traditional review of legislation to be circumvented.

Fifth, the motion offends the parliamentary conventions surrounding prorogation. All the authorities and all the practices direct bills to die upon prorogation.

Last, there is no precedent for a government motion which lacks unanimous support of the House to revive bills.

I suggest humbly, Mr. Speaker, that this motion is out of order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. The arguments made so far seem convincing, and I support them all because they are good arguments. It is true that traditionally, when after prorogation a government wishes to resume consideration of a bill at a given stage, unanimous consent is the usual vehicle, and we saw this in the House on May 23 when we gave unanimous consent for Bill C–73, which as you know, Mr. Speaker, has followed the usual legislative course and is now before the Senate.

In that case, I don't see why the government did not apply the same procedure to the other bills it wanted to reinstate. Mr. Speaker, there are two points I would like to make. First, I think we should consider the word "prorogation" and find out exactly what it means. Second, why do we use it and what are the consequences of doing so?

Mr. Speaker, so far, according to my references, prorogation—I will try to be as clear as I can—means that the government, with the consent of the Queen, decides to end a session of Parliament. All business is therefore suspended.

Usually, when the government decides to prorogue, this means it has exhausted its agenda and does not want to continue. What we have before us now is a government that prorogued the House, in other words, it decided to drop the proposed legislation mentioned in Motion No. 1, Bills C–58, C–73, C–78, C–82 and C–85 of this Parliament's second session.

Mr. Speaker, all the authorities I consulted, including Erskine May and Beauchesne, agree—I will read a few because I think it would be useful to know exactly what we are talking about. Erskine May:

[*English*]

"The effect of prorogation is at once to terminate all the current business of Parliament, not only the sitting of Parliament at an end, but all proceedings pending at the time are quashed except impeachments by the Commons and appeals by the House of Lords". And it goes on. All items are quashed.

We could go on to Beauchesne's. Beauchesne's is a little more explicit on prorogation.

[*Translation*]

Effect of prorogation and adjournment

Beauchesne's Fifth Edition, citation 167.

(1) The effect of a prorogation is at once to suspend all business until Parliament shall be summoned again. Not only are the sittings of Parliament at an end, but all proceedings pending at the time are quashed. Every bill must therefore be renewed after a prorogation, as if it were introduced for the first time.

What we have before the House, Mr. Speaker, is a motion that is faulty because it is inaccurate. Bill C–73 was reinstated with the unaminous consent of the House and has been withdrawn. The government did not remove the reference to this bill. My colleagues who spoke earlier mentioned this, and I think it is an important point to consider when the Chair will be asked to rule on this matter, Mr. Speaker.

• (1040)

We are now being asked to pass bills that were passed in whole or in part by this House. I think that Bill C–82, for example, had passed all legislative steps and been sent to the Senate. Now the government wants to start all over, but in a very special way, the legislative procedure for the bill dealing with the authority to appoint a port warden for the Harbour of Quebec and so on.

I do not understand why, Mr. Speaker, on May 23, when they came with Bill C–73 requesting unanimous consent, they could not have proceeded in the same way with Bill C–82 or some other bill once consent was given. I now oppose, Mr. Speaker, being presented with this jumble of legislation, some of which we seriously oppose and some of which we have agreed to. I cannot understand why this government, these government bullies now want to impose their will on the House of Commons through force of numbers and then would have us believe that they are sensitive to parliamentary reform and want Canadians to see this House work in a friendly, co–operative way.

We presented arguments, Mr. Speaker. I will not repeat them all because there are some good ones. There are good arguments that the government has no business proceeding as it is doing and that it is contrary to parliamentary reform and all political decency. Administratively, it may not be so different whether it is done unanimously or in the way the government proposes; the effect is the same—the House will have the bill before it. I say to the government that it is bad politically to proceed in this way and that we will regret it in this House. Canadians will again say that the government is again reducing proceedings in the House to the lowest level.

Mr. Speaker, something else concerns me too. Every bill must have authorization called the "royal recommendation". As far as I know, none of these bills has a royal recommendation. Each one of these bills will have to be printed separately and bear the royal recommendation. Mr. Speaker, I do not see how they can come to us with this package and tell us that once the motion is adopted, each bill will be printed and contain the royal recommendation.

Mr. Speaker, I think that is bad management, bad policy and, in my opinion, unparliamentary.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I am aware that some other hon. members wish to address the Chair. I will keep that in mind. For the moment I will hear the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, if you are intending to hear further argument, considering my role of responding to arguments, I would rather hear all the arguments and come at the end.

Mr. Speaker: I accept the hon. parliamentary secretary's suggestion.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the recognition and I will try to be brief.

I was not in the Chamber when the motion was formally put. Through the benefit of the modern technology of television, I had the set turned down low and heard a little and frankly could not believe my ears as to what was being proposed by my friend opposite, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the government House leader.

I am not going to repeat the arguments that have been made by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, the hon. member for Kamloops, let alone the hon. member who just spoke.

This to me, in the years that I have been here, would boggle the mind in terms of the effective working of Parliament. What really disturbs me, having spent a good many years on the opposition side, is that we know, and my former friends across the way know from when they were on the opposition side, that the prorogation date is sometimes used as the negotiating lever to get bills to move along. Under the tradition and history of the British parliamentary system, come prorogation, everything on the Order Paper died.

It was then incumbent on the government and the responsibility of the government in the new session to reintroduce the bills and/or try to work matters out by consent, as it often did.

Mr. Speaker, you have a good memory also. There were many times in this Chamber in which a deal was made before prorogation. Sometimes, by unanimous consent, bills which were on the Order Paper, certain ones being difficult to agree on perhaps, were nevertheless put together as a package even though prorogation was going to come that hour. In effect, these bills would stay by formal motion in the House in the same position on the Order Paper as they were before prorogation.

To me, without repeating everything that has been said, and I understand what my hon. friend from Ottawa—Vanier mentioned about reform, I am all for the reform of this place. I am all for expediting the business of this place. I think we waste a lot of time in this place. There is a way to do it.

If this government is going to bring in an omnibus motion, in effect just lumping all the bills together that were at some stage in a previous session of Parliament, and then through a formal motion of the House where they know they have the numbers to have that the *fait accompli* for the passage of all the different items in the motion, then this will bode very poorly to say the least for debate in this Chamber in the future.

Why would a government really worry about the opposition's concern about various bills if it knows that come prorogation date the debate will be cut off and Parliament will be prorogued since it has a majority. In the new Parliament the government knows it will not lose anything anyway.

The government can bring in an omnibus package resolution which has never been done before, as far as I know. I have not had time to go through the authorities, I have not seen an authority to justify this yet. This might be the way for government to really move a lot of business along, to go through this prorogation charade. In a new session, it can put all these bills down on the Order Paper and have one vote because of a Notice of Motion.

I think this is a very serious matter. I know the Chair will give it the consideration it deserves because I can see real problems in the future. What disappoints me is that those who used to sit in the opposition know the few levers the opposition has to focus attention in a proper way on government bills.

I would humbly suggest that this type of precedent, if approved, will remove the lever that is the whole reason for this place.

The former hon. member for Prince Albert, John Diefenbaker would say: "This is a place to talk". We all know we talk too much from time to time and there is too much repetition. There is too much reading of speeches. I wish that would be corrected.

If that was corrected Parliament would not be bogged down in so much tedious rhetoric, taking the time of the House and the staff and costing the taxpayers so much money.

I have to compliment the parliamentary secretary, the House leader and the government for its ingenuity in doing things this way. My compliment, however, is a back-handed one. This type of move shows no respect at all for the whole basis of why we are here in a parliamentary institution. While I give it a back-handed compliment for the ingenuity of carrying out certain instructions or trying to move along with government business, which is commendable, this is not the way to do it. It would be a very invidious precedent. I ask the Chair to exercise the discretion and experience of all table officers in interpreting this motion to make sure it does not come to fruition.

If this happens then, boy, you can kiss goodbye—I mean our government would only be human; it will do it once and do it again—opposition discussion or debate and use a coming prorogation or summer recess as a time when people do come together. It is like the old proverbial hanging. There is nothing that focuses the mind better than when the man is marching up to the gallows. Someone said something classical to that effect.

• (1050)

We all know how this system works. There is a lot of time-clock running, yet there are certain events where there is a focus of attention. If this thing goes through, one can forget about the focus of attention and this place becomes, to me, sadly, even less of a chamber for real debate than it is at the present time.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I want to make a few brief points.

First, on May 11, 1977, Mr. Speaker at that time ruled on an issue involving omnibus legislation, but it is important to note and I quote from *Hansard* of May 11, 1977, which referred to "different although related subjects". In other words, the only reason at that time that the omnibus legislation being contested before Mr. Speaker by members of the opposition allowed to proceed was based on the fact that it was different yet related.

The legislation before us today is as follows: "An act to amend aeronautics, an act respecting exporting, importing, manufacturing, buying and selling of certain weapons, an act regarding the status of artists in Canada, and another act concerning combating the laundering of proceeds of crime".

Even if one were to state that the precedent of 1977 was valid, it would only be valid if the bills were different yet related. The bills of course are not related at all. Therefore, any attempt by anyone to utilize that precedent as justification would be faulty.

Second, if we cannot do something by omnibus legislation we surely, as the hon. House leader for the opposition has stated, cannot do it by omnibus motion to pass a series of different bills together. If one is wrong, the other is equally wrong.

Finally, if this precedent is allowed to proceed, then what is next? I ask the question rhetorically. If one can resuscitate five bills with this motion, or four bills, what stops one from resuscitating all legislation from the past? Carrying it to the next level, what stops us from adopting a motion today deeming that all bills have reached third reading, every single bill that is before the House right now? What stops us from resuscitating a bill from 1977, saying that that particular bill has now reached third reading, and we are going to vote on it right now? As a matter of fact, we could actually pass a motion stating it has completed third reading debate.

What we are in fact doing is amending completely the rules of the House by adopting this motion, were we to do so, or were this motion to be ruled in order. The implications of ruling this motion in order would be such that I fear we could render—if a government wanted to, and I am not saying it does—this House of Commons totally irrelevant and redundant. We would simply deem everything and anything to have been passed, to have been at third reading, or to have been at any stage if for any reason the government did not want to proceed with other stages of the bill.

I would hope the Speaker would consider those additional points I have just raised.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I want to be brief along the same lines as the member for Annapolis Valley—Hants. This House is governed by specific rules, practices, and precedents.

As far as I can gather, it has always been the practice that when there is prorogation, all the bills on the Order Paper die. The practice of the House is that with unanimous consent, you can resurrect any bill at the point where it was when the House prorogued. That is the practice. That is the precedence. Not since Bram Stoker wrote *Dracula* have we been able to see this wholesale resurrection of zombies, which the government is attempting to do with this zombie amendment,

or this zombie motion. It is to raise the undead. All these bills are the undead bills, the zombie bills. It is attempting to do that with one motion.

The practices, the precedents and the rules of the House provide a check and a balance and there are certain provisions and certain practices and precedents such as the unanimous consent to resurrect a bill after prorogation which, in fact, is the check on the tyranny of the majority in the House of Commons. That is one of the checks that the opposition has.

Mr. Speaker, you can check the records, but in the past there has been unanimous consent for certain bills to be resurrected. In fact, even in the present session of Parliament there are a couple of bills that have had unanimous consent to be resurrected. I can think of Bill C-83, which is now Bill C-4.

I do not think that the government should be allowed to establish a new precedent. I do not think it should be allowed to overrun a balance that the opposition has had over these many years of parliamentary procedures, practices and precedents. So, I would ask you in considering, to rule this motion out of order and let us put these through the proper process.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I do want to spend a few minutes going through some of the arguments that have been put before you this morning and try and address them.

I would like to work backward through the arguments and, therefore, want to start with the comments of the hon. member for Prescott—Russell, the member for Annapolis Valley—Hants, and at the same time, the arguments of the member for Kamloops, because essentially, as I listened to them I thought the argument was, in all three cases, the same.

What was originally begun by the hon. member for Kamloops was that he tried to take the process we are undergoing today and paint his picture by taking it to the extreme. It is not an uncommon debating tactic. In fact, it is one that the hon. member uses regularly in the House.

Mr. Boudria: Hey, hey.

Mr. Cooper: I am sorry. I listened. I would like an opportunity to make my arguments, Mr. Speaker.

What he is essentially saying is that if you were to find this motion in order, then it is the same precedent as the omnibus bill and, therefore, what the government could do is come in and make a motion and pass every piece of legislation and everything that the government may ever want to do in this particular session of Parliament.

Of course, we have heard the argument before. We heard the same argument put by the same member when we discussed the rule changes. He said this was the kind of power that was going to be given to the government. In reality, this is a very different situation. We are not, by this motion, cutting off debate. All we are doing is reinstating bills at the stage they were left at in the previous session.

No, we are not cutting off a third reading debate or a report stage debate. We are not cutting debate off. We are simply arguing, and I think very credibly to the Canadian taxpayer, that there is no need to repeat all of that debate that has already taken place.

For example, Bill C-26, one of the bills mentioned in this particular motion, had 12 hours and 35 minutes of debate in the House already. It is now at report stage. Is it necessary to repeat all of that debate? No, I do not believe it is. That is why we are proceeding with this motion.

This is not a case of a government coming in and creating some sort of omnibus bill that ends forever the need for Parliament. What we are doing is saving the time of the House by not repeating debate that has already gone before this House. The hon. member for Kamloops used as his document the *Précis of Procedure*. I want to make a quick comment on that because I want to deal with some of the other citations that were mentioned by others.

• (1100)

The précis is just that. All it is, in layman's language, is an explanation or discussion of the rules and practices of this House of Commons. It has never been used as a

binding authority. It is not Beauchesne's, it is not the Standing Orders. The language in the précis may be strong and very descriptive, but it is designed so that those of us who are not experts in the rules can have some sort of an understanding of the subject that we may want to have some interest in.

Mr. Boudria: That is a really strong argument.

Mr. Cooper: Perhaps it is a very strong argument.

The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier as usual made a good argument in the House of Commons and as usual it was very persuasive for people who are watching the debate. What he essentially said, and he referred to Erskine May and other citations of other documents, was that all business of the House of Commons is quashed with prorogation. That was the thrust of his argument.

That is not true. We have plenty of precedents where business from a previous session prior to a prorogation has been reinstated. We have plenty of examples of that. It has not always been quashed. Maybe by another process, but bills, questions and all sorts of things—and you know the precedents as well or better than I do, Mr. Speaker—have been reinstated in this House of Commons. The process may have been different, but the precedent is very clear that in fact there is argument and precedent for reinstatement.

The member for Kingston and the Islands made four points, as I listened to his arguments. The first point was that what we were doing was unprecedented and therefore out of order. If we were to take the argument that any time a decision, action or process is new it is therefore out of order, or because it is different it is unprecedented and therefore it cannot be done, then judges, lawyers, the Speaker of the House, I, in my role as a parliamentary secretary to the House leader, the House leaders of the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party would not be able to proceed because all we could do if we could rely only on precedents would be simply to follow what our predecessors have done. That in and of itself is not an argument. It is a basis for much of our arguments and in most cases a good reason. Simply because we are using a process or a practice that is not clearly precedented does not in and of itself assure that process is out of order or in some way in contempt of this House of Commons.

We have precedents. We have precedents of reinstating business in this House of Commons. We are dealing today with a different process but the precedents are very clear.

Second, the hon. member says that it is up to the Speaker to maintain order. I agree. I have no problem with that. That is the role of the Speaker. Let us be specific, and I want to raise this particular citation because it applies not only to the arguments of the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands but also to the arguments of the Liberal House leader. It talks about the Speaker's right to rule on motions or processes before the House in order to maintain order. I want to read citation 411, page 149 of Beauchesne's fifth edition, subsection (3), the latter part of the paragraph:

> There can be but one question pending at the same time, though there may be numerous matters of business in various stages of progress standing on the *Order Paper* for consideration during the session. The only exception from this citation occurs at the report stage of a bill, when the Standing Orders confer upon the Speaker the power to combine amendments or clauses for discussion and decision.

There were references made to the power of the Speaker in relation to motions. What this citation is saying is that power, the one referred to by my hon. friends, is at the report stage. It is not particularly in this case and there are plenty of arguments and reasons why the Speaker can find that this particular motion is completely in order.

The third argument the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands made was that any irregularity of any portion of a motion would therefore make all of the motion irregular. I believe what he was pointing to is the fact that Bill C-73, as named in this motion, had been previously adopted by the House of Commons by unanimous consent and has now a new number on the Order Paper and we proceeded with it last week, I believe.

He argues that because this particular part of the motion has already been dealt with by the House, the motion in and of itself should be null and void.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you check through your precedents you will find one which says that what has happened here is that the House has taken action on a part of a motion and therefore that part of the motion becomes mute, becomes silent.

Before I proceeded in this way I did seek advice. I sought counsel from people who are experts in procedure. I talked to a number of people to make sure that what I was dealing with here did not require a second motion. I must say the advice I received, I think unanimously, was that what would happen is that all we would be dealing with is a part of the motion becoming mute but not in any way requiring a new motion or some sort of other method of dealing with it.

Mr. Speaker, if you check through practices in this House you will find that on a regular basis we will decide to do something in the House and yet we will continue to go through the process, the forms, even though there has already been a decision of the House. We do that because we recognize that we have a situation which has been changed by this agreement but we continue with that process to follow through with the form. I think that applies very much in this case. The fact that one particular element of this motion has already been dealt with by the House does not in any way make the rest of the motion irregular.

The final argument made by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, and he used the example of the port warden's bill, was that what is happening is we are cutting off debate, we are bringing it in at a stage that is not even a stage of the House.

We do not traditionally talk as a message to the Senate as being a part of our first, second or third reading process. We do not traditionally include it in part of the stages of a bill or a motion. Nevertheless, it is very much a part of our process. Our message to the Senate is a signal saying that we in this House have dealt with first, second, third, committee and so on stages of the bill and have sent a message off to the Senate and waiting for its reply. It is a part of our process. It is a part of our practice and to reinstate this particular bill at this stage is completely in order and is consistent with what I have said earlier, that in fact what we are dealing with is not a cutting off of debate but a continuation of a bill at a stage it was at prior to the prorogation of this House. The House leader of the Liberal Party made three arguments. First, he said that one paragraph has already been adopted by the House and therefore the motion is out of order. I think I have dealt with that at length.

• (1110)

Second, he said that there are five separate and distinct matters in this motion and therefore it is abnormal and should be ruled out of order. That is not the case. What we have is five distinct subjects within a motion, but they are not totally separate because of the thrust or theme of this motion.

The thrust or theme of this motion is reinstatement. What we essentially have is a motion asking for reinstatement at a certain stage and the particulars of that relate to particular bills. It is not unlike what we just went through in this House of Commons a short time ago when we dealt with rule changes. We had a motion to deal with rule changes but Private Members' Business and dealing with committees at great length were in that process. We had several subject areas that are unique and distinct in our Standing Orders but the motion that was being debated was the reform of the House.

That is exactly what we are in right now. We have a discussion of a motion before this House to reinstate the business of the House. Then what we have is only the particulars of that motion, the clauses of a bill if I can put it that way, which reinstate particular items at a certain point.

We are dealing with different items in a particular motion and to rule that motion out of order on that basis would mean no motions could proceed in this House of Commons because virtually every motion we deal with on the floor of this House contains in it different and quite often very diverse subject matters and subject areas.

I want to look at citation 751 of Beauchesne's. The reason I want to look at it is because I think it points out the processes of this House, the way that we as members deal with the processes and the way that the Speaker analyses and rules on those processes. Can one imagine a situation in which this House makes a decision on a certain subject and then immediately by motion reverses the decision?

Citation 751(1) of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition states:

> When the motion that the bill be now read a second time is negatived,—

In other words it is defeated:

> —it is competent for a Member to move immediately without notice: "That the Bill be read a second time on—

And a date:

—next".

What we have there is a circumstance in which the House has made a decision and then by motion we can come at it again, at the same stage.

What I am essentially arguing is that what we are dealing with here are the effects of a prorogation, a precedent which has been established in the past with not a new process, but a process which is completely in order.

I want to conclude by making these four points. There is precedent for reinstatement of business in the House of Commons. We have done it before by suspending Standing Orders, by consent of the House. We have done it before by unanimous consent and we did it just last week by unanimous consent.

To bring business back into the House is clearly precedented. We are talking here only of process.

Second, citation 412, subparagraph (1), page 150 states:

> The question is the subject matter of the motion, and on the merits of that subject matter the House has to give a decision either unanimously or by the majority of the members present.

In other words, there are two ways we can go on a motion. We can do it unanimously, which we do from time to time, or we can do it by division. The end result of that vote is the conclusion of the argument. In fact, that is what we are doing here today.

We could have done this unanimously. We could have saved ourselves an hour and fifteen minutes of House time. We could have been debating any one of these bills, for example. Instead, the House has chosen not to do it unanimously but to debate it and then divide on it.

Perfectly in order. A perfectly logical way of proceeding, and in fact that is what citation 412 of Beauchesne says. That is in fact what we are doing.

The third point concerns the argument that we are doing something unique and peculiar. One of the unique points of our particular Standing Orders is that from time to time we suspend our own Standing Orders, we suspend our own rules. We do that sort of thing regularly. In fact, if you look at the rules and forms of the House of Commons of Canada, with annotations, comments and precedents and so on, from 1958, it says in Item X, which is the way it is designated on page 11, that: "The House may even pass an order prescribing a course of procedure inconsistent with the Standing Orders. A motion for such temporary suspension requires notice", and it goes into particular Standing Orders.

We have done that sort of thing before. We have the precedent, we have reinstated bills in this House of Commons before by suspending Standing Orders, by unanimous consent. We have another process. There is nothing wrong with the process that is before us today.

It really boils down to one simple argument. Yes, we could go back and go through these five bills again. We could debate them once more, at tremendous cost to the House in time, at tremendous cost to the taxpayers of Canada, who are saying to us as members of this House: "quit fooling around, get serious, do some business, cut out the partisan games". We have heard it on all sides of the House. What we have done today is not in any way to cut off debate but rather to allow this House to continue the debate at precisely the same point it had ended debate prior to prorogation.

I have listened to my friends. I listened to them carefully and quietly. I wanted to hear their argument. However, there has not been a single compelling argument that would allow the Speaker to proceed to find this motion out of order.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary and I thank other hon. members. I have listened very carefully to this debate. I hope it is going to help me in making a decision. The hon. members would not be surprised if I said that given the complexity of this and given the precedents that have been cited and the authorities that have been cited, that I should reserve. I will try to return to the House as soon as possible. In the meantime we should probably proceed with the debate.

I will do everything I can to return as quickly as possible with a ruling. The hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I fully understand. I am sure that members in the House will want to co-operate with the Chair if the Chair wants to have time to reflect upon the interventions made by all members of Parliament, and I would concur with that.

However, I believe, as it is germane to our discussions, it would be very difficult for those of us on this side to proceed with debate until such time as a decision is rendered by the Chair.

• (1120)

Perhaps by way of accommodating the Chair and my colleagues to the left, maybe there could be some disposition that we might adjourn to the call of the Chair in order that we may have the decision and then proceed. We are of the view, quite opposite from the government, that the motion is out of order. Until such time as we have an adjudication of the procedural argument, we do not believe that it would be prudent to proceed.

Therefore, I suggest that perhaps we could adjourn to the call of the Chair or until two o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Kamloops and then the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I would concur with the point raised by my hon. friend. the Liberal House leader. However, I am also aware that we have a legislative agenda that we might wish to pursue other than government business item no. 1. This is a complex issue, as we have argued, and a critical issue in terms of the precedent that will be set for hon. members to consider in the future.

On the list of scheduled business is Motion No. 5, consideration of Bill C–5. I would say, on behalf of the New Democratic Party, that we are prepared to move quickly ahead with this. It is an important piece of legislation and we would be prepared to begin debate on that immediately.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the hon. members with care. They will know that in order for the House to proceed with business, there are a lot of people involved. Therefore, to change the business quickly is always a difficult thing.

We have been in this situation before in this House, on several occasions, when we have been waiting for a Speaker's ruling. What we have done in all cases was to proceed with the debate and wait for the Speaker's ruling, certainly in all the cases that I can think of at the moment.

I would ask that we do continue with the debate. I am quite confident, having listened to the arguments today, that the time of the House in debating the subject will not be wasted.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, just to perhaps help the Chair in deciding, and without getting involved in the cross–fire on the order of business, I understand the problems on both sides of the House.

I listened to the parliamentary secretary in a rebuttal in support of the motion. I am just wondering if I could pose a question to the parliamentary secretary who argued very persuasively on some of the points. I am not going to try to rebut his argument. It stands on its own merit and there are several points that I agree with which rebut some of the points made by the opposition.

Regarding the compelling nature of the precedent, I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary this question. In law, we usually never ask a question unless we know the answer. I did not hear the early procedure and perhaps I will be thrown down by my own question. My question to the parliamentary secretary in talking about a compelling nature is: Because there is only one issue here, as far as I am concerned, not all the other more refined arguments about motions in order or out of order and/or some parts of the motion staying mute because the House has already deliberated, and I tend to agree with the parliamentary secretary on that but in his discussions for counsel before he introduced the motion and/or what he said earlier today, and I missed part of it—can the parliamentary secretary give us any precedent from the Mother of Parliaments, where there has been a prorogation and a similar motion was introduced in an omnibus package to reinstate a certain number of bills in a certain form?

If he cannot, will the parliamentary secretary tend to agree with me, although he might not want to, that we can have such a compelling practice and tradition in the procedures and processes of this House that we do not try to make white black and black white by introducing this type of motion? In other words, is there another precedent for this?

When I first heard the argument upstairs on television, I could not believe it. The only argument that the parliamentary secretary made, and I understand the subtlety of the argument, was that there were ways to reinstate bills. I agree with that, but part of my question concerns the fact that, as far as I know the only way to reinstate a bill that was killed in prorogation, is by unanimous consent. I ask the question this way that

compelling procedures and practices apply. Can the parliamentary secretary tell us if he found any precedent in any House of Commons for trying to do what he is doing here today?

Mr. Speaker: I do not want to cut the parliamentary secretary off, but I have listened very carefully to the arguments. I can assure hon. members that the Speaker is not in any doubt whatsoever about the issue that is in front of us.

If the hon. parliamentary secretary wishes to respond, I certainly will hear him. We have heard very full argument, and I do not want to keep this going all day.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I think your point is well taken. There has been long and effective argument. I will let my case rest at that.

Mr. Speaker: I am going to have to ask for the co-operation of the House. Under the circumstances—and it is not the first time we have done this by any means at all—I am going to ask the House to carry on with debate on this matter. I will try to return to the House as quickly as possible with an appropriate ruling.

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (for Mr. Andre) moved:

That, notwithstanding any Standing or Special Order of this House, the following Bills introduced in the Second Session of the Thirty-fourth Parliament be reinstated forthwith in this Session as follows:

An Act to amend the Railway Act (grain and flour subsidies), be deemed to have been introduced, read the first time and ordered to be printed, read a second time, referred to and reported by a Legislative Committee with an amendment, concurred in at report stage with an amendment and ordered for a third reading (Bill C-26);

An Act to amend the Young Offenders Act and the Criminal Code, be deemed to have been introduced, read the first time and ordered to be printed, read a second time, referred to and reported by a Legislative Committee with amendments (Bill C-58);

An Act to provide for the dissolution or transfer of certain Crown corporations and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof, be deemed to have been introduced, read the first time and ordered to be printed, read a second time, referred to and reported by a Legislative Committee with an amendment (Bill C-73);

An Act to establish a federal environmental assessment process, be deemed to have been introduced, read the first time and ordered to be printed, read a second time, and referred to Legislative Committee C (Bill C-78);

An Act to amend An Act to provide for the appointment of a Port Warden for the Harbour of Quebec and An Act to amend and consolidate the Acts relating to the office of Port Warden for the Harbour of Montreal, and to validate certain fees and charges established pursuant thereto, be deemed to have been introduced, read the first time and ordered to be printed, read a second time, referred to and reported by a Legislative Committee without amendment, concurred in at report stage and read a third time and passed (Bill C-82);

An Act to provide for certain matters respecting official languages, employees' pensions and labour relations in connection with the transfer of certain airports, be deemed to have been introduced, read the first time and ordered to be printed, read a second time, referred to and reported by a Legislative Committee without amendment (Bill C-85); and

That the evidence adduced and documents received by any Legislative, Standing or Special Committee of this House, in the Second Session of the Thirty-Fourth Parliament in relation to these bills, be deemed to have been referred to a Legislative or Standing Committee in this present session.

• (1130)

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I will not take a lot of time in this particular debate because what I essentially want to do is put on the record of the House of Commons just a quick discussion of the five bills that are part of this motion, not in a substantive way, but to address what we are trying to do with this particular motion, which is to bring them back at the stages they were at prior to prorogation.

Bill C-26, which is an act to amend the Railway Act, grain and flour subsidies, is an issue that has had a significant amount of time in this House. In fact, it had some three days at second reading stage, for a total of over nine hours. That ended, Mr. Speaker, on April 30. It was then in committee until somewhere around June 5, 1990, that bill came back and had three and a half hours at the report stage. The bill deals with a situation that is already in practice. What we are simply trying to do is to bring the legislative powers up to speed or up to date with what is already being practised. We, therefore, are anxious to continue with the report and third reading stages of this particular bill.

Bill C-58 is an act to amend the Young Offenders Act. It is a very important issue and one that is very much on the minds and in the thoughts of Canadians today. I saw an article in the newspaper just last week talking about the concerns people had with the opposition not allowing or, as it publicly stated, not co-operating with the speedy

passage of this particular bill. The bill is at the second reading stage. It has had just a little over two hours debate at this point, but obviously there is much work to be done and much discussion needed yet and we, as a government, are anxious to proceed with those discussions and those debates. We look forward to doing just that because we believe it is an issue that the Canadian public is concerned about and wants to see a decision of this House.

Bill C–78 is an act dealing with the environment. Of course, Mr. Speaker, I do not have to tell you or anybody in this House that that is very much a topical issue, an issue of a great deal of concern to Canadian people. At the second reading stage of that particular bill we had nearly 13 hours of debate, spread over some six days here in the House of Commons. This is an issue that the Canadian public and the Canadian taxpayers want us to work on now. They want us to discuss the issue of the environment. They are anxious for this House to pronounce itself on things such as the green plan and the legislative agenda that the government has put forward through Bill C–78 and other vehicles.

Bill C–82 is an act to amend an act to provide for the appointment of a port warden for the harbour of Quebec.

In some ways, this probably demonstrates best the need for this particular motion that we have before us. In fact, what happened on Bill C–82 is that on November 5, 1990, the House took exactly 45 minutes to debate second reading.

Of course, as you or anyone who watches the House regularly would know, Mr. Speaker, it then went on to committee. It returned to the House on December 14 for the report stage and third reading. It took exactly two minutes of House time because the House supported the thrust of what was going on here.

The House was ready to decide. As a result of that, to reinstate the bill and all those stages would unnecessarily delay a bill for which the House had already indicated a pretty strong degree of support.

By proceeding with this motion, I think we are doing the taxpayer and Canadians in general a favour.

Bill C–85, the last one in the motion, is an act to provide for certain matters respecting official languages, employees' pensions and labour relations, et cetera. At second reading stage to this point, there has been a total of four hours and 45 minutes on this issue.

There are several important stages before the members of this House that we are going to have to continue in the debate relating to this bill. We have the full committee stage. We have an issue that is important not only to members but to a number of employees, employers and people across the country who are very concerned about this issue.

What we are asking by way of this motion is that this particular bill can continue at the stage it was at, which is either at the end of second reading or just having completed second reading and being ready to go on to committee.

We are anxious, as a government and as members on this side of the House, to get that issue before the committee, to discuss it, to look at whatever amendments may be necessary, and we look forward to doing just that.

I want to conclude my remarks by saying that at the moment we have before us some five bills, all of which are important to the Canadian public and to members of this House of Commons. I would hope that we could proceed with this motion as quickly as possible.

The government does not want to in any way tie up the time of the House or to waste taxpayers' money, but rather it wants us to spend our time debating the substantive issues, which are these particular bills. They would be reinstated at the stage they were at prior to prorogation on the successful completion and adoption of the motion before the House at this time.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with considerable interest to the parliamentary secretary. I must say that we participate in this debate on the substance of the motion with some degree of reluctance.

I think one could refer to our participation as participation under duress. There is quite a cloud, in my view, hanging over this Chamber today. We have had a motion, the procedure of which has been questioned by many

members in this House. Of course, the Chair is in the process of making an adjudication on its acceptability.

Notwithstanding that, the government nevertheless intends to proceed with debating the substance of the motion while the cloud *vis-à-vis* its procedure is still in serious doubt by members who are on this side of the Chamber.

I make those remarks not to reflect upon any decision of the Chair, but to make it very clear that our participation is done so under reluctance and under duress because we believe an adjudication forthwith would be the most appropriate. If not that, the parliamentary secretary would have availed himself of the opportunity under the guise of co-operation in facilitating legislation in this House, perhaps for a short adjournment in order for the matter to be adjudicated.

• (1140)

Notwithstanding that the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has made reference to taxpayers' money and their concern, with his hand to his heart—the only thing he did not have was a tear in his eye—with regard to these particular bills. It was not my decision, nor was it the decision of the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, and it was not the decision of the House leader of the New Democratic Party to adjourn the House for an entire month. It was not our decision. It was the decision of the government that was so concerned about money, concerned about taxpayers' expenditure. I think it ought to take that into account.

It was not the Liberal opposition or the New Democratic opposition which finally came to the decision to prorogue this House. If Bill C-26 was so important to the legislative and economic thrust of the government, why did it prorogue? Is it because it could not get its members here to debate the substance of the bill? What was it? It is utter nonsense to hear the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader make such references to the fact that these bills have now come back to the House and they ought not to start in the ordinary legislative process.

I find it very unacceptable that statements of that particular nature have been put on the record by the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, knowing full well that that is incorrect. I would go on to say much stronger words, Mr. Speaker, but let me say this. The hon. member is very careless with the truth.

The motion before us today in its substance is totally unacceptable to any serious parliamentarian. In my view and in the view of my party, this motion is designed for the sole purpose of subverting the legislative rules of the Parliament of Canada. These rules have been developed over the years and in fact over centuries, not as an impediment to the enactment of legislation, but as a delicate system of checks and balances designed to weigh the need for expeditious decisions on proposed legislation against the need for full examination and discussion of the proposals both in Parliament and in the public.

At the beginning of a session, the government outlines its legislative intentions and in the fullness of time it gives 48 hours notice of specific bills which are then given first reading and printed. After a delay of at least a day, the bill is debated at second reading and then is referred to the appropriate committee to hear evidence about the effect of the bill and to adjust the details. It is then returned to the House for possible further technical adjustment at the report stage and for final debate and approval at third reading. The bill is then considered in a similar process by the Senate and when it has been passed in the upper chamber and by both Houses of Parliament, the bill is then granted Royal Assent.

It is the responsibility of the government to introduce its legislation and to manage it to assure its conclusion by the end of the parliamentary session. The government alone, and this point must be made for members opposite, controls the timing of the ending of a session. Prorogation is entirely an executive act. The government arranges to prorogue a session in full knowledge of which bills will not have been completed in the legislative process. It is utter nonsense for the parliamentary secretary to make reference to Bill C-78 with regard to sustainable development in the environment.

If the government was so bent on having that particular piece of legislation, it had every opportunity to arrange a schedule of this Parliament to have further examination and then a resolution made by this House.

If a bill is so late in introduction or so poorly conceived that its legislative progress is unusually slow, the government alone bears that responsibility. It has more than adequate rules to assist it in taking on this particular responsibility. If a bill has not been passed by the end of a session, its death is thrice the responsibility of the government opposite.

First, the bill was not introduced in a timely way. Second, the government did not properly manage the legislative process of that bill. Third, the government alone had the power to end the session and thereby terminate the life of that bill.

From time to time in recent years some non-controversial government bills and some bills of great detail and national importance, but of little partisan account, have not been completed at the time of prorogation. In such circumstances, the House has been disposed to give its unanimous consent in the new session of Parliament to restore these items to the stage at which they died at the time of prorogation.

Let it be clear to those who are viewing today's proceedings that we have had two examples of such bills in the present session. One of these was the Crown corporations bill, an administrative proposal that, because of an important local interest, was subject to more extensive debate than some items of a similar nature. When the government asked to restore this bill to the stage at which it died in the previous session, we in the opposition recognized that it would be in the interests of the taxpayer and good public policy to expedite the measure, and the required unanimous consent was forthcoming from this side of the House. The bill has now been introduced and passed and consummated by this particular Chamber.

The other bill was the trust and loan companies legislation which is part of the major overhaul of the laws governing financial institutions in Canada. This bill had an extremely extensive committee stage, during which many diverse interests were asked to express their views, resulting in many amendments to the bill. The legislation has moved forward and forward in a spirit of non-partisan collaboration, an attitude that continues. The opposition had no difficulty whatsoever in agreeing to restore this bill so that the valuable work, not just of parliamentarians but of interested citizens and the general public as well, would not be ignored.

In this case the opposition probably was more eager than the government to agree to restore as, in our view, the government has been far too slow in proceeding with the financial institutions package. We are eager not just to finish the trust and loans bill, but to proceed with the other elements of the financial institutions package, especially the Bank Act revisions.

Unanimous consent to restore items such as these is always forthcoming. These bills in the last session were reasonably fairly handled by the government, I might add, and while we could not agree with the government on all of the policies put forward in this legislation, we believed the public interest would be best served by expediting this particular passage.

This is not the case with the legislation dealt with in the motion before us today. The most important of these bills is former Bill C-78, the environmental assessment bill. This legislation is as important as any placed before this Parliament as it addresses a subject of vital interest to the future of every Canadian from coast to coast. We in the Official Opposition co-operated with the government in moving the bill to committee. The government repaid us with vagueness, evasiveness and temporization. It has been unwilling to deal in substantial terms with possible amendments and it has been unreasonably reluctant to give the public any insight into how vital regulations under the legislation might be framed.

• (1150)

My colleague from Davenport will make reference to those specifics when he takes the floor shortly thereafter.

While the subject matter of the bill is important and the need to legislate in the area is essential, we see many flaws in the bill. The bill fails to incorporate any concept of sustainable development. The terms of the bill are vague and general where they should be firm and specific. Many of the factors proposed for governing environmental assessments and reviews are weaker than those under the existing environmental assessment and review order. There are loopholes in the bill that could lead to favourite individuals or companies being able to evade the provisions of the legislation.

There is undue discretionary power permitted the minister. Not that the minister will be bad, but when one person has that kind of power, there must be some

limitations and some restrictions regarding large amounts of discretionary power.

There is inadequate protection offered to native communities. The bill fails to give the environment minister sufficient authority *vis-à-vis* other ministers whose pet project endangers the environment. The bill does not give Parliament adequate authority over the creation or alteration of regulations. The bill is not specifically applicable to all relevant departments, agencies and their legislation.

In short, the bill is full of holes and the government's response to criticism in committee has been completely and utterly inadequate.

Under the circumstances we do not believe that the House of Commons ought to be asked to expedite the passage of the bill. We believe that the new Minister of the Environment ought to be asked to go back to the drawing board and produce a new bill.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Dingwall: We do not want to be hoodwinked by some cheap political trick, trying to reinstate legislation which has fallen dead as a result of the government's own ineptitude and subsequent action with regard to proroguing this Parliament.

We have similar difficulties with other legislation in this motion. Some of my colleagues will be dealing in detail with these later in this debate. However, I want to outline some of them now. The former Bill C-26, the Railway Act amendments, which we in Atlantic Canada refer to as the At and East bill, is in my view and the view of my party just plain bad legislation. The bill will further endanger the rail transportation system in Atlantic Canada. It will cost jobs in Atlantic Canada and in southwestern Ontario as well. It will unduly increase the costs of livestock and poultry industries of Atlantic Canada and it will have a destructive effect on the export of Canadian flour.

Those are the reasons why we oppose both the substance of this particular bill and the procedural gymnastics of the government to try to reintroduce this bill through its motion.

The government puts this bill forward as a so-called expenditure reduction, but its disastrous impact on both the agricultural and transportation sector, especially in Atlantic Canada, will be so destructive to the economy that in the long run it will only lead, in my view and in the view of my party, to greater costs.

The opposition cannot co-operate in the passage of bad legislation.

The former Bill C-58, the young offenders legislation, is also a bad bill that no reasonable opposition could be expected to expedite. This bill represents a terrible step backward, away from a concept of rehabilitation and back to a concept of not just punishment but even revenge. The bill does not address the conditions that lead young people to crime and has been judged by experts to be far more likely to reinforce rather than rehabilitate criminal tendencies. The legislation has been universally denounced as a nearly Dickensian retrogression.

The bill should not be advanced. The government should do the honourable thing and withdraw it.

The former Bill C-82 appears to be an administrative bill, but it is of great significance to the shipping industry. Its hasty passage through this House in the last session led to it being slowed down in the Senate.

The government refused to allow the House committee on the bill adequate time to consult the industry on such matters as ceilings on fees under the bill. The bill is also inadequate with reference to verification, audit and accountability; again another reason why this particular motion ought not to be proceeded with and ought not to be adjudicated in this particular House, not only on its substance but on the procedural gymnastics of the government opposite.

The government is now asking the House of Commons again to abandon its right to look into all of these issues. It wants us to leave these important questions to the Senate, its favourite upper chamber. This, I suggest, is a strange proposal coming to us from a well-known foe of the Senate, the government House leader. It is a proposal with which the opposition cannot and will not agree.

Finally, the motion deals with former Bill C-85 regarding the privatization of airports. Our concerns with the bill in the last session revolved around the protection of employee benefits, something that obviously members opposite do not seem to be too concerned about. But, when it affects workers and ordinary Canadians, we on this side are concerned as to what happens with those individuals. We are concerned with the protection of

jobs, the equitable sharing of cost and the maintenance of services in both official languages.

In the last session the opposition attempted to approach this matter in a very collaborative manner, but it was rebuffed by the former minister's petty, I might add, mealy–mouthed and duplicitous manner. We believe that the new minister ought to be given an opportunity to correct this situation by starting this bill all over again.

As a supporter of the Speaker in the chair, I want to make it perfectly clear to you, Sir, as occupant of the chair that we do not oppose this motion for the sake of being difficult. As I have already indicated, the opposition has clearly behaved in a reasonable and co–operative manner when presented by reasonable conduct of desirable legislation. We cannot be expected to co–operate either in the passage of inadequate or downright bad legislation. We most especially cannot be expected to co–operate in this attempt by the government to subvert the parliamentary process, to evade parliamentary scrutiny and public input, and to shirk its responsibility.

This motion represents yet another move backward in the government's march toward parliamentary reform.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I say to you and to the members who have participated in the procedural aspects of this motion and who will now participate in the substance of the motion as ordered by the Chair, that we feel very strongly that this has subverted the legislative process which has been codified in the Standing Orders of the House and referred to in Beauchesne's, Erskine May and other sources as referred to by all hon. members on both sides.

Let it be said and let it be understood that we on this side of the House will fight under the provisions of the Standing Orders and parliamentary tradition. Whenever there is bad legislation which is not in the best interest of the public policy of this country, we will oppose, we will amend and we will do our best to get a fair deal, an appropriate deal for all Canadians wherever they live.

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this motion today. I would like to focus my comments on one particular bill, Bill C–26. Before doing so, I would just like to say that in a general sense the debate taking place today goes to the heart of parliamentary democracy in this country.

We have seen example after example of this government ramming through its own legislation, ramming through its own wants and desires without proper consultation, without following rules, I would suggest, and in a fashion that causes people in this country not only to wish for but demand some major parliamentary reforms which are long overdue, given the attitude and the actions of a government in its second majority mandate.

• (1200)

With respect to Bill C–26, I think it is a microcosm of many of the problems that exist with this government. I have a personal interest in Bill C–26. I was the person for the New Democratic Party who was on the legislative committee with respect to that bill.

With respect to Bill C–26, the government has ignored Parliament, the people, experts, reports and now it is going to finally ram through a piece of legislation that was removed from the books two years ago.

The history of this bill is very interesting. The At and East bill is a bill which allows the export of grain and flour through the ports of Halifax and Saint John, through a subsidy program and that is that during the winter months when the seaway cannot be used it is very expensive to transport grain to those two ports. This program was put in place to offset that cost to allow the usage of those ports. Those ports are important to western Canadians like myself with respect to the Canadian Wheat Board when grain is shipped for export. It is important to have open seaports and those are the only two ice–free seaports on the eastern seaboard. It is important to maritimers, to eastern Canadians with respect to livestock, poultry, cattle and so on in terms of getting some cheaper rates for their feed. It is important to places like Dover Flour Mill which rely on the elevator for storage of their grain.

The interesting thing about this program is that the government ignored reports from the maritimes. The Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission, back about 1985 or 1986, approached the government and said: "Look, you are spending too much money on this program. You are spending $40 million a year. Here is a

method where you can spend something like $20 million a year and still have the same effect, keep it so that these ports will be competitive."

The government ignored it. There was a major report done. The government ignored it completely. In 1989, it was announced during the budget speech that the At and East program would be removed, effective July 15, 1989, I believe, without even consulting the APTC and without even looking at what it had said. The government ignored it completely and removed the whole program without thinking of the consequences, without looking for alternatives.

The interesting thing about this is that it removed the program and it was never brought up in the House until February 1990, after our party had raised the matter in the House asking what had happened to this program. The next day, bang, it was in second reading.

As this matter went through second reading, it became very clear that the government had paid no attention to the reports of the experts, had paid no attention to the needs of the maritimers and had paid no attention to the needs of the Canadian Wheat Board. It simply saw it as a way to save $40 million; a very narrow minded and short sighted view of a program that has contributed a lot to regional development in the maritimes.

As it went through committee stage, group after group, representatives from the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission, livestock groups from Atlantic Canada, people from Dover Flour Mills and others pointed out the frailties and the weaknesses of removing this program and putting nothing else in place. They pointed out that in fact it is going to cause problems with the Saint John elevator and it did. It is closed now. They pointed out that it was going to put the Halifax elevator in jeopardy and it is in jeopardy. They pointed out there were going to be jobs lost and there have been jobs lost. They pointed out that in fact it was going to threaten the livestock industry.

The Canadian Wheat Board came before us and said that the closure of Halifax and Saint John elevator may well mean the loss of wheat sales. We can ill afford in this country a loss of wheat sales. We are having a tough enough time competing with the Americans and the Europeans. The reason they said we would lose them is because nations in warmer climates, such as Cuba, would prefer to pick up their grain from an ice-free port than sail to Montreal to pick it up.

The Canadian Wheat Board said that, all things being equal, if Cuba had to go to Montreal, it may well lose grain sales. It appears that has been the case.

That is something that we in western Canada simply find unacceptable, given the nature of the grain industry today.

The interesting thing about this debate is that unlike many bills and many programs in which there is a straight philosophical difference, in this one there was an alternative. There could have been put in place a well thought out and well researched alternative.

When I came to the government, being the naive person I suppose I am, I thought there was a realistic possibility of actually maintaining, not the At and East bill as it exists now, but a revised At and East bill. It needed updating. It had not been changed since its implementation in the early 1960s. The government ignored that completely and discounted the arguments.

The one thing that was accomplished out of our committee reports and committee hearings was that the government reluctantly, after getting pressure from all these various groups, and the media started picking up on some of the problems, agreed to do a study on the effects of the loss of the At and East program and on the grain elevators in Atlantic Canada.

There was a report prepared and completed in November 1990. It is a fairly extensive report looking at all the various aspects of grain handling in eastern Canada. It comes to some interesting conclusions, which I am afraid the government again seems to have ignored.

I am quoting from the report of the grain elevators in Atlantic Canada, *Grains 2000 Study*. On page 41 under conclusions, it states:

> The principal finding of this study is that an increase in export grain is required for the Halifax and St. John elevators to achieve financial viability. If incremental flows of export grain are not achieved, the Halifax elevator could face closure and the Saint John elevator would be unable to reopen. The loss of an elevator with water receiving capability will be significantly detrimental for the Atlantic livestock industry. As shown in the analysis, the cost of feed grain in the region could rise by $10 per tonne or more.

What this is saying is that the elevators in Saint John and Halifax are beneficial to the livestock industry because they provide some form of competition for the railways which also bring in feed grains. There is not

enough business coming out of the livestock industry to sustain those elevators. They need some increased export trade.

The Canadian Wheat Board is not in the business of supporting elevators. It is in the business of providing the best return it can for its prairie producers and therefore it is going to sell its grain where it can get the best dollar for the prairie producer. The Canadian Wheat Board has said unless there is some sort of program, we are not going to be sending grain out to Halifax. It has said it will do what it can.

During the summer months it does send grain out to Halifax. During the winter months when the seaway is closed, it does not even send a bushel because it is simply too expensive to send by rail to Halifax. The Canadian Wheat Board is doing what it can, but it is not going to do it at the cost of prairie producers.

This report says that unless there is some increase, and it does not need to be a huge increase in export grain, the one elevator of the two still operating will close and neither will reopen.

• (1210)

It also says the general conclusion is that changes to various government programs and so on will not result in a significant increased flow of feed grain through the elevators on a sustained basis. This largely explains the study's finding that to ensure long-term viability of the Halifax elevator and to re-open the Saint John elevator, the flow of export grain must be increased. I have commented on that already.

At the present time, the Atlantic elevators must compete as an eastern point of export for Canadian grain with elevators in the lower St. Lawrence. The primary disadvantage the Atlantic elevators have is the higher transportation costs to move grain to their facilities relative to the lower St. Lawrence. It is more expensive to ship the grain from Thunder Bay to Halifax than it is to ship it from Thunder Bay to Montreal. The ports find themselves at a major inconvenience. There is a more serious problem in the long run and a more serious problem to national unity in this country. It is much shorter to ship the grain through American ports than it is to ship it to Halifax. Canadian Pacific Railway has already purchased lines in the eastern United States and has the capability to bypass Canada completely. It has indicated that it has no qualms in doing so if the economic situation warrants. The plans are in the works for that very purpose.

If that happens, what is going to be the purpose of having a rail line in Atlantic Canada? The At and East Program, which would bring grain along on CN tracks through to Halifax, has already been taken away. VIA Rail has been cut and that has cut movement on those lines and those lines are becoming economically non-viable. The next step is to remove those lines completely. What is that going to do for national unity? What is that going to do for the economy of the maritimes? What is it going to do when you look at moving grain from western Canada to eastern seaports? The American seaboard is going to look very attractive. Those are some of the results of this program.

The report says to achieve some competition, "a freight equalization program will need to be designed so the Atlantic and St. Lawrence elevators are equalized from the Canadian Wheat Board perspective." In other words, this report, set up by this government, says that unless there is an equalized payment, some sort of At and East program in other words, those elevators cannot compete. When those elevators close we lose ice-free ports, we jeopardize the very shaky livestock, poultry and beef industry in Atlantic Canada, we lose hundreds of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars to the economy and we ultimately threaten Dover Flour Mills, a very efficient flour company which has been competing under very adverse conditions and has been doing very well. If the Halifax elevator closed, Dover Flour Mills would be put in danger.

What do we come down to? We come down to something that is extremely illogical because from a straight, economic point of view, to remove this $40 million program is going to save this government $40 million or $35 million, depending on the year, in its deficit but it is going to cost many, many times that much resulting from the loss of that program: all sorts of unemployment insurance, loss of jobs and loss of economic revenue. For a short gain the government is sacrificing a major long-term loss. It is totally illogical.

I remember challenging some of the members, ministers and others to justify that logic. I asked them to show me where my logic was wrong and they could not do it.

After pressuring them they decided to have a study done. What have they done with this study? They have done nothing with it. This study is concluding basically what the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission was saying all along, that there has to be a program.

An hon. member: And what you were telling them too.

Mr. Laporte: What we as a caucus were telling them. The reason my caucus and I do not want to see this bill passed is that the cost is going to be too high for this country, both in economic and social terms.

We are asking this government to put forth a realistic alternative. That is all we have been asking right from the beginning. In fact that is all the maritimes have been asking for the last seven years, and this government has ignored them.

This government talks about national unity. It goes on and on about the Constitution, from which I do not want to detract because it is a very important issue. But the government seems to fail to realize that it is doing more to tear apart this country than it has ever done to put it together.

We have fought for 125 years, since the existence of our country, to maintain an east-west relationship despite the strong pulls of the north-south which in many ways naturally draw us.

We now have a government that has just cut those east-west ties one after the other: communications, transportation, telecommunications and the media. It goes on and on.

I was talking to some maritimers last week. They were saying: "Why should we worry about western Canada when we cannot get our grain from there? It is too expensive. We do not seem to get the benefits from central Canada. We would be better off dealing with the Americans". When we hear people talking that way, it is a very frightening statement to hear being made by serious people.

I really hope and plead with this government to reconsider its position on this bill. There is no area of this bill that makes any sense. It defies logic. The only place it makes sense from the government's point of view is that it is a cut in the deficit, a very short-term gain, which in reality is no gain at all.

I just want to make a few concluding remarks. I concur with many Canadians in that what we need is some sort of parliamentary reform or change. We cannot continue operating this nation the way it is with the sort of attitudes of this government.

It is with a lot of frustration that I speak on behalf of many people from the maritimes who feel very frustrated and disillusioned with this government. It seems to be ignoring their wishes. I can identify with that, being a western Canadian because this government has certainly ignored the needs of western Canadians.

Small business people, family farms, fishermen and others who are simply trying to maintain a living are being attacked continually by this government, and Bill C-26 is just one example of that attack.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, from this side of the House we are asking ourselves what would cause the government or any government to reintroduce six pieces of badly written proposed legislation and insist that it be examined further.

• (1220)

It is beyond our ability to understand why the government would do that. I will focus on the one of the six bills which I know a little bit better. I am asking myself what is the reason the government insists on presenting Bill C-78 for re-examination. Is it because of political ideological bankruptcy? Is it because of political indifference or even perhaps political ineptness? I do not know which of the three.

Bill C-78 has a very unique distinction. In listening to the witnesses from interested organizations and individuals who appeared before our committee, the bill was criticized by virtually every one of them. It was, in addition to that, amazing that both industry and environmental organizations and spokespersons would agree that they would prefer to operate under the present guidelines on environmental assessment, that they are better off under the present guidelines than under the proposed bill.

That is a rather unique feat, to manage to produce a bill that gets criticized by everyone affected. I wonder about the political sensitivity or political bankruptcy of this government because any cabinet, any political organization called a party—as the so-called Progressive Conservatives like to call themselves—would, in the light of what has happened to Bill C-78 since last June,

certainly be glad to have an opportunity to put forward a revised bill. However, the government did not. This is what is so astonishing.

Second, one wonders about the indifference of this government when it has heard speaker after speaker, witness after witness, with some very rare exceptions—I would say one out of 10 witnesses—indicate that his or her organization was pleased with the proposal. In most of the interventions that we listened to, they said: "Please give us another measure or leave us under the present guidelines".

One has to wonder what it is within the machinery of government that makes it so insensitive to the input that has been collected by the committee process. This is what troubles me profoundly. What happened to Bill C-78 is that the government and the chairman of the committee in charge of Bill C-78 did not call one meeting between December and April of this year. This led us to conclude that the submissions made by witnesses had made a point, that they had registered and something was happening.

The previous minister in November and December indicated on a number of occasions that he was going to produce some regulations for us to look at to show how the bill would work, and that he would produce a package of amendments. Fine. We were glad to hear that.

Come January, nothing happened. The same in February, March and April. Now, after all these months, we discover that the government's silence was not due to the fact that it was elaborating on the input received by interested parties as a result of the committee process—which under the old rules was one of the best in the world, we are now heading toward a system that is very narrow because we will hear and admit only technical witnesses—that having heard all the witnesses and receiving that input, the government was elaborating and proposing changes.

We were hoping that the government would introduce a new version of the environmental impact assessment legislation as a result of that. Instead, we discover in the motion we are debating today that actually that has not happened.

The government is blindly, in an insensitive fashion, proceeding as if nothing had happened in 1990. As I mentioned a moment ago, it also decided to remain inactive on this bill for four solid months. This is unusual behaviour on the part of this already decrepit and bankrupt government, as seen in so many other fields of policy making. This was demonstrated by its behaviour on this particular bill which was intended to be a demonstration of the imagined Progressive Conservative commitment to the environment and to sustainable development.

That was the foundation. It was going to be the pillar of Conservative commitment to the practical application of sustainable development as embraced by the Prime Minister at home and abroad on a number of speeches, and by four subsequent environment ministers at various gatherings internationally.

The Government of Canada was committed all the way to sustainable development and the environment. Here we see that when it comes to putting into practice words and rhetoric, this government has fallen flat on its nose.

I would not want to end with only a general statement. I would like to substantiate what I am saying with a very precise analysis, in the time available to me, of our serious reservations about the old Bill C-78, which is now being forcibly reintroduced. Also I would like to explain why we thought that, as a result of questioning and representations, the government was thinking it over and was going to reintroduce a better version.

There is nothing wrong with introducing bills that are poorly written. It can happen to anyone. We know that. What is wrong is the blind indifference to the input received in a process which is intended to improve the quality of the bill. That is the point.

Let me bring to your attention a few sections. In general, one has to say that the objections to the bill were threefold. One, it gave too much power—it still does because that is what we are debating here today—to the department which initiates a certain project.

Second, too much is left to the regulatory power of cabinet. Third, there does not seem to be anywhere in the bill an explicit authority given to the Minister of the Environment allowing him or her to reject a specific project.

As for specific questions, the wording of clause 4 is very weak. It ensures only that environmental effects receive careful consideration before actions are taken. In addition, it is not the purpose of this act to ensure sustainable development despite many theoretical declarations to this effect.

As for section 5, we have to conclude that there were two profound concerns with this section. One, it is weaker than the current regulations. Second, tax breaks are specifically excluded by this legislation as a possible reason to refer a project to a federal environmental assessment review. This, while it may seem to be a dry, technical point, has very serious implications for many energy and natural resources projects.

• (1230)

We then looked at section 6 in particular and found to our dismay that it gives the proponent powers that are virtually unlimited. We felt that clearer rules instead should be introduced and established to remove the notion that the proponent forms an opinion about whether or not a project is to be referred for a review or not. In other words, the powers given to the proponent under Bill C–78 are far too great.

Again, within the same section 6, we felt that the second half is confusing. It begins with the very grandiose statement "for greater certainty" and then by the time one finishes reading that particular section, one wonders what it is all about. In other words, it is a section that badly needs clarification. The section was written and intended to offer the reader clarification. This is a very amusing contradiction.

Moving to section 11, we found that while it lists the factors to be studied by a panel created by the implementation of this legislation, we felt that it did not heed the consultation process of 1988 and that that consultation process is not required in this bill. In addition, the bill does not require the review of alternatives to the proposed project or to native claims.

When we looked at section 11, again we had to conclude that actually the fox is still in charge of the chicken coop. Because, under this legislation the Minister of the Environment does not have the unfettered authority to set the terms of reference and scope of the review panel. We, and a large number of witnesses, felt that this was one of the major flaws of the bill. We are now being asked to re–examine it, in the full knowledge that it has these serious weaknesses.

Concerning section 16, there is a reference there to the "responsible authority". This is the initiating department or proponent. It makes all the decisions as to whether to proceed or refer the project to mediation or to a review panel, or involve the Minister of the Environment if you like. Whatever action is taken hinges, however, on the opinion of the responsible authority, namely the initiating department.

Even more interesting, I submit to you, is the fact that the cancellation of a proposed project is not an option. The responsible authority must withhold approval if the project is referred to a panel, but the bill does not include a rejection of the project even if the project is likely to cause significant adverse effects that cannot be mitigated. At this point I would ask, at section 16, whether any fair–minded and intelligent politician would not think here is something that we must re–examine, something is obviously not coming together.

But this is not all. I must refer you to section 20 where, in the opinion of a responsible authority, a project is described on the mandatory list. The Minister of the Environment has certain powers to deal with the initial environmental report and the minister may do a number of things, which I will not put on record because of limited time. In this section we find a fundamental problem with the approach the government has taken to this legislation. What better reason I ask, within the framework of sustainable development, to reject a project than if it is likely to cause significant problems that cannot be mitigated.

However, we find that the Minister of the Environment does not have that option. In the opinion of this government, such projects may deserve study but they cannot be cancelled. To make matters worse, it is the proponent or proposing department that has a major say in writing the terms of reference for the study of the appointed panel.

When it comes to discretionary powers which, as you well know, are very important, section 24 gives the Minister of the Environment the authority to refer a project to a mediator or a panel under certain conditions.

Well, we find that the Minister of the Environment can only do those things after consulting with the responsible authority. The minister is continually fettered in responding to proposals that have significant environmental impacts. Even under this section the most the minister can do is refer the projects to panels or mediators. The minister does not have the authority to reject any project as unsound from an environmental or sustainable perspective.

I do not know, Mr. Speaker, whether you want me to go on and examine other sections because this report is becoming more and more depressing as we explore in depth the quality of this bill. You can see, however, the point I am trying to make. I do not want to become too tedious, but with the time still allocated, I would want to bring to your attention section 25, which seems to be aimed at environmental groups which intervene in projects.

For example, in section 25, Ottawa-based national groups would be excluded from mediation on any project except one taking place in Ottawa. A national organization could not comment on something happening in Vancouver, Halifax, Toronto, Winnipeg, Montreal or Quebec City. Thus, to be at the mediation table you must live on or own land or otherwise be directly affected by the proposed project.

There are weaknesses in sections 26, 30 and 31. Mr. Speaker, I see you have already pointed out to me that I have only a couple of minutes left.

Let me bring to your attention section 34 which deals with the decision of responsible authority. It is the heart of the bill because it deals with the response to the report prepared by a mediator or a panel. Following the report of a mediator or panel, the responsible authority shall approve the project, under certain conditions of course. Where, in the opinion of the responsible authority, the project is likely to cause impacts that cannot be mitigated or justified, it shall not permit the project to be carried out.

Finally, we find in this section that a project can be rejected, but not by the Minister of the Environment, only by the proponent. Even then, within the same section there is permission that a project can proceed, no matter how serious the impact, if it can be justified. I ask you, what does the word justified mean in section 34? Obviously it means if you can make a good case, I suspect a political case in cabinet, if you are the proponent of the particular project and you are eloquent and articulate and you can perhaps demonstrate that in the short term, that project shall proceed.

I submit to you that this is a very troublesome concept. I would like to take you through the balance of this bill to reinforce what I hope I have achieved in these 20 minutes, namely to convince you that Bill C-78 should not be reintroduced in its present form.

• (1240)

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, I would like to compliment the member. I know he is most erudite concerning the environmental situation in Canada. He has spoken up many times in that area in this Parliament and I have seen him in past Parliaments when I have been a viewer from the outside looking in and I want to compliment him on his commitment to the environment.

In looking at this bill, I would like to ask the member to expand a little bit on one of the parts of the bill that concerns me somewhat, and that is the section where the cabinet decisions are exempted from the legislation. I look at any section of any bill where there are certain exemptions, or the cabinet gets the opportunity to make policy outside legislation, in particular, in my own province of British Columbia, where the agricultural land reserve bill allows cabinet to review certain processes and applications and then override its own legislative body in coming up with decisions. I wonder whether he sees this particular provision in the act as being fair, or does he anticipate that it could lead to some abuse, particularly when pressures are put on the cabinet by various lobby groups or political friends who want a fast track approval in some area?

I would further ask whether there are any safeguards or means of assuring that environmental decisions are given proper weight in these cabinet decisions referring to this and other cabinet decisions where they have discretion.

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the member from the Okanagan Valley for his very generous and kind words. The question which he puts is very central to the spirit and the heart of Bill C-78. Under the bill as written now, cabinet would be fully in command of whether or not it approves a proposal. It would not be bound. It would not be directed by the Minister of the Environment of the day in rejecting a specific proposal. The way it is drafted, the allocation of powers is such that the environment minister is virtually in the hands of the initiating department and minister throughout the entire process. Therefore, the role of the

Minister of the Environment is unlike what one would expect from this bill. It is very marginal.

The Minister of the Environment is not the main actor under the terms of the bill under discussion. To answer the hon. member's question, cabinet could be exempted. The process would not even require an exemption because the process is designed in such a manner that under very rare circumstances could the Minister of the Environment put his or her foot down and say no to a project. There is impotence here in the implementation of environmental principles.

That should take care of overriding in their own legislation because it would not be necessary to override. To use a common expression, you could drive a truck through this bill as it is designed.

What safeguards are in the opening portion of the bill, in the preamble? There is good rhetoric but in essence the operative sections of the legislation are written in such a manner that to talk about environmental safeguards, we must go outside the bill itself. The weakness of the bill is that the political responsibility to be discharged by the Minister of the Environment is marginalized by the design of the bill which attributes so much power to the initiating department, which could be the Minister of Transport, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Minister of Finance or the minister of any other important agency which operates at the federal level.

I hope that this gives a sketchy answer to the question of the hon. member. We were surprised, as I pointed out in my intervention earlier, that the bill itself was criticized by virtually every witness. There was not one sector in society affected by this bill that persistently came forward and said they liked it. Usually, from our experience, there is a polarization before committee. One sector of society says it is good and another one says it is bad. In this case, we had a uniformly negative response from virtually all witnesses, except one or two.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I would like to compliment my colleague, the member for Davenport, for giving an extremely succinct and penetrating summary of the weaknesses of Bill C–78. He speaks with authority, as we all know, from his long experience on environmental matters.

I want to ask the member, and I know we have very little time left for him to reply, not on the substance of Bill C–78 which, as he has outlined is so severely flawed, but about the process. That is, this motion once again undermines the ability of members from all sides of this House to contribute constructively to legislation because the government refuses to take into account the suggestions made as a result of the committee stage of legislation.

We have a great example with these bills, not only Bill C–78 but the others that are before us, of a government which is ignoring the worth–while suggestions that have been made and an opportunity to improve very necessary legislation.

I would like to ask the member if he would just outline for the record the suggestions that have been made to improve Bill C–78 or to improve the whole process of environmental assessment which are in the public domain and which the government could have drawn upon to redraft this very important piece of legislation.

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, on both points the hon. member is quite correct and I agree with him. The process in committee is being very seriously damaged in its credibility by motion No. 1, which we are debating today. It makes a mockery of all that work and, particularly in the case of Bill C–78, it in essence rejects the input that we received from the public. The public interest is seriously affected by this move on the part of the government.

As for the second question, yes, the government in essence is saying that the input provided by members is not relevant. This is, in part, easy to understand because under this system one does not pay much attention to the opposition.

• (1250)

We know that. We live with that every day. However, when this message is articulated, not in relation to opposition members but to public organizations, to witnesses, to associations from coast to coast which take the trouble to make a submission and then see their

submission being ignored, then it is a very serious action on the part of this government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, we in the Official Opposition participate in this debate very reluctantly. Obviously, we are not sure that this motion is in order; we have submitted arguments that the Chair is considering.

Nevertheless, since the debate is under way, Mr. Speaker, without prejudging it, but if the motion is ruled out of order or unacceptable, we must say that this whole debate will have been rather academic. That is how we feel about this. As a matter of fact, having stated the reasons why this motion is defective, I might add that this procedure is contrary to parliamentary tradition and is unprecedented in Parliament. Usually, when the government wants to revive a bill or put it back on the Order Paper following the prorogation of the House, it proceeds by unanimous consent.

Prorogation, as I explained earlier Mr. Speaker, puts an end to everything. It is not us, opposition members, who say so, but the very definition of the word "prorogation". It puts an end to everything and all items on the Order Paper lapse. And the government which—let's be candid about it—controls the agenda, as it controls the debates and the bills, knew full well that, if the House adjourned in May for almost a month and then there was a prorogation, these bills would be lost.

These are no doubt contentious bills, Mr. Speaker. We believe that some of them have been debated well and, so that the Canadian people will know, vigorously. We have tried to get across to this government that major amendments were required. We succeeded in some cases, but in others, we failed. It has to do with the way Parliament works and the rule of the majority where by the majority decides. So, the government does as it pleases.

Bill C-26, Mr. Speaker, is a bill intended to amend the Railway Act.

[*English*]

The purpose of the bill was for the termination of the At and East grain and flour subsidy announced in the budget of April 27, 1989, and put into place on July 16, 1989.

The whole subsidy aspect of Bill C-26 was questioned by many of us when the bill started first reading on June 16, 1989. That is some time ago, two years ago. We have had second reading speeches on February 12, 1990, February 20, 1990, April 30, 1990, and then it was referred to a legislative committee which reported back to the House about a month later, on May 31, 1990. It was debated again on June 5, 1990, and that was it. We never heard about it again. The government comes in after taking its decision to prorogue the House and says: "Well, even though the bill has been here for two years, we could not see ourselves able to take a few weeks or a few additional days during May or April to debate that bill. We would rather adjourn the House and go home." That is what happens when the government does not pay attention to its agenda. It misses sometimes and it is sometimes responsible for the slowness of this House.

The other one is Bill C-58, which was alluded to by my friend, and probably will be the object of great concern to many of us. The bill in question was first read on December 20, 1989. The second reading was on May 30, 1990. It was referred to a legislative committee on June 14, 1990. It was reported to the House on December 10, 1990. Nothing has happened since. That is more than six months ago. The government prorogued, yet it did not give a darn about what happened to that bill.

Here is the government again trying to tell us that the opposition is preventing legislation from going through. The government controls the agenda. It proposes the agenda to the House. We, the opposition, can only dispose of it in due course. It did not propose and we could not do anything about it.

Bill C-73 I think has already been taken care of. If my memory serves me right, C-73, by unanimous consent, was re-tabled or taken up where it was left off and is now called Bill C-8. That is the only bill on which the government came to us and said: "Would you agree to unanimously replace this bill on the agenda?" We did and the act was passed here last week on May 23.

Why could the government not at that time include the other bills with it? Why could it not ask for unanimous consent on the other bills? It did not ask. It picked one, Bill C-73. As far we are concerned, as the argument put by my House leader here today showed, this motion is irregular and out of order because it still contains an item on which this House has passed judgment. This House has decided that C-73 would be passed. This

House has decided that it should be adopted and it is now in the Senate.

The motion is weakened by having Bill C–73 taken out of it.

We have C–78, an act to establish a federal environment assessment process. We just had an eloquent speech by my colleague, the member for Davenport. Those remarks I endorse. We have had a long process. I could give all the dates: from June 18, 1990, when it was first read to the House, until its referral to a special committee on October 30, 1990.

I then come to Bill C–82, an act amend an act to provide for the appointment of a port warden for the harbour of Quebec and an act to amend and consolidate the acts relating to the office of port warden for the harbour of Montreal, and so on. This bill was first read in the House on September 26, 1990. We went on to second reading. On November 5 it was referred to a legislative committee. It was reported to the House without amendment on November 22. The bill was concurred in at report stage on December 14, read the third time and passed by this House December 14, 1990. That has been dealt with.

Here we have a government which says that because of its friends on the other side in the Senate, proper study was not given to this bill. It wants us to start over again. I just do not understand. This bill has been passed and adopted. It would seem to me kind of a heavy procedure for the government to reinstate that with a Royal Recommendation and do it all again. It is not our doing, it is the government's doing.

I want to talk in the few minutes remaining about Bill C–85, a bill which touches the official languages; a subject I find very important. The purpose of the bill was to allow for certain employees' pensions and labour relations in connection with the transfer of airports in Canada and that is a very important bill that we should talk—

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): When we resume, the hon. member for Ottawa–Vanier will have 11 minutes left.

It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock.

The House took recess at 1 p.m.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

CORBY'S DISTILLERY

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my disappointment at the decision made by Hiram Walker Allied to close its Corby's distillery facility at Corbyville, Ontario, in my riding.

Corby's will continue to employ its 170 person staff until September 30 of this year, when the plant and the facility will close down completely. This plant has been a well respected pillar of the Quinte region's corporate community for 132 years. It is deeply regrettable that the rather dramatic market shifts have resulted in this unfortunate business decision. Corby's unparalleled tradition of product excellence and community service as a large employer and generous corporate citizen will be sorely missed in our area.

Although times have been tough for all of us lately, I know that all members will share with me in the hope that we will not see more Canadians continue to lose jobs and go through the suffering and shock that these Corby's employees are now experiencing.

* * *

CFB SHILO

Mr. Lee Clark (Brandon—Souris): Mr. Speaker, I want to state clearly to this House that I am strongly opposed to any proposal which may exist at any level to either downsize or close CFB Shilo. Should the German army decide not to renew its training contract at Shilo or should National Defence Headquarters recommend the relocation of any of the present personnel, Canadian units currently stationed elsewhere in Canada or at Lahr, Germany, should be relocated to Shilo in order to maintain the strength of the base.

As CFB Shilo is the principal army base between London, Ontario and Calgary, the strength of this base must be maintained to ensure that adequate forces are available to meet any emergency which may arise. In addition, the presence of the base and the civilian jobs which it has created make an immense economic contribution to western Manitoba, which our region cannot afford to lose.

In conclusion, I ask the Minister of National Defence to take whatever steps are necessary to protect the future of CFB Shilo and to reassure my constituents who understandably are worried by the speculative newspaper stories of recent days.

* * *

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the 30th anniversary of Amnesty International to pay tribute to this internationally respected human rights organization, with more than a million members in over 150 countries around the world and over 1,000 dedicated staff members.

Amnesty International's work on behalf of prisoners of conscience, over 42,000 since its founding in May 1961, and its tireless advocacy of an end to torture and the death penalty have been an inspiration to all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

As an Amnesty International representative said, after 30 years we are sure of only one thing: It is now much harder for governments to cover up their crimes and avoid paying the political price.

[*English*]

Amnesty International has noted that two out of three people are ruled by governments that torture and kill their citizens and that political opponents are held in more than half the countries in the world.

Therefore, in congratulating Amnesty International, let us rededicate ourselves to a world in which fundamental human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights, are respected in all countries throughout the globe.

[*Translation*]

TRIBUTE TO YVES LAFOREST

Mr. Clément Couture (Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, on May 15 this year, Mr. Yves Laforest, a resident of my riding, hoisted the flag of Quebec on the summit of Mount Everest. Mr. Laforest is the first Quebecer to reach the highest peak in the world, at 8,848 metres.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of my riding and on behalf of all Canadians, I wish to pay tribute to Mr. Laforest and congratulate him on his success.

Now that is an example of endurance and determination!

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, this is National Access Awareness Week in Canada.

Of the 3.3 million Canadians with disabilities, 60 per cent are unemployed.

Access Awareness Week is an attempt to have the public develop an appreciation of the problems associated with disabled people. Access to employment, access to education, access to better housing, access to recreation, access to a better quality of life; these things which most Canadians take for granted as their basic rights are often denied the disabled.

As Canadians, let us support National Access Awareness Week in our communities in order that disabled Canadians will be able to enjoy the same level of services that all other Canadians enjoy.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Al Johnson (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, the federal tax system is unfair in its treatment of the family. There are a number of family organizations which have made significant contributions toward strengthening the family. Their work demonstrates that the tax system discriminates against the family. Organizations such as the Vanier Institute, the Kids First Association, and *l'Alliance pour la justice fiscale* have made in depth studies of different aspects of the tax system and have

found that there are rules and regulations that provide disincentives to family life, to marriage and to home care for children.

The Prime Minister and our government are committed to reviewing our policies in relation to the family.

I would therefore urge the government to work with these organizations and to use local networks, such as the Family Life Education Council of Calgary, in developing a fair, effective and efficient tax system that treats all families equally and enables them to make the choices that best meet their particular needs.

* * *

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): "To freedom." Those words resulted in seven years imprisonment for two Portuguese students, which prompted Peter Benenson to found Amnesty International 30 years ago today.

The original objectives of getting the right to freedom of speech and belief for all, and the aims of getting the release of prisoners of conscience who have not used or advocated violence, having fair and prompt trials, and stopping torture or execution of prisoners have all been upheld.

Now, with more than 1 million members in over 150 countries, Amnesty International has established political neutrality and global credibility while investigating some 42,000 cases, from the killing of children in South America, to beatings in Sri Lanka, torture in Senegal, mass imprisonment in Chad and executions in Iran. In 1990 alone, 72 delegations were sent to 49 countries, including the Middle East, Nepal and Romania.

Without Amnesty International, the tyrants would be celebrating. Instead, we celebrate and look for the day when all people have basic human rights.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ADVERTISING

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Mr. Speaker, Labatt's Breweries announced recently that it was making major changes in its advertising strategy. Instead of using sex to sell its products, Labatt intends to appeal to people's intelligence. Mr. Speaker, it is high time our breweries stopped insulting the intelligence of Canadians by associating sex with the consumption of alcohol. I hope that other big companies will take the same approach and that soon we will no longer see the kind of advertising that exploits female physical attributes for purely commercial gain.

* * *

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, today VIA Rail is being hauled before the courts for thumbing its nose at the Official Languages Act and language of service provisions. For thirteen years, VIA Rail has been the target of comments, recommendations, exhortations, and warnings, all of which were meant to arouse the corporation out of its lethargy.

Since 1978, in the Ottawa-Montreal-Toronto triangle, the Commissioner for Official Languages has received many complaints about bilingual service at VIA Rail. That is why today, the Commissioner saw it as his duty to file a notice of motion with the Federal Court of Canada, ordering VIA Rail to ensure that the public is able to communicate and receive services in either official language, where there is significant demand for the use of that language.

It is also high time VIA Rail implemented the provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms with respect to official languages, by making sure that all Canadians can depend on both official languages being used upon arrival in the stations, in security, ticket collecting, general announcements and security services on board trains and in the stations, and in all other communications between VIA Rail employees and travellers.

Mr. Speaker, VIA Rail, or what is left of it, is still too important to Canadians to be allowed to neglect its linguistic duties. It is time VIA Rail did something about this. Otherwise, the courts will have to order the corporation to behave in a way that is more Canadian and more respectful of our Constitution.

S. O. 31

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, an editorial in this Monday's *Globe and Mail*, if accurate, poses some real challenges to Canada's new defence minister. Mr. Dale Grant states that "Few Canadians know that in terms of personnel versus the size of the defence budget, Canada has perhaps the most expensive armed forces in the world."

It has more generals than tanks, more officers than privates. I understand that the fragmentation of the military has led to this excessive management growth. Today there are nine lieutenant-generals, who get $131,000; there are 29 major-generals, who get $100,000 each; 84 brigadier-generals who get $94,000; 3,700 majors who get $64,000 and 7,500 captains who get $51,000 each.

If I were the minister I would cut, cut, cut this bulbous management team to an affordable and sensible number.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, when does construction of buildings increase by 40 per cent in Seville, 169 per cent in Algiers, and 200 per cent in Buenos Aires? When do furniture costs increase by 500 per cent in Japan over four years?

It occurs when External Affairs is involved in overseas projects.

• (1410)

It is not a new development. The Canadian embassy in Washington had a projected price-tag of $28 million in 1984, but it opened in 1988 with a final cost of $82 million.

What could be the reason for these over-runs? The government says that currency fluctuations are to blame. Not so. For example, the Argentinian austral fell against our dollar an astonishing 155,000 per cent. These costs should be declining and not galloping out of control.

Meanwhile, 50 per cent of our diplomats and headquarters staff are over-spending their hospitality budgets, with little concern for cost accountability.

The total cost over-run of these five projects is an astonishing $102 million. External Affairs has become a sink-hole of taxpayers' money. I call on the minister to get all of her houses in order.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, some people over the last few days have been trying to build a controversy between the Prime Minister and the NDP Government of Ontario.

This is not the kind of bickering that Canadians want to hear. The time for various levels of government bashing each other is past. The 1990s, if Canada is to survive economically and politically, will have to stress compromise and common ground.

Right now, Canadians are struggling in a sea of debt. That debt has come to mean high taxes, and high taxes are sucking the life out of the middle class.

The only way around this is to reduce government spending, government deficits and, ultimately, the taxes that all governments impose.

I rise to ask everybody to chill out, tone down the rhetoric, and concentrate on our common enemy.

There is no question what that is. It is called debt.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold): Mr. Speaker, in the past week or so, I had discussions with representatives of the Canadian steel industry and of the Canadian trucking industry.

It is no secret that they are going through some very difficult times.

I am dismayed, and so are many of my constituents, to learn that Canada Post has awarded a huge contract for post office box keys to a U.S. company. It seems to me that if the postal boxes can be made in Canada, it is equally possible for the keys to be made in Canada, thereby protecting jobs and our industries which, as I said, are in difficulty and distress.

I deplore this type of action by the Canadian government. In addition to the two industries which I have mentioned, my area is suffering from cross-border shopping.

It is with a great amount of regret that I see that the Neilson chocolate company—all the kids eat chocolate bars—is sending loads of chocolate bars to the United States where they are sold 20 cents cheaper per unit.

I urge the government to consider some of its actions and to provide economic relief for my area and my riding.

* * *

HUMANITARIAN AWARD

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I inform the House and also congratulate you on receiving the Humanitarian Award on Sunday from the Jewish community in Vancouver.

It was given to you for the work you have done over the years in assisting Jewish immigrants from Soviet Russia and the reuniting of many families and giving of new hope for many more.

It is interesting to note that from the original one's and two's, hundreds of thousands of Jews are now leaving Russia primarily to make new lives and homes in Israel, and also elsewhere.

It is also interesting to note this event was in the same week as the miraculous air-lift of 15,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel. This completed Operation Moses, which was started over three years ago.

Congratulations on your well deserved award.

* * *

CITY EXPRESS AIRLINES

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, in June 1986, Rick Brennan of *The Windsor Star* filed a request under access to information to get the safety records from the Ministry of Transport for City Express Airlines. He got these documents only after a delay of almost five years recently the longest delay in the history of the Access to Information Act.

The request did not relate to personal information about an individual. Instead, it was about the record of safety of an airline used by thousands of people every week. Surely they and the public generally had a right to know promptly if the airline was meeting federal government safety standards and, if not, what the government was doing to enforce them.

The material that was finally released last week showed that City Express did not have a good record. More troubling, the information appeared to show that the ministry was not as vigorous as it should have been in ensuring that the airline lived up to these standards.

Also troubling was the admission by the lawyer for the Department of Justice that she did not vigorously pursue efforts to have this information released. This situation shows a need for a review of the existing law. It also shows the need for the government to begin actively applying the existing law.

Mr. Brennan and the *Windsor Star* are to be commended for their persistent efforts over the past five years, but these efforts should not have been necessary. The travelling public and all Canadians deserve better.

* * *

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister in charge of constitutional reform is saying that he wants to involve the aboriginal people in the special committee next fall on trying to get a consensus on the Constitution. I think that is a very good move. I would like to see the minister elaborate in the House as to in what way or how he is going to involve the aboriginal people on that committee.

I also want to say that this establishes a bit of a precedent in that if we have the aboriginal people on the committee, I think we should expand it into a true constituent assembly and involve all kinds of other people that under-represented in our present system, such as visible minorities, the women of this country, poor Canadians and many other Canadians who are under-represented in the kind of political system that we have. If we are to have a true national consensus on the Constitution of this country, we can achieve that by having a truly national constituent assembly.

AST CANADA INC.

Mr. Harry Chadwick (Bramalea—Gore—Malton): Mr. Speaker, I am always pleased to learn that a new company is opening in my riding, but the recent opening of AST Canada Inc. had particular significance not only to the riding but to the rest of Canada.

AST Research Inc., a leading North American manufacturer of high-performance personal computers, has maintained a sales presence in Canada since 1986. AST's fiscal 1990 revenues surpassed $.5 billion U.S.

AST Research Inc. proves that North American companies are staying in Canada and are continuing to invest in our economy. The recent opening of AST Canada Inc. is a reflection of the confidence in the global importance of Canadian business. The fact that AST Canada Inc. is fully staffed by Canadians indicates the depth of the commitment AST has to Canada.

With expansion continuing to include regional offices in Montreal and Vancouver, AST is demonstrating the kind of positive attitude toward partnership that is necessary as the world and Canada adapt to an increasingly global market.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister.

The vast majority of Canadians do not approve of the excessively high deficit Bob Rae has inflicted on Ontario. However, we believe the people of Ontario will be able to deal with this problem three years and four months from now, when an election is held and they will be able to elect a Liberal government in Ontario once again.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: I therefore want to ask the Acting Prime Minister why the Prime Minister raised this matter in Asia? Why is he washing Canada's dirty linen in Japan? Why is he giving the impression that a large part of Canada does not want foreign investment?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think it is quite unfortunate that the hon. Leader of the Opposition wants to dwell on this particular issue because he knows as well as anyone else that the public finances of any nation are of important interest to Japan, which invests dollars in Canada. The fact of the matter is that there are concerns about it.

Just to set the record straight, and I want to assure the hon. member and other members of the House, the Prime Minister has been in Japan promoting Canada, all regions of Canada: Ontario, western Canada, the Atlantic region, the north, Quebec.

If there was any suggestion over the fact that the Japanese were not interested in the public finances, all one has to do is read the *Globe and Mail* this morning which says in an article by Edith Terry—

Mr. McCurdy: Who is she?

Mr. Mazankowski: She happens to be in Japan with the *Globe and Mail*. She is not sitting here, making assumptions, guesses and interpretations. This is what she said: "However, participants at the summit said the Japanese had raised the issue of Canada's public finances before Mr. Mulroney arrived at the meeting". So, obviously his comment was appropriate.

• (1420)

I think what is most important is to summarize the words of Mr. d'Aquino, who said: "I have not heard the Prime Minister say anything that was not terribly bullish".

We have just heard a comprehensive speech, an excellent speech. To suggest there was anything partisan in it would be searching, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

REFUGEES

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, a lot of us in this House have had the occasion to visit refugee camps. There is nothing more tragic than the plight of a refugee, someone who is homeless and too often without hope.

Why did the Prime Minister promise while in Hong Kong that Canada could take in more refugees when the fact is that the budget for settling refugees in Canada has been cut by 20 per cent?

Does the Prime Minister not realize that it is cruel to raise the hopes of people who have neither a home nor a country, just to use them for a photo opportunity?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the record of Canada in terms of immigration and in terms of welcoming refugees to Canada is more than a photo opportunity.

The hon. member should remember and look at the figures because he presided, with his colleagues, over a government that was welcoming people into Canada at the rate of maybe 70,000 people a year a few years ago.

This government increased our commitment to immigrants and we now welcome to Canada over 200,000 people a year, and that is a record that the hon. member should recognize.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, after what happened in Hong Kong and Japan, will the Acting Prime Minister send an urgent telegram to the Prime Minister and ask him to make a real contribution to Canada's reputation abroad—by coming home right now?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, that is a suggestion similar to that which the hon. Leader of the Opposition made when we sent our troops to the Persian Gulf to fight a war. He said: "Bring them home". We did not do it then and we will not do it now.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Last Sunday, more than 5,000 Canadians in the Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands gathered to make themselves heard and demand that the government put an end to the depressed state of the economy in their region. According to Statistics Canada, the unemployment rate in the area is over 27 per cent. When will the government table economic policies that will give some hope and create employment for these people who want to stay in their region? When?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, my answer will be very short. I would ask the hon. member to listen carefully to what people say after my visit to the Gaspé Thursday morning.

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, we are very anxious to hear what the minister has to say. However, considering his record since 1984, I don't think there is much hope.

The Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands rank second among the regions in Canada with the highest unemployment rates. So again, my question is: When will the government introduce policies to deal with this? We don't care about the minister's photo opportunities. We want concrete measures. When are we going to create durable jobs in this region, the most beautiful region in this country?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, again, I would ask the hon. member to listen carefully to what we say on Thursday to the people of the Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands. I met these people 8 months ago. They made some proposals, and I intend to give them an answer on Thursday. The hon. member will see how we deal with problems. That part of the country was just as beautiful in 1984, and we know how you dealt with the Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands at the time.

* * *

[*English*]

TRADE

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. We have all been witnessing on television today the clumsy attempt at damage control. What Tom d'Aquino said yesterday the embassy officials are getting him to deny today. What Mr. Nukazawa said yesterday they are giving him the script to deny today. Having bad-mouthed Ontario on this touted mission to increase trade and development in Canada, having misread the collective minds of Japanese businessmen, and having behaved as a narrow political partisan, and having blamed the journalists for his negative comments about Ontario, are the Prime Minister and this government now prepared to apologize first of all to his hosts for misreading the minds of Japanese

businessmen and to the people of Canada and the people of Ontario?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, if there is any apology necessary it should come from the premier of Ontario who has now acknowledged the fact—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Mazankowski: —that the Prime Minister is out there promoting Canada, all parts and regions of Canada, all provinces of Canada, and it is unfortunate that the opposition fails to recognize, as I quoted from *The Globe and Mail* this morning, that in fact the Japanese happen to be concerned about the fiscal problems in Canada, the deficits, and that was acknowledged in the report by Edith Terry who said participants at the summit said the Japanese had raised the issue of Canada's public finances before Mr. Mulroney arrived.

That is not only the public finances of Ontario but indeed all of Canada and of course the hon. member should recognize that.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the Deputy Prime Minister. It is a matter of record that this Prime Minister has been bad-mouthing Ontario in Hong Kong and in Japan. As Premier Bob Rae has pointed out—

Some hon. members: Oh, Oh.

Mr. Rodriguez: Now you are listening. I have their attention, Mr. Speaker. As Premier Bob Rae said, when the Prime Minister is travelling abroad he is not a Conservative, he is the Prime Minister of all of Canada. In the Prime Minister's own speech in this House during the debate on the Speech from the Throne, he pointed out that it is time to move beyond special interests. Now is the time to speak for the national interests.

In this spirit, can the government give the assurance that the Prime Minister will not bad-mouth any province on any future trips, not make bad jokes about refugees, will not practise mind-reading in public, and will act more statesmanlike?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is really unfortunate that the NDP gets very sensitive when they are subjected to a bit of criticism. For example, the treasurer of the province of Ontario went to Wall Street and he got a blast for his budget. While we are talking about criticism, in a recent interview, Mr. Atkinson, the chief economist of the Bank of Montreal said there would be a tremendous price to pay for the fiscal and budgetary policies of the province of Ontario.

• (1430)

I quote what CTV said: "So Bob Rae's budget is costing people who borrow money for mortgages a half a point a year". Mr. Atkinson replied: "That's the estimate we are putting on it".

Members of the New Democratic Party cannot hide the fact that the budget that was brought down by the province of Ontario is an economic disaster. They should accept that fact, accept reality, and get on with the business of running the province.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, it is to be noted that the Deputy Prime Minister did not answer the questions I posed to him.

[*Translation*]

We know that the Prime Minister intends to continue travelling in the coming weeks.

Can we have the assurance that in his coming travels, the Prime Minister will set aside his partisan comments and positively represent the interests of all parts of Canada?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Again, Mr. Speaker, I have had a chance to read and listen to what the Prime Minister has been saying. This is what Mr. d'Aquino stated.

Some hon. members: Oh, Oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. minister.

Mr. Mazankowski: It is May 27 and I understand that hon. members quoted quite freely yesterday, so perhaps I might be given the same privilege today.

Mr. d'Aquino said: "The only thing that I heard at lunch was the Prime Minister making a very strong pitch

like I just heard him make today as to why Canada is a place that the Japanese should be spending more time both investing in and why we should be having much closer economic and political relations.

I think that is spoken like a true Prime Minister and I am proud of him.

* * *

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology.

The minister knows that the government's high dollar and high interest policy has been devastating for the Canadian steel industry. I want to ask him specifically today about the thousands of jobs reported to be sacrificed at Algoma Steel in Sault Ste. Marie, which would destroy the livelihood of thousands of families and devastate the entire community.

What specific assistance is the minister prepared to give today to save jobs and help this community?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague is well aware, we have been part of discussions that involve the company Algoma Steel, the union, the shareholders of Algoma Steel, Defasco, as well as the bankers in the province of Ontario, to try to assist in ways of seeking adjustment to the company so that it can continue in business.

I am sure my hon. friend is well aware of the very serious financial conditions of Algoma Steel. He is also very much aware that if the federal government provides specific monetary assistance to the company, it will very seriously affect its capacity to sell into the United States market.

That option is not open to us, but we are talking to the company to try to assist in ways that will allow it to move into a new regime, possibly helping out in the training and retraining of individuals who would lose their jobs.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Labour.

The minister knows that there have already been thousands of jobs lost at Algoma Steel and there are plans for further lay-offs. Many of them are older workers.

Is the Minister of Labour willing to give a commitment today to designate Algoma Steel workers eligible for the Program for Older Workers Adjustment so that they can be provided with an adequate and respectable early pension?

The chances of these older workers finding jobs in today's recession are almost nil. Would the minister give a commitment today to designate this industry and this community for assistance under the Program for Older Workers Adjustment?

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend knows that POWA, to which he is referring, has specific rules. A committee made up of representatives from Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada is actually meeting and will make a recommendation to both ministers. I hope that recommendation will be favourable.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, since January 1, 1989, Ontario has lost 144,000 or 14 per cent of its manufacturing jobs. Employment is down 19 per cent in auto parts, 21 per cent in steel, 26 per cent in machinery, and 33 per cent in furniture. Because of this government's deliberate policies, many of these jobs are lost forever.

When will the minister responsible for industry help Ontario export something other than jobs?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that my hon. friend speak to the person immediately to his front and left. He would find out that I am actively helping Ontario companies find new business through trade opportunities in the Middle East.

The member for Etobicoke North and I were on a trade mission. He has just very kindly sent to me a report that he wrote for *The Financial Post* on the trade mission. He neglected to mention my name in it, unfortunately.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I just wanted anyone who read that article to know that I was the minister who was leading that trade mission, helping Ontario companies, helping Quebec companies, helping companies from Newfoundland right across Canada to British Columbia

find business in a very important part of the world, a part of the world where we can find good new business.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, I suppose the minister is suggesting that he should stay abroad and bring the Prime Minister home. Perhaps that would help.

On November 24, 1988, the Prime Minister in Toronto promised: "to ensure innovative and generous adjustment and retraining programs with the chief priority being the well-being of the individual Canadian worker and his family". Yet today tens of thousands of unemployed Canadians are waiting for retraining.

When will this government honour this promise? When will this government start retraining these unemployed Canadians so that they can be part of Canada's future and not part of its past?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): It is a bit ironic, Mr. Speaker. That member's party in this House fought Bill C-21. It targeted over $800 million which we wanted to invest in the work force of Canada and is exactly the kind of thing the member is calling for.

I can tell him that the labour force development strategy board is having its first meetings yesterday and today. It has been entrusted with finding ways where we can apply these hundreds of millions of dollars and invest in our work force so as to improve its skills and performance.

What he is asking for is already happening. He should come of age.

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, the Acting Prime Minister was quoting Mr. d'Aquino in support of the Prime Minister. Of course Mr. d'Aquino was part of the delegation. It was the Prime Minister who said: "You dance with the one who brought you".

My question is for the minister in charge of national unity. The premier of Ontario has said that the Prime Minister should speak on behalf of all Canadians and not as leader of the Conservative Party.

Does the minister believe that the words and actions of the Prime Minister overseas are a contribution to his efforts to strengthen national unity?

• (1440)

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Yes, Mr. Speaker, although it is obviously important that Canadians who are interested in national unity and in the strength of the economy read what the Prime Minister said and not simply listen to the cast put upon his words in this House.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

Millions of Canadians have heard about the Prime Minister's morbid premonition and of his efforts to solicit the votes of 4,000 Vietnamese refugees. They have also seen him bad-mouth Ontario in Hong Kong and Japan, then blame the press, and then have the gall to ask the premier of Ontario for an apology.

Is it appropriate for this man who has so obviously lost control of himself to be in charge of a country?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member that there is absolutely nothing wrong with the province of Ontario or the people of Ontario. What is wrong is that the Government of Ontario is mortally flawed in its attempt to deal with the pressing economic issues.

Quite frankly Ontario happens to be, through the leadership of its government, the odd province out. At a time when all governments, with the exception of Ontario, are attempting to deal with the fundamental problems affecting our economy, namely inflation and deficit reduction, it is going in the other direction. That does not augur well and does not look well in the eyes of international investors.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

Two weeks ago Canada's defence minister announced major cuts in defence expenditures and set off a time bomb for more to come. It is called mass destruction.

All regions of the country that have bases, thousands of military personnel, the Royal Canadian Legion and millions of Canadians are worried about the future of the Canadian forces and the great name they have made for Canada around the world.

Why has the government adopted such irrational cuts to the Canadian forces at a time when it has no defence policy? It seems determined to destroy a large part of one of the great institutions of our Canadian fabric, namely the Canadian forces.

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is confused about two different issues.

The announcements that were made several weeks ago by the Minister of National Defence were the reallocation of our existing spending and a reduction in some of the procurement programs which were no longer considered to be priorities, to fit within our existing budget over the coming years.

The second issue, which we are now addressing, is the longer term defence policy review to look at the future roles and the future needs of our Armed Forces throughout this country.

I want to remind the member that the objective is that we will continue to have an Armed Forces, men and women who are professionals, well equipped and are relevant to tomorrow's world. That is the commitment we have and that we will continue to fulfil.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, it sounds as if the minister has backed off and there are going to be no base cuts as announced.

Canadian forces bases cuts would take place in the regions of the country already hard hit economically by the government's own created in Canada recession. Mass destruction is no way to reward the Canadian forces for their outstanding contribution both inside and outside Canada.

Why will the government not bring in a defence policy paper and allow discussion on this issue before it implements its mass destruction of the Canadian forces and the economy of the Canadian countryside? Are there going to be cuts or are there not?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend knows quite well that the work is ongoing. It has involved many people having input, many experts in defence areas, to discuss the future of our Armed Forces.

I think the hon. member also recognizes that there is too much infrastructure at the moment for the size of the force and the composition of the force, and that we will be looking at making changes and adjustments to the costs in order that we can maintain a capable, efficient Armed Forces for the future.

All these decisions will be made by cabinet in due course with opportunities, we anticipate, for the public to review and be involved in this process as we continue through the coming months.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

On May 14, the minister released what she then said was a comprehensive and accurate report on the Al-Mashat affair, stating that: "no conspiracies by any individual or government agency, either Canadian or foreign, was involved in this case".

How, then, does the minister reconcile that statement, the fact that Mr. John Burns, an FBI agent, travelled twice to Vienna to meet with Mr. Al-Mashat during the time his application to come to Canada was being processed?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, first of all I stand by the statement I made. We in my department are unaware of any connection between the FBI and Dr. Al-Mashat.

There certainly was no attempt by any foreign power to influence any decision on our part or on the processing of the immigration application.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I note in passing that the minister did not deny that such visits took place. If they did take place, it is

clearly a contradiction of the report she issued on March 14.

In keeping with the minister's commitment made to this House about full disclosure of relevant information in the Al-Mashat case and given that the standing committee on external affairs is having its organizational meeting this afternoon, will she agree that there can be no real inquiry until we have a full and proper production in public of all relevant documents?

Will the minister agree today to release all those documents, the list of which I sent to her office this morning, so that we can have a proper and full and honest inquiry?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the process so far, including the statement made by my hon. colleague and myself, has been an honest one. I think it is regrettable the hon. member has made allegations that are totally unfounded.

Let me say as well that we have agreed there will be an open and honest inquiry. We are going through documents and we are looking at the privacy provisions and at security provisions. We have said from the beginning that we would produce all of the people and all of the relevant materials to the extent that is possible.

I have given this House my commitment on that from the very beginning, and the hon. member knows it.

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the government House leader. I have in my hand a whole list—

An hon. member: What is your credit rating?

Mr. Riis: I will come back to the comments made by the Minister responsible for Canadian Unity and some of the cat-calling he has been doing in a minute. I have a number of quotes that he has made, that the Deputy Prime Minister has made, that the Minister responsible for Canadian Unity has made, and that the Prime Minister has made, all calling for a non-partisan approach to the House of Commons.

The Deputy Prime Minister was screaming a few moments ago to my colleague about his concerns regarding one of the provincial governments. Is this what the government House leader means by a non-partisan approach to the House of Commons?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): No, Mr. Speaker. What I meant was that we should adopt as a practice that which was the practice in this House of Commons being an opportunity for members to ask questions, not make accusations, not make representations.

I would ask that we all take a look at Beauchesne's sixth edition, citation 407, which describes how Speakers have suggested we behave. If we follow that, those watching in the galleries and those watching TV would have a lot more respect for all us than they apparently do.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, this is an interesting comment coming from a member of the government who not long ago rushed your chair with their rule books in their hands and brought the House to—

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. member has a question, would he please put it to the minister?

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Deputy Prime Minister and concerns his response to my hon. colleague.

Would he not have to admit that the Rae government introduced a number of policies in response to the fact that the fiscal and monetary policies of this government have resulted in rack and ruin in the province of Ontario and right across Canada?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member gives me an opportunity to explain to the Canadian people just what is going on with respect to spending across the country.

• (1450)

The Government of Canada has kept its program expenditures increase to an annualized rate of about 3.7 per cent since we have been in office. The Government of Ontario introduced a budget that provides a 13.4 per cent annualized increase in one year. That is inconsistent with the co-ordinated policy that is needed in this

country if we are going to get at the root causes of inflation and fiscal consolidation and bring about strength and durability in the Canadian economy. That is what we are all trying to achieve.

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

Will the minister advise the House and the people of Canada if he and the Prime Minister have now absolutely and without question rejected and ruled out the concept of a constituent assembly other than this House of Commons and the Senate?

If he has, will he give this House his undertaking that the recommendations of this Parliament of Canada will be accepted by the government without modification that the whole matter will be dealt with in an open way and that there will be no changes made behind closed doors.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think most of us who went through the Meech Lake experience will agree we are past the stage in which we want to have proposals put forward that have to be accepted without modification.

I certainly will be interested in the recommendations of the Beaudoin–Edwards committee. I think the whole House will be, and I will be looking for ways in which those can be applied.

With regard to a constituent assembly, the view of the government is known. We believe that it would be unfortunate to put aside a parliamentary system which by and large has worked in the country.

However, we recognize that this system has not earned the respect it requires. What we are proposing for the joint committee that would be established and operating in the summer and in the fall is a parliamentary base composed of members of this House and the other place, but using such elements of a constituent assembly or such other means that reach out to the people of Canada to ensure that we have the broadest possible participation in a process that will recommend the decisions that should reshape this country.

NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State.

This is National Access Awareness Week and the theme is "Access is a Right". However, for blind people accessibility is obviously not a right.

The only money provided by this government through the CNIB for Braille services, talking books and teacher training for the blind is less than $50,000 a year.

Does the minister really believe that $50,000 out of a federal budget of $160 billion this year is fair to the blind people of Canada?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I would like to briefly refer my hon. colleague opposite to the statement that we made in the Speech from the Throne.

We will be coming forth with a comprehensive package of measures dealing with accessibility for all disabled in this country: accessibility to housing, to employment, to transport, and to recreation.

The program is well in its definition phases and I hope to be able to make an announcement in the near future.

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, people are sick and tired of patronizing statements. What disabled people need is not sympathy. They need support.

In the United States, the federal government has taken the lead in the production and distribution of Braille and talking books. Is it not about time the government got serious and provided this essential service to blind Canadians?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the government is working very closely with the disabled to elaborate this five-year strategy that will be announced.

I have been dealing with them on a regular basis. The plan is coming along very well, and we will be able to announce it in the very near future.

AID

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for External Relations.

The United Nations development report is all about global human development. The 1991 report released last week states that the quality of Canada's aid program is poor. To quote its principal author, Mahbub ul Haq, "it is a cause for concern that only 5 per cent of Canadian aid ends up in the basic human survival programs".

Given that the first priority of Canada's aid program as stated in the minister's own strategy paper is poverty alleviation, can the minister assure us that all new trends in CIDA will not benefit Canadian contractors as a priority but will directly address and correct Canada's poor record in alleviating global poverty?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations and Minister of State (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reassure my colleague that the strategy defined in "Sharing Our Future" is still what guides our aid programs and sets out our policies.

Therefore I can assure her that our programs are still directed to offsetting poverty and especially to furthering social development. In this regard, I would tell my colleague that CIDA estimates approximately 40 per cent of its funds have an impact on people's social development in health, food, education and even job creation that in the long run can help women and families.

I can assure her that we will continue to direct our programs toward those objectives.

[*English*]

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

The United Nations development report says, contrary to the minister, that Canada's aid program failed in adequately alleviating poverty and instead was focused too much on the provision of self-serving economic development and technical assistance. It is well known that direct poverty alleviation is best implemented overseas through our non-government organizations and their Third World partners.

Will the minister assure us today that she will cancel all budgetary cutbacks to Canadian non-government organizations and instead provide them a growing proportion of funding according to their program capacity?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations and Minister of State (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)): Mr. Speaker, I would again reassure my colleague about the orientation of our programs. We have clearly stated that all our Canadian partners, be they non-government organizations, institutions or even the private sector, helped us deliver the kind of aid required for Third World development.

I would also tell my colleague that of course non-governmental organizations are essential and do outstanding work, but I also believe that the private sector too can contribute to the economic growth of developing countries. Our partners in all Third World countries ask us to develop employment and thus contribute to their people's welfare.

For this, we will continue to use all our Canadian partners in the development of Third World countries.

* * *

[*English*]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, the Japanese government has now officially apologized to those brave Canadians who were interned during the Second World War. In the wake of this action I have a question for the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

What does this government plan to do to compensate those Canadians for the suffering they went through at the hands of their captors? Will this government help those veterans with their claim for some financial compensation to go along with the apology that we have heard today?

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, what happened yesterday was certainly an extraordinary event for Canada and the Canadian people and particularly the Hong Kong veterans in receiving an apology from that government after 45 years. It would certainly have to be termed a diplomatic success by any standard.

Nothing can ever really compensate the POWs, the Hong Kong veterans who spent four years in the prisoner of war camps of the Japanese. It is for this very reason

that Canadian governments, not only this government but previous governments, have gone a long way to help try to compensate those people. In fact, we have paid over $50 million in prisoner of war compensation to those 2,000 people who were taken prisoner back in December 1941.

Nonetheless, there is a claim before the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations put forward by the veterans groups themselves. They have asked us as a non-government organization to refrain from direct entrance into that particular debate.

* * *

• (1500)

PORT OF HALIFAX

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Transport.

A year ago, officials from the Halifax-Dartmouth Port Development Commission warned the government that unless action was taken to address the imbalance between Canada and the U.S. rail rates, the port of Halifax would be in deep trouble.

In December of last year, the same organization presented a list of options for the government to consider.

What is the government going to do to protect the port of Halifax? What action is it going to take to ensure that the port remains viable and that the employment levels remain viable as well?

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, I met with members from the port of Halifax last week. I will be in Halifax on Thursday and will be at the port at that time. We will continue to work with all those people involved to ensure the viability of the port of Halifax.

Points of Order

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of parliamentary delegations from the Republic of Bulgaria, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Romania, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: I wish also to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of members of the Bundestag Committee on Nutrition, Agriculture and Forestry, led by Mr. Siegfried Hornung, Chairman.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: I wish also to draw to the attention of members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. George McLeod, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health of the Province of Saskatchewan.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

REQUEST FOR MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, in light of the response of the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs to a question in the House during Question Period and as a member of the Beaudoin-Edwards committee which is sitting until ten o'clock each night making deliberations on a report, would the minister be willing to make a ministerial statement on constituent assemblies tomorrow morning?

Mr. Speaker: I am not at all sure that is a point of order. The hon. member, no doubt, can speak directly with the minister.

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

During every Question Period backbenchers from all sides want an opportunity to ask questions concerning constituents back home and the concerns they have.

I am wondering if you would check the "blues" today of the hon. member for Nickel Belt who had six sentences of preamble, making no representation, asking no question. I think you will find in Beauchesne's that is out of order. Would you kindly check?

EXTENSION OF QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, concerning the point made by my hon. friend and in the spirit of the question, I want to say right now that an opportunity should be provided to a number of people who do not make Question Period.

May I suggest that starting tomorrow we extend Question Period for an extra half hour to allow more people to participate in this process?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I just want to set the record straight that during discussions last year with both parties in terms of rule changes, I offered opposition members an extra 15 minutes a day. They turned it down.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to explain that what the government House leader has said is not true. He should have explained that it was part of a large package.

I would like to say that what he has indicated—if people are listening in or watching they will get the wrong impression—was never offered. I am suggesting that starting today I am prepared to offer at least half an hour, if not more, to add to Question Period every day.

ALLOCATION OF TIME DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I heard the parliamentary secretary make his suggestion that somehow there was something wrong with Question Period when members on the other side could not get recognized for questions.

Part of the reason why they and the rest of us do not get recognized for questions every day is the windy answers we get from ministers of the Crown.

I want to make it very clear that the Deputy Prime Minister gave a four-minute answer to the question of the Leader of the Opposition. I have never heard so much drivel in four minutes in this House in my life.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I want to address that point of order very quickly by suggesting to the House that yes, from time to time answers on this side are too long and from time to time questions from that side are too long.

Perhaps what we can do later at our committee this afternoon is come up with a solution that would be acceptable to both sides of this House.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, in order to facilitate the concerns of the members opposite, perhaps they would concur with the suggestion which has been made by my colleague, the leader of the NDP in this House.

Perhaps we could extend, if there is consensus, this particular Question Period for another 10 or 15 minutes to give members on both sides an opportunity to ask more questions. I am sure members of my party would concur with that particular resolution.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I know we are usually chastised for negotiations on the floor of the House.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Cooper: I made a serious offer a couple of moments ago. We have a meeting of the management committee in 53 or 54 minutes. I hope to start on time. Perhaps at that time we can come up with a really good solution for all members of this House.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Chair could give some direction. There was a motion to seek unanimous consent of the House. I did not hear anybody deny that, so I am assuming that we are going ahead with a continuance of Question Period. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: I might be getting into pretty dangerous ground if I assume that.

The hon. member has indicated that there is a motion before the House to continue with Question Period. Is there agreement?

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: Yes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

WAYS AND MEANS

EXCISE ACT

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)) moved that a Ways and Means motion to amend the Excise Act and Excise Tax Act, laid upon the table on Friday, May 17, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

WAYS AND MEANS

TABLING OF NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I have the honour to lay upon the table a copy of a notice of a Ways and Means motion to amend the Income Tax Act and other legislation.

I ask, pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 83(2), that an Order of the Day be designated for the consideration of the said Ways and Means motion.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EXCISE TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. John McDermid (on behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance) moved that Bill C-10, an Act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Excise Act, be read the first time and ordered to be printed.

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

* * *

• (1510)

[*English*]

AERONAUTICS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Shirley Martin (for the Minister of Transport) moved that Bill C-5, an act to amend the Aeronautics Act and to amend an act to amend the Aeronautics Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise for the second reading debate on Bill C-5, namely an act to amend the Aeronautics Act, to amend an act to amend the Aeronautics Act. I hope that we do not have to soon put forward a further amendment to this act or else the title will be almost impossible to deal with.

As many hon. members will know, I was personally involved in the development of increased fines for aircraft noise violations, so I am particularly happy to speak to this bill today.

These amendments to the Aeronautics Act are being brought forward to update the existing legislation to deal with the issues that have arisen since the act was last amended in 1985. They will also provide the legislative framework for the implementation of undertakings of this government regarding penalties for noise violations and federal-provincial recommendations with regard to airport zoning.

First, I would like to address the section which will provide for an increased maximum for administrative monetary penalties. The 1985 amendments introduced the concept of administrative monetary penalties, which authorized the minister to assess a penalty to a maximum of $1,000 for the contravention of certain provisions. These provisions are designated in regulations which also established the maximum penalty with respect to each provision subject to the limit of $1,000 set out in the act.

In some cases this $1,000 limit has shown to be ineffective as a deterrent, especially with regard to the violation of noise abatement procedures at larger airports, such as Toronto's Lester B. Pearson International.

To overcome this problem, the act is being amended to increase the maximum penalties to $10,000 for corporations and $5,000 for individuals. Bill C-5 will allow the regulations to be amended, increasing the maximum penalty for those offences where such an increase is warranted.

Second, a new section is being added to the zoning provisions of the act, authorizing the minister to make agreements with local zoning authorities that will allow the local authority to make and enforce zoning regulations for local airports, using provincial procedures. This amendment is based on a recommendation of a federal-provincial working group on aerodrome zoning. It met to

explore methods of increasing federal-provincial co-operation in preparing and enforcing zoning regulations on lands surrounding airports.

Height zoning around aerodromes comes within the exclusive power of the federal government since it relates to aviation safety while the provinces have the authority to zone such areas for other purposes. Additionally, zoning procedures under the existing Aeronautics Act are more complicated and expensive than those followed by many provinces.

This amendment establishes a system whereby provincial zoning authorities will be able to make height zoning regulations apply to airports at a time and in a manner that will be in accordance with other zoning regulations applying to the area.

If the local authority does not wish to make such an agreement, it is not obligated to do so and the airport may eventually be zoned by the federal government if it comes within zoning policies.

Bill C-5 also proposes amendments to the Aeronautics Act to allow a more expeditious response to urgent safety recommendations.

Occasionally, a body investigating an aviation accident or incident will make a recommendation to the Minister of Transport that requires immediate implementation in the interests of aviation safety.

A new provision being added to the act will allow the minister to make interim orders that will give these recommendations an immediate mandatory effect, while the formal regulation is undergoing the normal process. The interim order will remain in effect until the regulation is completed, or for a maximum of two years.

Another provision of the bill we now have before us will give the minister a new power in the act to withhold, suspend or cancel a Canadian aviation document where, in the minister's opinion, the past record of the document holder justifies this action. This would also apply to any principal of a company which holds the document. This will enable the minister to deal appropriately with situations where an operator, whose certificate has been cancelled, attempts to continue his or her operation by starting a new company or by buying an existing one.

If the minister suspends or cancels a document on this basis, the decision can be reviewed by the Civil Aviation Tribunal.

Two new provisions expanding extraterritorial jurisdiction to the act are being added. The first will make all the provisions of the Aeronautics Act apply, as appropriate, to passengers as well as crew members on board Canadian aircraft operating outside Canada. For example, requiring the use of seatbelts.

The second provision will authorize the Governor in Council to make regulations implementing obligations that Canada has already accepted in principle in ratifying Article 3 "BIS" of what is known as the Chicago Convention, for instance, setting out requirements for aircraft that may be intercepted while over-flying another country's territory.

Last, but not least, Bill C-5, provides for amendments to the security provisions in the act to implement the system of establishing security measures to be carried out by air carriers and airport operators. Instead of security measures being "approved" by the minister, specific ministerial orders will establish those measures that must be carried out by the air carriers. This system will overcome certain legal objections to the earlier method.

Mr. Speaker, I have given only a broad picture of the amendments that Bill C-5 proposes to make to the Aeronautics Act. I look forward to discussing all these facets of the bill with my colleagues when we reach the committee stage.

I am confident that all hon. members will find these amendments worthy of their attention and allow us to bring this most helpful bill through the legislative process in an expeditious manner.

After consultation, I would like to move:

> That Bill C-5, an act to amend the Aeronautics Act and to amend an act to amend the Aeronautics Act, be referred, after second reading, to the Standing Committee on Transport.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The House has heard the motion moved by the hon. minister. All hon. members opposed to the motion please stand.

And fewer than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The motion is deemed to have been adopted, pursuant to Standing Order 73(3)(*b*).

Motion agreed to.

[*English*]

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the bill in front of us today, as the minister stated in her introduction, is to amend the Aeronautics Act.

Much of the bill is in a sense housekeeping. It is to correct various inconsistencies and dated provisions in the existing act. The important element in the act from the point of view of the official opposition is the provision for increased fines for noise violations, in particular, at Canadian airports.

• (1520)

This is an important provision. It is one that is long overdue. It is one which the opposition has been urging for some time in parallel with the proposal for improved noise monitoring systems at our major airports. Certainly the increase from $1,000 to $10,000 in way of a fine for noise violations is in itself a modest enough improvement, but it is at least a step in the right direction and we welcome that provision in the bill.

We also welcome the provision permitting the minister to make an interim order at any time when the safety of the public appears to be at risk.

At the present time, as the minister would know well, the procedures transport investigation bodies are required to follow has meant that the enforcement of regulations has been a long and time-consuming process, a process that has meant the delay of necessary corrective measures. We welcome a step that would enable the minister to proceed in a prompt and effective fashion to ensure that violations of the Aeronautics Act and particularly those relating to noise abatement are dealt with in an effective manner.

Having said that, I want to spend a moment on the question of the general problem of noise abatement and violations at our major airports, particularly at Pearson International Airport in metro Toronto. The impact of the airport in a variety of ways on the surrounding communities has been a constant problem which has continued for a number of years and it seems we are no closer to a solution than we were several years ago.

I say that because we on this side of the House, the Official Opposition, have attempted on a number of occasions to set forward alternative policies for the government to consider and implement as a means of ensuring that the health and the environmental safety of the members of the surrounding communities are not adversely affected by the operations of airports.

Some members will recall that members on this side took an initiative to form a task force under the direction and leadership of the member for York South—Weston and submitted a report to both community groups and to the government recommending a variety of steps to ensure that real progress would be made in coming to grips with the problems at Pearson International Airport.

In that connection, I would refer particularly to the recommendations of that report, which is now more than a year old, which related to various alternative airport use alleviating the heavy pressures on Pearson International Airport. The recommendations with regard to the safe and effective use of the total airport facilities in the Toronto area included an assurance that the facilities of Buttonville airport would remain available to general aviation use.

The issue of how Mount Hope airport at Hamilton might be further used to offset the extreme pressures on Toronto airport and the possibility of even using London, Ontario airport more efficiently and effectively have also been canvassed in our report. The possibilities offered by Toronto Island airport should also be further developed.

None of those issues have been addressed by this government. None of those possibilities have been explored in a systematic fashion, nor has the possibility of the construction of another airport, which the task force under the leadership of the member for York South—Weston suggested, been addressed.

We see a situation in which the federal government has a very large parcel of land available in Pickering for the development of a second major airport for Toronto and yet no progress, no effort has been made to utilize that opportunity. Instead, funds have yet again been channelled into the expansion of Pearson airport.

The possibilities also exist of the development of land transport, particularly fast rail transport between Quebec City and the Windsor corridor. Again, the government has shown no initiative, no progress in exploring the two proposals that the private sector has come forward with to develop that fast rail service, patterned in part upon the highly successful rail services in Europe and in Japan.

This would alleviate many of the pressures on Pearson International Airport but we have had no indication from the government that that initiative, that possibility, can be given a fast-track treatment and we have no assurance to offer to the people living around Pearson International Airport that the rail facilities will be so developed as to lessen some of the pressure on Canada's major airport.

With regard to the situation at Pearson International Airport today, the noise problems are the paramount environmental question but there are other problems which I want to turn to in just a moment.

With regard to noise abatement, the report which the Liberal Party brought forward is quite clear about the need for more effective monitoring of noise pollution at Pearson airport. As I said at the beginning of my brief statement, we welcome the very modest step that was offered today in the way of fining those who systematically violate the existing noise regulations.

The fact remains that those regulations are not in themselves adequate to ensure that the people of the surrounding communities, whether in Malton or in Mississauga or in Etobicoke, have a healthy and enjoyable environment.

• (1530)

I would salute my colleagues from Mississauga East and from York West along with the member for York South—Weston for the leadership that they too have provided in attempting to convince the government of the necessity for pursuing more actively and energetically noise abatement procedures at the airport. In the bill before us only is there the provision for increased fines. Welcome though that may be, it certainly does not address the question, for example, of night flying, a problem that is becoming increasingly acute at the airport where services are now offered on a regular or scheduled basis after midnight and before 6.30 a.m. or 7 a.m., with an impact on the residents that you can well imagine.

The fact is that a number of the schools and public buildings as well as individual citizens are deeply affected by the constant noise of the airport. There are health problems. And, of course, there are certainly property value problems which are pervasive throughout the area.

I would suggest that steps should be taken, even at this late date, to look again at the installation not only of additional monitoring equipment but additional sound barriers and more stringent restrictions on night flights, on full power take-offs and on engine testing at the airport, especially during what should be the quiet hours from midnight until 7 a.m.

Despite those and a variety of other recommendations offered by the Official Opposition, the government has not brought forward any substantial response. It has not indicated the directions of its thinking other than to propose that there be three additional runways built at Pearson airport.

Quite obviously the traffic numbers which the government has brought forward to justify the expansion of Pearson airport by the construction of three additional runways ignores completely the possibilities offered by the greater utilization of the neighbouring airports which, as I have already suggested, might well be expanded and tied in together to a total network of airports for the metro Toronto region.

The impact of the airport, not only in terms of noise but in terms of the adverse effect it can have on ground water from the pollution caused by dumped fuel or by de-icing solutions, has not been adequately addressed.

The impact on wildlife remains a very real problem for all those who are concerned about the adverse impact of the airport on the natural environment. Again, we have had no indication of leadership from the government in those issues despite the reassurances of a succession of transport ministers. I believe there have been something like six in the past few years.

The growth at the airport in traffic has not been matched by any real effort to address the questions raised by the opposition and indeed by my colleague from Dartmouth who has done some notable work regarding the expansion of rail services in Canada and the direction of public funds to that expansion as one

method of helping to offset the adverse impacts of airport expansion.

The response of the government has been to undertake an impact study. An agency has now issued an environmental impact statement, the summary of which I have here but which, in total, is several massive volumes. A large amount of public funding has been spent on various studies that compose burden of this report, but what do we have in the end? We have the bald recommendation that the "proposal for three additional runways at Lester B. Pearson International Airport provides the solution that best serves the community at large".

The view of the citizens who live in the area of the airport, the many hundreds of thousands of Canadians who live under the flight paths or, indeed, in the surrounding communities, is to the contrary. They feel that the construction of three additional runways is merely going to compound what are already very serious problems.

I note that as part of this environmental impact process, Transport Canada has invited comment on the report up to July 12 concerning the way in which the impact survey was conducted, but not on the findings of the survey itself. The public's reaction to the survey will necessarily be a more protracted process. It will presumably continue late into the summer and through the autumn, and there will indeed be opportunity for everyone with an interest in this highly important question of airport expansion to offer their views.

The fact is that without some leadership by the government, without a clear indication that it is pursuing the development of alternative methods of transport, thereby ensuring Canadians who live around airports that their concerns and needs are being taken fully into account, I am afraid the process itself is unlikely to offer much confidence to those who have been so adversely impacted by the expansion of Pearson airport.

Equally, if the question of night flights, the question of regulation at the moment is not adequately addressed, then too confidence in this process will be open to serious question.

I want to conclude by stating that while we in the Official Opposition will support the bill, we regard it as a mere drop in the bucket, as it were, of what is required with regard to regulation of air transport in Canada, and particularly with regard to the deleterious effects that a major airport can have on the way of life, the quality of life of the people who have the misfortune of living under the flight paths of a major airport.

I hope the government, in bringing forward this bill, is making a very real commitment to ensuring that those other questions, and serious questions that they, are also being addressed in the most expeditious and sensitive manner.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate today in the second reading debate of Bill C–5, an act to amend the Aeronautics Act and to amend an act to amend the Aeronautics Act.

We have had a chance to visit this legislation in the past, and we are now proceeding to make even more appropriate changes to the legislation that not only affects the mechanics of airline operation and aviation, but protects the safety of those who use the services and those who live beside the areas served.

The act makes a number of very important and positive contributions. I want to go through them very briefly and then deal with some of the areas where I feel some additional improvements can be made within the context of the direction that the government is taking.

For example, the increase in the fines for violations of noise abatement procedures is a good step. If my memory is correct, when we were dealing with this section back in 1986 we argued then that the amounts were too small. This particular bill increases the maximum fine for an individual to $5,000. The maximum fine for a corporation is $10,000.

• (1540)

I want to reiterate the arguments I made then. It is still an unfair relationship. Five thousand dollars to a mechanic is a lot different from $10,000 to Air Canada. I think that the ratio between the fine available for an individual—and let us remember it may be an individual who is only doing what he or she is told, as opposed to

the fine for the corporation who may have issued the instruction to violate the noise abatement procedures—is quite out of balance.

Let me add that I am pleased that the minister has recognized the appropriateness of sending legislation to the Standing Committee on Transport. We had agreed prior to it that that would be something we would support. When it gets into the standing committee, I hope we will take a serious look at perhaps finding a new formula.

Perhaps we should be dealing with a percentage of income—the percentage of a pilot's income, the percentage of a flight attendant's income, the percentage of a mechanic's income, the percentage of a ground staffer's income—on one hand or on the other hand the percentage of the company involved—the gross revenue of that airport for that year—so we can put some fairness into that kind of approach. It is really to prevent it from becoming a licence to charge, a way in which to get around the legal requirements.

Ultimately what we really want is to ensure that the noise abatement procedures, whether they be in terms of the ground support, the baffles, what have you, or in terms of the use of certain types of engines in modern airplanes, can be achieved.

The second area is the added authorization between the Minister of Transport and provincial zoning authorities to deal with the enforcement of zoning regulations for airports. There has been a long outstanding need for this kind of correction.

We have a situation in the city of Thunder Bay which has grown up around the Thunder Bay International Airport. I can remember back in the mid-seventies when I was a provincial member having to deal with the realities of the noise contours as applied in their relationship to land development and pressure from the land owners who want to develop and have put pressure on the municipality to agree to it.

It is still before the various levels of government, the OMB, the city, and the province. I believe that this kind of change will facilitate proper zoning controls so that we can protect both the airports and the surrounding residences from encroachment by either one of them.

The new power to make regulations to implement the provisions of the convention on the International Civil Aviation Act is a positive step. It should have been done a long time ago.

The same is true with the provision for interim orders. Where a safety recommendation comes from a body such as the Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board charged with the investigation of aviation accidents comes forward, the government can act immediately. There is a built-in notification procedure. We may wish to take a look at some of the mechanical parts, but I believe that the provision of an interim order is a very good step.

We have to be able to react quickly. We all saw the very graphic results on the day it happened and the results of the interim report of the royal commission studying the Dryden airplane crash, the Air Ontario crash. The government had to have the ability to make reactive steps in order to learn from that accident and to protect passengers and crew members on future flights.

There is also the new provision to give the minister the power to withhold, suspend or cancel a Canadian aviation document where in his or her opinion the past record of the document holder or any principal of a company which holds a document justifies that action.

This will prevent the cancellation of one and having it resurface under another name, under another group of owners. It is designed to protect the public.

We have to make sure that within the legislation before us there are sufficient safeguards for the appropriate appeal mechanism for the individual who may find him or herself caught in the situation, but believes that they have been unfairly denied their right of due process, unfairly prevented from having an aviation certificate issued on their behalf.

I have had one one case that went to the aviation tribunal where an individual was found to be innocent of the decision that was handed down against him. However, there was no mechanism to have his record stricken, it remained a black mark even though the appeal had overturned the initial decision.

So we have to make sure that as we review this particular legislation that we put in place the components that will protect all players, not just the travelling public, not just the government, but those charged with

the responsibility and the authorization of transporting people or cargo from place to place. They, too, must have their day in court.

There are a number of other very worth-while changes. They bring us into the 21st century by adding computers to aeronautical products, the software, some language clean-up.

There are two areas that I want to spend a bit of time on because I think they are very important in the context of what is happening today, this month and last month.

The first one deals with changes to section 4 which sets out the extraterritorial application of the act that will make it apply outside of Canada.

You may remember that not too long ago I rose in this House during Question Period, back before prorogation, and raised a question with the then Minister of Transport—in fact, it was the last question to the previous minister—about the ability of airline employees to exercise their right to refuse to work in an unsafe condition that was occurring outside the country.

Let me give a bit of background. Back in April a Canadian Airlines flight attendant refused to board her scheduled duty flight bound from Pearson International Airport to Lima, Peru. She cited section 128 of the Canada Labour Code which allows an employee to refuse to work when they believe it reasonably constitutes a danger.

This flight attendant exercised what she believed was her legal right to refuse to leave Canada to go to a country that, among other things, was suffering from a cholera epidemic. The Department of External Affairs had been sending around a travel advisory for Canadians warning them about this particular situation.

Four days before, in the same destination, a colleague of hers was abducted 300 yards from his hotel by four men who identified themselves as police. He was taken in a car, roughed up and robbed.

Canadian Airlines flight attendants have layovers, or rest periods, as long as 30 hours in Lima. They are taken from the airport to their hotel in a battered bus staffed by an armed security guard. Canadian Airlines pilots who have agreed to extend their duty day times beyond their contract maximum do not lay over in Lima, but are flown to Mexico at the end of their flight duty, one can only assume because they feel unsafe in that particular environment.

The crowning point of this woman's argument was the fact that the day that her flight, the one that she was scheduled to be on, landed in Lima, Peru, there were 30 buildings bombed in that city. This included the Canadian embassy and five other foreign missions. That woman did not get on the plane that night, but her colleagues did.

Labour Canada, which investigated that evening, found she had no reason to refuse to work, and I am advised that that decision has now been upheld in that particular case. But part of the argument from Labour Canada at the time of the initial investigation was that Canadian employees did not have the right to refuse to work in another country. A flight attendant who leaves Canada, travels to another country, remains an employee of the airline, is under the direct control of the airline while in that other country. They are restricted in their travel movements. For example, in Lima, Peru, I believe they cannot travel more than 150 kilometres from the airport. They have their meals and accommodation paid for by the airline.

• (1550)

One of the things I want to address in committee is to ensure that this legislation extends, by eliminating any ambiguity whatsoever, the provisions of the Canada Labour Code across our borders; to the men and women who, in effect, represent Canada. They have the right to a safe and healthy working environment.

My colleague from Mission—Coquitlam is concerned about a decision by NationAir which allowed, the captains of NationAir to let the passengers light up if the flight is delayed. This is in violation of an act of this Parliament, the Clean Air Act or the act that deals with smoking on airlines. We have to look at that.

We have also got to look at the provisions in this legislation that may clarify, once and for all, whether or not the flight attendants, or the crew, have the same restrictions on the length of their work day as the pilots do. There are a couple of reasons for that.

First, it is not something they should have to negotiate at the bargaining table.

Second, the prime purpose of having flight attendants on aeroplanes is not to provide us with drinks or to hand out coffee or snacks or to sell duty free goods. Their reason for being on those airlines is for your safety and mine, primarily at the beginning and the end of the flight. If you have a staffer who has been forced to work for 14 hours non-stop, that staffer is pretty tired. Yet, they are the ones who have the responsibility, in the event of a crash-landing—let us put it bluntly—where there are survivors, to try and open the doors. They have to be well rested. They need to have all their senses about them.

If they have spent 14 hours, either waiting in airports or pushing carts up and down the aisle, or in some cases dealing with individuals who have had too much alcohol, they are not going to be able to perform. So it is important that we clarify this legislation to ensure that there is a legislated mandate for a restriction on the length of time that flight attendants can work while in transit.

I assume my time is almost up, but correct me if I am wrong.

My final point is another area this bill deals with, the question of security. This bill makes some changes in the manner in which security is to be provided at airports in Canada. It also makes some changes in terms of conditions that we expect at the other end, in the other countries our airlines are serving.

But the point I want to raise with regard to this is that we have an ongoing battle between the contract people who provide security at our airports. Transport Canada does not provide security services at Terminal 1, Terminal 2, Terminal 3, Vancouver, Thunder Bay or Halifax. Those are provided, based on the authority of the Minister of Transport, by the airlines themselves. The airlines, in turn, contract out those services and we end up with situations like we have today in Toronto at Terminal 1 where the company that had the contract, in order to regain that contract, bid at a rate that requires them to extract $2 an hour from their existing employees.

We should not be using contract employees, low minimum wage ghetto employees, to provide for the safeguarding of our air travellers in Canada, into Canada, and out of Canada.

We have got to take a serious look at this bill. I believe that within the context of Bill C-5 the opportunity is there to correct a wrong. In the bill itself the minister is losing the power to set the standards and they will now be done by regulation. The bill is dropping the provision for the airline companies or the airports themselves to provide the security. In part, they have gone half way. At the very least, within regulations, it can be changed to decide that they be employees of Transport Canada, or in the case of some of the devolved airports, employees of the local airport authority. But I think we have to take a very serious look at this because we have a responsibility both to the people who provide this service and the people we are providing the service for.

My final point, and again it is an area that I will pursue within the Standing Committee on Transport when this bill comes before it, is that there is wording in Bill C-5 that makes reference to planes being registered in other countries being required to meet the security provisions for Canada. I want to look at that clause because by my interpretation it still leaves a loophole for some airlines that travel within Canada to not have to expose their passengers to the kinds of security measures that all of us go through on an almost daily basis, whether at Pearson or Montreal airports or wherever. If we are to have a secure system, we must make sure that no one has an opportunity to take anything aboard any plane leaving Canada or coming into Canada that can do harm to the passengers and the staff on that plane or harm to the people in the area around them.

I look forward to the work of the committee. I think we can make a good bill that much better and I know the government is listening.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the opportunity to make some brief submissions with regard to Bill C-5. We are presently debating this bill at second reading and I wish to reiterate the position of the Liberal Party that we support this bill in principle.

Unfortunately, its predecessor, Bill C-76, died with prorogation a number of weeks ago and this bill has been brought up for consideration. We consider it to be a good bill, a step in the right direction. Unfortunately, the bill was not brought forward sooner, but in any event the Liberal opposition looks forward to the opportunity to consider the provisions of Bill C-5 in minute detail at the committee level.

As was indicated by the two previous speakers, Bill C-5 is generally considered to be a housekeeping bill. It is entitled an Act to amend the Aeronautics Act and to amend an Act to amend the Aeronautics Act. As you know, a few short years ago, the original act, the act we are amending, was passed by this Parliament.

• (1600)

Over the course of the last number of years, it was deemed necessary to introduce some amendments to correct some minor problems with the original legislation. As well, it updates some of the provisions in Bill C-76.

However, there are some very important changes to the bill. Among the most important changes are the provisions which increase the fines for designated offences within the bill. Fines are increased from $1,000 to $5,000 for individuals and from $1,000 to $10,000 for corporations.

That would include airline companies operating in Canada and other airlines that use Canadian airports. In particular, it would include provisions dealing with noise abatement and contraventions of the provisions dealing with the restriction of noise.

I had the privilege of chairing the federal Liberal caucus task force on Pearson International Airport a few years ago. In fact, the committee rendered its report on June 12, 1989, some two years ago.

Since that time, the report has been circulated widely. We have had numerous requests for copies of this particular report. It was a comprehensive report that studied the workings of Pearson International Airport and all the problems associated with it. The report made a number of excellent recommendations.

The task force consisted of a number of my colleagues, members of the Liberal opposition. It spent a number of days at Pearson International Airport touring the facilities there. Then it listened to a significant number of witnesses who came forward to express their concerns about matters affecting Pearson International Airport.

We heard from the pilots' association, for example. We heard from representatives of the major airlines. We heard from representatives of smaller air carriers. We heard from citizens' groups and politicians from other levels of government. All had very important and significant concerns to bring to our attention.

The report that was released on June 12, 1989 includes a section on noise abatement and hours of operation. This particular section of the report is relevant in considering Bill C-5 which has, as one of its main provisions, the increase of fines.

In this report two years ago we recommended that fines be increased in order to deter and dissuade airline companies from breaching noise by-laws. We believe that with a significant increase in the fines that can be levied, airlines will think twice about breaking curfew provisions at Pearson International Airport and at all airports across the country.

We fully endorse and support the increase of the maximum penalty for breaching noise abatement provisions. As I indicated, the maximum penalties would be increased from $1,000 to $5,000 for individuals and to $10,000 for corporations.

I would ask the committee to consider not only maximum penalties for breaches of noise abatement provisions, but minimum penalties. We know that when we establish a maximum penalty, that is the limit. If we do not provide a minimum penalty, a suspended sentence for example, no penalty at all could be considered an appropriate penalty.

If this Parliament wishes to send a very clear message to those who at times, in a callous fashion, breach noise abatement provisions then the committee should consider incorporating minimum penalties within this legislation.

Once it is proven that a particular company or individual has breached a particular section—and I refer again to the noise abatement provisions—then there would be a minimum penalty that that person or company would be subjected to.

There are a number of MPs from the Toronto area who have a significant number of constituents who are directly affected by Pearson International Airport. The task force heard, of course, that there are problems at other airports in Canada, in particular at the Vancouver airport in Vancouver, British Columbia, and I am sure there are problems at other major airports in Canada. The mandate of the task force that I chaired though was simply to investigate the problems at Pearson International Airport.

I represent a riding that is east of the airport, York Southwest, and I know that the former Minister of Finance, now the Minister for International Trade, represents the riding of Etobicoke Centre and his

constituents are very concerned about what is happening at Pearson. A number of my colleagues as well, from Etobicoke North and York West and others from Mississauga, also have constituents who are directly affected. In fact, the task force heard that over 300,000 residents living near the airport are affected by problems at Pearson International Airport.

The residents who have written to us, appeared before the committee or have called our constituency offices have consistently and persistently pointed out the problems emanating from frequent take-offs and landings at Pearson International Airport. In fact, at task force hearings the most animated, the most passionate submissions came from community groups which expressed their serious concern about noise problems at Pearson.

The problem continues. The complaints continue. Unfortunately, this government and its officials believe that the answer is simply to build new runways. We do not believe that is the ultimate answer.

The task force report points out that before there is any consideration of increasing the runways at Pearson, the government should consider increasing the usage of other airports in and around Toronto that are under-utilized at present. For example, the airport at Hamilton. We heard a significant amount of evidence about the under-utilization of that particular airport.

The taxpayers of Canada have spent millions of dollars to update that particular facility and for some reason the government has chosen not to require different airlines to move their operations to the Hamilton airport. A lot of the commercial traffic could be moved to Hamilton. Hamilton is not that far away from metropolitan Toronto. Indeed, it is at times more convenient, or would be more convenient, for people to travel to Hamilton rather than to Pearson International Airport.

We also recommended that, for example, the use of the Buttonville airport, the Island airport, the London, Ontario airport and the Oshawa airport could be increased. Also, we recommended that the government introduce measures to require companies and others to use those airports to draw away, to siphon off some of the very heavy traffic at Pearson International Airport.

Regarding the problems of noise, especially noise in the early morning hours and in the evening hours, the task force recommended that there should be no easing of the restrictions placed on late night flights at Pearson International Airport.

• (1610)

We also recommended the appointment of an independent airport ombudsman to investigate and report on noise complaints at Pearson International Airport. Unfortunately, the government has not yet adopted this recommendation and perhaps at the committee level the members of the committee will consider same. The problem is not going to disappear, although the operators of different airlines suggest that with the advent of quieter aircraft the problem will eventually diminish and go away. That has not yet happened and the task force heard that the fleets of Air Canada and Canadian International Airlines have a small percentage of quieter generation aircraft.

My time is limited. At the committee level the Liberal members of the committee will certainly bring to the attention of the committee the section in the task force report dealing with noise abatement and hours of operation at Pearson International Airport. The problems are well known. The report is extensive; the recommendations are good and I believe the committee can make excellent use of the summary of all the evidence that we heard two years ago. That evidence is still relevant today. That evidence includes the tremendous increase in the number of complaints at Pearson International Airport over the last five years.

We were told at the task force that in the period 1985-88 the number of annual complaints rose from 500 to over 3,500, an increase of over 700 per cent. At the same time, the number of aircraft movements increased from just over 250,000 to just under 350,000, an increase of approximately 30 per cent.

The problem of noise at Pearson International Airport is significant. A community group called the Citizens Against Airport Noise appeared before the committee and I would suggest that perhaps the standing committee that considers this bill would consider inviting this citizen group and others before the committee.

Different citizen groups and community groups have called upon the government to undertake an effective noise abatement program. There is still a lot that can be done. Some has been done over the last number of years but we believe there is still a lot that can be done in order to give some peace of mind and tranquillity to all

those who have invested in homes around Pearson International Airport. Believe me when I say it is not pleasant, especially in the summer, for people in a lot of communities around Pearson to have to listen to the aircraft landing and taking off. Some people suggest that the homeowners there purchased their homes knowing that the airport was there but the problems have increased over the last five or ten years because of the increase in air traffic at Pearson.

We recommended in this report, in order to deal with these concerns strict curfew hours, the installation of noise monitoring equipment at the airport, the erection of noise barriers, restrictions on noisy models of aircraft and the imposition of severe fines for violators of noise regulations. This bill does deal with the last point, and that is an increase in fines.

The task force listened to a company called Consult-Air, which advanced a number of noise abatement proposals. We believe some of the proposals had a lot of merit. One of the proposals was the establishment of an ombudsman to investigate and make public recommendations on noise and other complaints related to airport operations.

As I indicated earlier, the aviation industry is taking the position that the new generation of stage three aircraft such as the A-300, A-310 and A-320 series as well as the Boeing 757 and 767 represents the eventual solution to the noise problem.

"There is little doubt that from the standpoint of noise generation, fuel efficiency and environmental protection,"—I am reading from the report—"these new generation aircraft are vastly superior to older, noisier aircraft such as the DC-9, Boeing 727 and 737, the Lockheed L-10ll and the older models of Boeing 747."

While the air carriers are touting the merits of the new generation of stage three aircraft, if we look at the fleet of Air Canada and Canadian, for example, we see that the stage three aircraft are rather limited in those fleets.

In the Air Canada fleet there were 116 aircraft in 1989. There were six McDonnell Douglas DC-873s, the cargo plane, 36 McDonnell Douglas DC-9s, six Boeing 747s, 14 Lockheed 1011s, 33 Boeing 727s and 21 Boeing 767s.

The only aircraft that can be characterized as the quieter generation of stage three models are the 21 Boeing 767s and the six re-engined DC-873s. That is a total of 27 aircraft, 23 per cent of the entire Air Canada fleet.

While it is a significant percentage, it is not enough to lead one to conclude that these quieter generation aircraft are the answer today. It will take a significant number of years before the stage three aircraft constitute a significant majority of the fleet of both Air Canada and Canadian Airlines.

I note that my time is almost up. There are a number of other provisions in this bill that we consider to have merit. One of the provisions in section 4 is to extend the workings of the act to passengers on board aircraft that are not over Canadian air space. That would enable the prosecution of passengers who refuse to buckle up while a Canadian aircraft is landing in a different country.

At present, the bill does not apply to them. Passengers could not be prosecuted even though those passengers could pose a significant safety problem to other passengers when they do not buckle up or follow the provisions of Bill C-5.

In closing, let me say again that the Liberal Party supports Bill C-5. We will make every effort to expedite the considerations of this bill at committee. We hope to participate in a very complete way in trying to make this bill a better bill at committee.

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address certain issues with respect to Bill C-5, an act to amend the Aeronautics Act.

Let me say at the outset that we, on this side of the House, agree in principle with the legislation. There are certain sections that require clarification or improvement.

I would like to bring these issues before this House and certainly before it reaches committee at third reading.

First and foremost among our concerns is the fact that the Minister of Transport is given extra added powers to make interim orders to implement safety recommenda-

tions of bodies such as the Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board.

I want to ensure that this legislation will also allow the minister to implement air safety recommendations from other institutions and from other committees.

• (1620)

I speak primarily of an ongoing inquiry: Mr. Justice Virgil Moshansky's investigation into the air tragedy at Dryden, Ontario. We understand at this stage that Mr. Justice Moshansky has completed his hearings into this matter and is in the process now of forming his final recommendations.

The report is in its final stage and should be released some time in June.

We are further aware from the information that we have been able to gather that Mr. Justice Moshansky's inquiry went to further in depth studies, not only in the events that led up to the Dryden crash, but in the ability and the competence of those entrusted with the responsibility in Canada of investigating not only airline disasters but airline incidents.

We are also led to believe that problems with the air-side operation at Pearson International Airport will be addressed in his lordship's report.

I compliment the former ministers of transport who were in office during the Moshansky inquiry for implementing the interim recommendations made by the justice, especially the recommendation that affects so many of us in Canada with respect to airline procedure on de-icing.

I want to ensure, and I will pursue in committee, that the recommendations that will be forthcoming and that have been so long awaited from the Moshansky inquiry will receive priority of the highest order and that the legislation that we are in the process of implementing through committee and through final reading will be implemented at the earliest possible time for the betterment of the travelling public in Canada and for international countries that use a Canadian airline service.

The other area that I hope this legislation will implement and allow us to have more of a rapid input into safety measures which affect Canadian air travellers is with respect to safety and security. In light of the events that have happened in the last few days with respect to an international airline, I am told that the X-ray procedure on baggage for all Canadian airlines does not follow the X-ray procedure requiring all baggage to be X-rayed before it gets on an aircraft.

We are told that only the baggage that is carried on by the individual through the security gates at all airports in Canada is subject to X-ray investigation.

I would like to urge today and with this opportunity to speak before the House and in regard to recent events that all baggage which goes on to any airline in Canada not only follow the present procedure that it must be on the same airline as its owner, but that it be X-rayed for suspicious materials. I would like to see that recommendation implemented at the earliest possible time.

My colleague from Toronto spoke at some length on environmental concerns and noise abatement, and quite capably gave the concerns of those areas around Pearson Airport which will be influenced by the increased traffic that we presently experience in the hub of Canada which is Pearson International Airport.

In this bill we will question the environmental concern which will be expressed through the assessment which is presently going on of the contemplated addition of the two extra runways to handle the expanded traffic Pearson is not only receiving now but is expected to receive in the next several years as it becomes the hub of Canadian air travel in Canada.

Needless to say, we should not avoid what the report of the environmental assessment hearing will recommend to us involved in transportation and to the government with respect to the two additional runways which may be added.

I am advised that even with the environmental assessment review with respect to the two runways, an Order in Council can do away with the environmental assessment hearing and its recommendations. The process of adding the two additional runways at Pearson International Airport is a *fait accompli*, and regardless of what the environmental assessment review will show, the two runways are now in the planning stage at Pearson International Airport.

I caution this government that the noise abatement and noise procedures should be enhanced and given proper consideration at this stage before those two runways are completed.

My colleague has also addressed the noise abatement issue. This legislation draws to our attention another very important deficiency, not only in air transportation in Canada, but in all transportation needs.

What we see in this House day after day is a lack of a comprehensive national transportation policy which not only will guide Canada and its transportation needs in the next two or three or five years, but will bring Canada into the 21st century to be more competitive on the international scene, as we are all trying to do, and to provide a facility within Canada for the ease and convenience of Canadian travellers.

We see, rather than a national transportation policy, an erosion of surface transportation in this country which is really cause for concern. We noticed last week right here on the Hill a lack of transportation policy which for every trucking company in this country, every truck driver and every independent owner is cause for serious concern about the future viability of his and his family's livelihood with respect to certain taxation measures that prevent them from operating in a competitive way with his American counterparts.

We see almost a complete erosion of another surface transportation need; the passenger rail service within this country. I know that in my riding of Thunder Bay, and as I travel across this country and talk to people in many communities across this country, that the erosion of passenger rail service has been one of the key factors in the unity debate which we presently find ourselves in. The national transportation passenger system which brought us all together is now being disintegrated, and that has caused this country great concern. A national transportation policy would be one of those areas in which we could address the need for a national transportation system within this country.

We talk about environmental concerns. We do not use the natural waterways, the Great Lakes system and the Great Lakes seaway to their advantage. If we do not start using the seaway for the transportation, not only of goods, but of persons in the near future, it may well be on its last leg as a viable transportation entity within our country and we would not want to see that happen.

Our highway situation across this country is in a state which requires federal intervention. I was talking to one of our colleagues from the United States this weekend at the United States Inter-Parliamentary Session and any interstate highway system is funded 90 per cent by the federal government. In Canada this national transportation policy is left deficient.

With the lack of a national transportation policy, we see that this act before us today, Bill C-5, is another piecemeal solution to the problems that confront Canada and all Canadians with respect to deficiencies and transportation requirements we so sorely need within this country.

As I said at the outset, we will support this legislation, but we on this side of the House will continue to research, promote and put forward a national transportation policy which will meet the needs of Canadians in this generation and will bring Canada into the 21st century with the transportation requirements that are so sorely needed but deficient from the lack of leadership we are seeing today.

• (1630)

I appreciate the opportunity to make those remarks.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the spirit of Bill C-5, the Aeronautics Amendment Act. What I think is important is that there are some very good amendments coming forward in it. However, some of the amendments fall a little short of what is needed for those people who work for the airlines.

Some of the hon. members who have spoken before me have spoken quite extensively about the important amendments that are coming for those who live and work in the vicinity of an airport. Some hon. members have risen and spoken about those who are the travelling public.

I would like to address my remarks to what would be helpful in this bill—if there were additional amendments—for those who work for the airlines.

To illustrate my concern I would like to give some examples. My first example is a woman who the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan referred to earlier when he spoke. This woman, who works for Canadian Airlines, was scheduled to board her flight from Pearson International to Lima, Peru in early April. She refused to board, citing section 128 of the Canada Labour Code,

which allows an employee the right to refuse work when they believe it reasonably constitutes a danger.

Here are the reasons this woman refused to board that aircraft. Lima is the capital of Peru. It not only currently suffers from a cholera epidemic, but it continues to be the scene of continual rebel and terrorist violence. Only five days before this woman refused to fly to Peru, on April 1, 1991, a Canadian Airlines flight attendant was abducted 300 yards from his hotel by four men who identified themselves as police. He was taken in a car, roughed up and robbed.

Canadian Airlines flight attendants currently have layovers or rest periods for as long as 30 hours in Lima. They are taken from the airport to their hotel in a battered bus manned by an armed security guard and dropped off. However, the pilots, who have agreed to extend their duty day beyond their contract maximum, do not lay over in Lima, but are flown to Mexico at the end of their flight day.

The day after this woman exercised her right to refuse unsafe work, terrorist bombing incidents occurred at more than 30 buildings in Lima, Peru including, I might add, the Canadian embassy and five other foreign missions.

In its March 1991 travel advisory for Peru, the Department of External Affairs warns that both street crime and terrorism are serious problems in several cities and regions. Since the conflict in the Persian Gulf, there has been a marked increase in the attacks made against foreign diplomatic missions, restaurants, cultural centres, businesses and public areas in Lima. The notice also urges visitors to consume only food prepared under hygienic conditions, carefully cleaned fruits and vegetables, peeled and preferably cooked, bottled water or water purified by boiling it for 10 minutes if possible.

Canadian Airlines own guidelines for the cholera epidemic include no fish, no salads, no showers, and no water that is not gasified and sealed.

Within hours of this woman's refusal to board that airline, two Department of Labour safety standard officers investigated her claim on site at Pearson airport. A verbal rejection of the claim was given, with a written decision to follow, on the grounds that there is no danger or risk from cholera and that the foreign nature of the job site and the security threat put her beyond the jurisdiction of the labour code.

Yet, there is clear and present danger. I have illustrated in my remarks the clear and present danger that led this flight attendant to refuse to fly to Lima, Peru. Forcing workers to go to Lima is not in the spirit of how we all believe our workers in Canada should be treated.

To provide for this worker the airlines could provide layover flights to Mexico, but they have said they will only do so if the attendants extend their duty days even longer than 14 hours. That would be simply replacing one safety hazard with another. Overtired, overworked flight attendants are not safe.

It would be very useful in this legislation to have an amendment that would restrict the duty days of flight attendants to reasonable and humane hours. In addition, we would expect that either the Minister of Labour or the Minister of Transport, or both, would work to resolve how a worker is to be treated when he or she leaves the country.

One of the other areas that I would like to address regarding this legislation, and another where I would suggest an amendment would be useful, is the whole question of security at airports. I rose in the House last Thursday and made a statement regarding one security firm at Pearson airport which is undercutting another security firm to secure a contract with the airport for its airport security. This is not, I might add, isolated to Pearson. In fact, this is happening at a number of airports across the country. We have recently seen the outcome of such a situation with the dispute that went on at the Edmonton airport.

The particular situation that I am speaking about concerns Terminal 1, where the security firm Aeroguard is demanding a wage cut of $2 an hour from its employees as well as elimination of the group insurance plan. The company is threatening the 100 passenger screening agents with layoffs if they refuse these cuts so it can get a renewal of the contract, so it can win the bid.

This kind of tactic invites raiding, it invites instability in that work group and it does not even provide reasonable job security. There is certainly no reason to develop any job pride. Without pride, without continuity of service, the ability to do a good job as a screening agent is hurt. I think we would all agree, certainly the members in this House who fly thousands and thousands of kilometres a year would agree, that it is very important that these people are very skilled and very committed to the work they do and should be encouraged to develop pride in

their work. This is another area where we feel an amendment to this amendment would be useful.

I was hoping today to rise in the House during Question Period, and I did not get the opportunity to do so. However, I certainly will raise the issue now concerning the whole question of who is in charge of enforcing regulations relating to health and safety matters on aircraft. Labour Canada appears to establish the regulations. However, in the case I am going to discuss Transport Canada is charged with enforcement.

The question I was going to raise concerned how on earth Transport Canada could override an existing law under the Canada Labour Code by permitting NationAir to amend its flight safety manual to allow smoking on a non-smoking flight while that flight is delayed on the ground.

Why is Transport Canada circumventing that law? Why is it permitting one carrier this special treatment over the expressed concerns of flight crews about their health and safety?

We have even moved that in this precinct which encompasses the House of Commons, and those of us who smoke have honoured it, the people around us should not have to be recipients of our side-stream smoke, that we should not have staff who are required to work in the same workplace with smokers, that smokers should not be allowed to smoke in the workplace. Yet Transport Canada has allowed this airline, NationAir, to permit smoking if the flight is delayed. Not only are we suggesting that airline flight attendants are subjected to inhaling this smoke. Certainly passengers who do not smoke are being exposed to it. In addition, one small factor in a recent incident with NationAir was that the alarms were all set off in the washrooms by the huge cloud of smoke in place on the aircraft because of the delay.

• (1640)

It would seem to me that this is another area the government might want to think about, including an amendment to this act that would be helpful.

There are four areas where I would suggest we have amendments. In conclusion I would like to point them out: first, an amendment that also protects workers on international flights and their right to refuse what they believe is unsafe work; second, an amendment that would limit the hours of work of crew members of an aircraft that is operated by air carriers, and of the crew members of an aircraft that is in fact carrying passengers; third, an amendment bringing security staff at airports under the employment of Transport Canada; and, fourth, an amendment that will not allow Transport Canada to overrule labour, health and safety regulations.

We look forward to this bill going before committee and we are sure that after our persuasive argument the Minister of Transport will agree with us that those kinds of amendments are also very important.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The minister of National Health and Welfare, on a point of order.

* * *

REINSTATEMENT OF BILLS

NOTICE OF MOTION PURSUANT TO S.O. 57

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): In accordance with Standing Order 57, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that at the next sitting of the House, immediately before the Order is called for resuming debate on government motion No. 1 to reinstate certain bills introduced in the Second Session of the 34th Parliament and on any amendments relating thereto, I shall move that the debate shall not be further adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Dartmouth—Goods and Services Tax; the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona—Canadian Pacific; the hon. member for Saint-Léonard—The economy; the hon. member for Carleton—Charlotte—Canada Post Corporation; the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso—Canada Post Corporation.

[*English*]

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the hon. minister has given notice of limitation on Motion No. 1.

On behalf of my party I take great exception to the minister's notification, and I want to advise the minister that his motion certainly comes at a very inappropriate time with His Honour, Mr. Speaker, considering the ruling that was placed before him this morning.

I would like to advise the minister that we will be debating this motion, and we feel that the government is certainly not correct in moving this notice at this particular time.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I wish to point out to the hon. members of this House that the minister is complying with the Standing Orders in giving notice of this motion, although the Chair has taken under advisement the issue of whether Motion No. 1 on the Order Paper is in order.

The Chair takes note of the motion of closure that the Hon. Minister of National Health and Welfare has just tabled.

* * *

[*English*]

AERONAUTICS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Howard Crosby (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleague from Nova Scotia will bear with me. I merely want to make a few brief remarks on Bill C-5 which amends the Aeronautics Act.

As members are well aware, many of the provisions of Bill C-5 relate to the security measures that are taken in airports across Canada for the travelling public. The bill is also concerned with the safety of passengers. It is just to those two points that I would like to direct a few brief remarks.

I believe that the regulations and procedures that are most acceptable to the public are those that appear to be reasonable and rational and solve the problem of security in the processing of airline passengers. However, while I am no expert on aeronautics, I am an expert on airline passenger services, having travelled for over 10 years back and forth to my constituency in Halifax West and various other places.

I would like to make a few remarks in the hope that officials will read the record and pay some attention. While I endorse wholeheartedly security measures at airports across Canada, I am not always satisfied that the rules are effectively and properly administered.

Let me just give one rather easy example between airports. As you approach the Ottawa International Airport security area, you simply take your choice of two or three avenues in which to have the required inspection carried out. On the other hand, in the Montreal airport, that is Dorval, you are channelled through one gateway on to the security at which your boarding pass and other credentials are inspected. At Halifax International Airport, you are channelled through one gateway but no pre-inspection is carried out.

Just very simply observing those three airports, there is no question that the most effective inspection method is to channel all passengers through one entry, inspect their boarding passes and any other credentials they are required to have, and then go on to the inspection.

Time and time again I am sure other members have experienced at the Ottawa International Airport where you are simply allowed your choice of inspection stations. There is always confusion about boarding passes. People are held up. In many cases they are asked to check metal objects and so on.

Why could the authorities not simply have a system employed at all airports whereby there is pre-inspection of credentials where passengers are told that they should remove metal objects from their pockets or purses and put them in a container and other information about the inspection process?

This pre-inspection would also allow those poor people whom I encounter sometimes—and I must confess that on occasion I have been one of them—who are late arriving, possibly and hopefully through no fault of their own, and are unable or unwilling to jump ahead of the line and therefore may risk missing their flight.

I think all of us can have mercy on people in that position and through some pre-inspection process allow them to proceed on a priority basis. There ought to be enough humanity among my colleagues to endorse that

kind of process, especially for people who are not accustomed to airline security and air transportation.

In pursuing the authority that we in Parliament are giving to the minister and to the government to enact regulations, my plea is simply to have sensible regulations applicable on a uniform basis at airports throughout Canada, regulations that people will understand, appreciate, respect and therefore observe so that in the end we will have a more effective administration with which to achieve the purpose of the safety and security of airline passengers.

• (1650)

I have another point because the bill deals with the safety of aircraft passengers. It is a matter that is also subject to federal regulation, that is the carriage and storage of goods and baggage on board an aircraft.

How many times have you got on an aircraft with a bag which is within the regulations and found as you take your seat that the overhead compartment, which is the proper place to store the bag, was occupied? It could be pillows, equipment, flight attendants' baggage and so on. Consequently you move as a passenger to the next storage area, which means that the passenger arriving after you finds your bag in his or her storage area.

Surely this is a matter that can be regulated in some sensible way so we do not get this ludicrous loading of an aircraft where everybody is searching for a place to put their hand baggage, and then when the journey is completed there is a great mix-up as passengers try to retrieve their baggage.

I do not know exactly how the storage of baggage relates to safety, but the regulation is designed to ensure safe conditions aboard the aircraft. That is why we have the regulations in the first place. Having told airline employees and officials that baggage has to be stowed away, the government must come up with some sensible rules or a system whereby baggage is properly stowed away so that it will not create havoc in boarding and debarking from aircraft.

I know there are no provisions in Bill C-5 specifically relating to security measures at airports or to safety on board aircraft. The fact of the matter is that we in Parliament are giving that authority first to officials to draw the regulations, second to the minister to put them forward, third to the government to enact these regulations as law. My plea is simply that when this power is being exercised some common sense principles should be observed. This common sense element will ensure effectiveness of the regulations.

In justification for making this intervention, because I know my colleague from Cape Breton will be annoyed that I held up what I am sure will be an impressive delivery in the House of Commons, Bill C-5 makes it very clear that people who contravene the regulations may suffer all sorts of severe punishment pursuant to this regulatory authority. Whether they contravene them in Canada or abroad it does not matter because the bill provides that a contravention that occurs outside Canada can be punished within Canada.

The act is very clear on the obligations of Canadians and others as passengers on Canadian aircraft. I want the authorities to be equally clear about the methods, the systems, the processes and the procedures that they put into operation through the regulations which we in Parliament are empowering them to make.

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I was not going to intervene, but there are two issues that my colleague from Halifax West raised which I think deserve comment with respect to his government's position.

The first is the uniform safety and security precautions that he was asking for that would be consistently applied throughout the country. That is an area that we on this side of the House have been asking the Minister of Transport and his government to implement. That is simply a uniform security measure applicable throughout Canada, from anyone catching an airplane in Victoria, British Columbia right through to St. John's, Newfoundland. They should be as equally applicable in St. John's and Victoria as they are in Ottawa.

We all know, as our friend has just stated, that procedures are not the same in all airports. One issue that the ministry of transport should address is the security precautions within this country, particularly at this time, with a uniform application of security measures not only on luggage which is checked through

before boarding but luggage that is taken on the aircraft. This was the second point of his argument.

The reason for my question is that we have had several recommendations from the National Transportation Safety Association, what used to be the National Transportation Agency, to the minister with respect to carry-on luggage on aircraft in Canada.

In 1988 they made a recommendation with respect to what luggage a passenger is allowed to take on an aircraft. This was fine when Air Canada and Canadian Airlines offered fairly good and fairly large planes throughout the country. However, the airlines have down-sized and now just operate between the major cities and have connector flights between all the small and remote communities in this country. Those smaller flights are with smaller aircraft. Yet, we have not changed the rules concerning carry-on luggage on these aeroplanes.

What might have been acceptable on a DC-9 or a 727 is no longer acceptable on a small Dash-8 or a 25 or 30 passenger aircraft. We have not addressed that critical safety issue in the regulations that should be imposed on the travelling public in this country.

The Ministry of Transport is responsible for not making and not implementing the recommendations made consistently to their ministry, not only by the National Transportation Agency but the Canadian Aviation Safety Board.

I would ask my friend from Halifax West to comment on why his government has not implemented those recommendations from the responsible agencies within this country.

Mr. Crosby: Mr. Speaker, I do not see any need for me to respond for the government. Unfortunately, I am not a member of the cabinet and am not privy to these decisions. However, I can say that airport security is an evolving process. I hope that in this bill we can contribute to the evolution of that process. Now, as a result of remarks that have been made, officials will have an opportunity to review those remarks and perhaps the government can make some of those changes.

Rome was not built in the first day. It took time to evolve and airline regulations take time to evolve. I do not see any real difficulty there. We can always look and hope for improvements. Recommendations from other organizations are always welcome if they are improvements.

I hope the member will realize and recognize that I am simply making a contribution, an intervention that I think could be helpful if it is looked at and reviewed in a positive light. I hope that will be the decision of the officials and the government.

I have to endorse what he says about cabin baggage. People will go to the limit of the rules. They will take aboard an aircraft whatever baggage they are allowed to take, because it simply aids their travelling capacity as they will not have to wait for luggage at the end. At the same time, they will observe whatever rules are put in place.

I agree with the member that there is a burden on the government to have, as I have already said, effective and sensible rules governing these areas so we all know what the rules are and we can all observe them with some relish.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

REINSTATEMENT OF BILLS—SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: As hon. members are aware, we have had a series of comments concerning a problem in the House. Unfortunately, it was impossible to produce a judgment with all the requisite reasons, but I acknowledge the urgent nature of the issue raised by hon. members and the need for handing down a judgment this afternoon.

Consequently, I am now ready to render my decision.

[*English*]

A point of order was raised this morning relating to government business No. 1, which concerns the reinstatement of certain bills from the Second Session.

• (1700)

After hearing representations from several hon. members, I took the matter under advisement and have been deliberating on the points raised, intending to render my decision tomorrow.

However, I have now received representations, as I have just said, on behalf of the three House leaders requesting that the Chair render its decision this afternoon.

Accordingly, to accommodate this request, I will now render my decision. I will return later to explain the rationale behind it. I should say—and I think hon. members can understand this—that I am trying to accommodate certain necessities and I would hope that it would not become the practice to give a judgment and file the reasons later.

The Chair, of course, knows full well the effects of prorogation on the business then before the House. The Chair must also acknowledge, however, that the notion of reinstatement of business in the subsequent session is well established in our practice.

While this has hitherto been done by unanimous consent, the Chair can find no compelling reason to preclude proceeding by way of notice of motion, nor am I persuaded to reject the motion outright.

The theme of the motion is the reinstatement of certain bills. While the six bills are all distinct, the purpose of the motion is clearly to reinstate the bills at various stages. Therefore, the Chair has decided not to divide the motion for the purpose of debate.

That being said, however, the Chair does have some difficulty in accepting the argument that a member in casting a single vote, can adequately express his or her opinion on six distinct pieces of legislation.

Therefore, government Motion No. 1 will be dealt with in the following manner. There will be a single debate and five separate questions will be put, namely on the reinstatement of Bill C–26, Bill C–58, Bill C–78, Bill C–82 and Bill C–85. No question will be put on Bill C–73 as this matter has already been disposed of by the House. The enabling final paragraph of the motion will, as appropriate, form part of each question put.

* * *

AERONAUTICS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Corbeil that Bill C–5, an act to amend the Aeronautics Act and to amend an act to amend the Aeronautics Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to say a few words on this legislation, an act to amend the Aeronautics Act.

It will be very difficult to live up to the advance billing that has been provided for me by my colleague from Halifax West.

As my colleagues who have spoken earlier this afternoon have already mentioned, the Liberal opposition basically supports the legislation that is before us. Its main substantive provisions concern increasing fines for airline offences relating to the contravention of the airport noise restrictions and expand the power of the Minister of Transport to deal with airports' emergencies under certain circumstances.

The Liberal Party certainly supports the thrust of this legislation, which is to reduce noise pollution at our major airports and to increase airport safety. In fact, members on this side of the House, particularly those representing constituencies in and around Toronto, have called upon the government to take action to deal with the problem of airport noise arising from over–flights and the take off and landing of large jets at the Pearson International Airport.

I am informed that a task force study by the Liberal opposition called "The Report on the Pearson International Airport" cited some rather shocking statistics concerning the number of flights landing around the residences near Pearson International Airport. For example, 747 jets land and take off, waking up residents who live near the airport, at 3 a.m., 4 a.m. and 5 a.m. There are some 300,000 people are living in that area.

Certainly the problem of noise pollution and frequent flights over Pearson International Airport is a serious problem. It is good to see that the members of the opposition have been vigorously representing the concerns of their constituents faced with those difficulties.

In fact, what surprises me about the debate on this particular piece of legislation, in light of the motion introduced earlier by the government, is the fact that Bill C–5, which we support, was not included among the pieces of legislation that the government chose to include in its motion for reinstatement of outstanding legislation from the previous session.

It does not bode well in terms of increasing the degree of collegiality and credibility among members who work diligently in committees to try to improve legislation for the government to reintroduce flawed pieces of legislation which we on this side of the House have opposed and against which we have presented arguments from many people who have consistently demonstrated flaws in the legislation. It does not bode well for the government to reintroduce those pieces of legislation without cleaning them up, without improving them, as this government proposes to do with this motion, and not reintroduce legislation which the opposition members have already agreed to support.

Bill C-5, which was introduced in the previous session as Bill C-76 in June 1990, was not proceeded with any further after that. This is a piece of legislation which, as I have just mentioned, concerns a large number of people living in and around Pearson International Airport and concerns the safety of passengers travelling at airports across this country.

With the government proceeding pell-mell with legislation over the opposition of many interest groups, while at the same time stalling on other worth-while pieces of legislation, it is not hard to see why Parliament is looked upon with such scepticism by so many Canadians.

That is the first point I would like to make in general about this piece of legislation.

Now, hon. members may wonder why a member from a rural riding like Cape Breton Highlands—Canso would choose to speak on the subject of airport noise, airport congestion and the safety at our major airports. Certainly noise pollution from jets landing and taking off is not one of the most pressing concerns facing the constituents in my riding.

It certainly does not compare with the problem of the lack of job opportunities which we face. The airports that we have, and we have some which could accommodate additional aircraft—in fact, we have an airport which could quite well accommodate a regular airline service which would improve the ability of the area including my constituency to attract job opportunities—have not been able to convince this government to provide the necessary support for that kind of regular airline service.

• (1710)

I certainly hope that this government will see fit, since it is beginning with this bill to address certain transportation issues, to address that particular issue.

Unfortunately, and this is one of the real ironies which I want to draw to the attention of the House concerning this piece of legislation and the context in which it is being introduced, at the same time as the government drags its feet in dealing with the noise pollution facing our overcrowded airports, such as Pearson in Toronto, it is simultaneously placing additional costs and additional discouragement on the use of other less congested, less crowded airlines across the country, particularly in regions such as Atlantic Canada.

I am speaking in particular of moves by the Minister of Transport to dramatically increase airport landing fees. These are a considerable disincentive to some of the regional carriers to use the airports in Halifax and in other places in Atlantic Canada. These fees are an additional discouragement to development in Atlantic Canada.

This is occurring at the same time as the government is dragging its feet in dealing with what is a really serious safety and noise pollution problem at Pearson International Airport. Why the government would not work toward diverting some of the traffic away from overcrowded Pearson into other parts of the country, why it would not encourage aircraft to land in less congested parts of the country and at the same time spur development in those areas is beyond me.

Certainly, I hope that while the government considers this piece of legislation it will see that we have to improve airline services. We have to provide better service in some of the outlying regions of Canada. Airline transportation is definitely the most used mode of transportation, and is becoming more and more relevant for an increasing number of Canadians, even those who live in the rural areas, especially those who live in the rural areas.

I hope that the Minister of Transport will begin to stop discouraging airline transportation and airlines from operating in our regions and that this can be done at the same time as he is increasing the safety of airlines in places like Pearson.

In conclusion, I support, as do my colleagues on this side of the House, the thrust of this legislation. Naturally we will want to have it studied carefully in committee to see where it can be improved. I note that it is housekeeping legislation from 1985 which obviously was not completely fool-proof. I hope that we can tidy it up in committee. At the same time I want to make the point, and it is a general point since this is the principle surrounding this bill, that the government should act to make it easier for regional carriers to operate in Atlantic Canada and to encourage the airline transportation infrastructure we so badly need in that part of the country.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, I am anxious to take part in debate on this bill. Here we have the largest or second largest department in the whole government and neither the Minister of Transport nor the Minister of State for Transport are in the House. It seems to me that it should be a requirement in any self-respecting government or cabinet that when a minister has a bill before the House, he damned well should be here for the whole debate. If he is not available, tough cookies. We will inform him about that kind of responsibility he has if and when we get to see him in front of a committee.

I want to mention something about an item in Bill C-5. It concerns security. I do not know where this new minister and the new minister of state have been and how much homework they have done, but it is understandable. I have been through 13 or 14 Ministers of Transport since I came here. My hon. friend from Halifax talks about how many flights he makes. Well I have done over 900 in 25 years. I think I know a little bit about it.

Three generations of my family have been in transportation. I am sure as heck no expert, but I want to remind the House and remind both ministers, if we can find them, that the transport committee went to Europe three or four years ago and we submitted some unanimous, all-party recommendations. We looked into ports, railroads and airports. We spent over three weeks on it. When it comes to airports, we went to Heathrow in London, Schiphol in Amsterdam, the airport in Frankfurt and Orly-Charles de Gaulle in Paris.

The one thing we found in those four locations, and you would have to admit that they are all at least as big as Pearson International and it did not matter what kind of government they had, is that they were not going to leave airport security up to private enterprise. They were not going to leave the safety and security of the travelling public and the airline employees up to whom could get by the cheapest. In every instance the security operations were run by the equivalent of our Department of Transport.

The transport committee made a unanimous recommendation, all parties, that airport security should be operated and run by the Department and Ministry of Transport.

Now that was not easy to come by. We all met sort of half way and we learned from what we found out in those places. So the conclusion remains, as the committee found, that it cannot be left to the airlines to contract for and implement security because they will get by as cheap as possible to cut down costs. Thanks to deregulation they are going to cut corners. They always have and they always will. When you see the spectacle of 60 per cent, 70 per cent or 80 per cent turnover in personnel and security staffs of various and sundry security companies that operate in this country at various airports, it makes you wonder how well trained they are, how good they are at their job, what they get for pay and fringe benefits and what they get for on and off hours because it is a very demanding and boring job.

• (1720)

They get the minimum. My friend had better not say that to me because he ain't been there.

If you put this under the Ministry of Transport, it is responsible for staff, staff training, pay and benefits, a less rapid turnover in personnel. It is deplorable what has been going on at airport after airport across this country. You cannot call that the maximum or best kind of security.

The ministry can bill the various airlines at any given airport on a *pro rata* basis for the costs for that security, and the costs will likely be higher than they presently are. I have yet to hear any taxpayer or voter complain about paying an extra few dollars on his plane ticket to be assured of the best possible security. Anyone who would suggest otherwise does not know what he is talking about.

I would like to move to another item—airport expansion. There is a fundamental principle about airports. The government, under three or four different ministers of transport, did exactly the opposite of what you should do in transportation economics, airline economics. The stupid mistake was that it went and expanded terminal capacity before it expanded runway capacity. It did it backwards; it had Terminal 3 built by the private sector.

The runway capacity would not handle the traffic from the two terminals already in existence.

I do not know what dummy persuaded the minister of the day to accept that. You cannot do it that way if you are going to have any kind of chance for success. On the second day of the operation at Terminal 3 I flew from Regina to Ottawa on Canadian Airlines International. I landed in Toronto and taxied up to Terminal 3, a very nice building. They welcomed me into the Canadian-plus lounge and then we boarded the plane, taxied out on the tarmac and sat there for 15 minutes waiting for a takeoff slot. Then we got the takeoff slot and went down to where the planes line up to take off. We were plane number 14 to take off and it was 10.30 at night. You could not call it a rush hour. Here was Canadian International Airlines, the new civilized way to travel. Well, nothing had changed, not a damned thing. What is the difference whether you got on at Terminal 1 or Terminal 2 if you still had to sit for 30 or 40 or 50 minutes before you could even take off?

It proves to me, and I hope to you, Sir, that the government did it backwards.

Now let us get to runway expansion, airport expansion. I heard the hon. member for Etobicoke North mention Pickering. My God, did he not learn anything from Mirabel? Is the Official Opposition proposing to go that route again?

An hon. member: Do you not want Pickering?

Mr. Benjamin: He proposed it. If you had listened to him—I listened to him carefully. He was worrying about not using up all the land the government still has at Pickering. Maybe he should start up a chicken farm or something. I do not know.

I want to say that when it comes to airports I have gone through this myself. I bought a house in Regina at Lakeview in 1973, which was right at the end of the east-west runway of Regina airport. The Regina airport was in place 20 years before that house was built. I bought it and knew full well. When the wind was the wrong way the aeroplanes went right through the bedroom, especially a cargo flight for Canada Post at 3 or 4 in the morning. The Armed Forces did their touch and go landings at three, four and five o'clock in the morning out of Moose Jaw Air Force Base. We put a stop to that nonsense.

What do we find at Heathrow? It put in two more runways. It paid for peoples' homes to have double and triple glazed windows, insulated. It put up massive concrete barriers to deflect noise upwards and it put in half a mile deep row of trees all the way around that airport.

What do we do in Canada? We let developers build houses, warehouses and whatnot right beside the bloody runway when we should be safeguarding the area required for an airport in today's age and with the kind of aircraft we have.

It was done backward at Pearson. It can still be corrected. Two more runways must be built immediately. It would be cheaper to buy those peoples' homes and give them a fair market value than it would be to move the whole operation to another airport like Pickering.

If you have not learned anything from Mirabel, you will never learn anything else.

I want to say something else to my hon. friend from Hamilton. I have listened to him for a couple of years about using the Hamilton airport. He still has to find somebody who will use it.

I believe the ministry of transport could order cargo flights and Canada Post mail flights to use places like Hamilton and Buttonville at two, three or four o'clock in the morning, and they would not have to use Pearson. That is not more than 10 or 15 per cent of the total traffic at Pearson International. The difference it would make does not amount to anything.

I am sorry to say to my hon. friend that if Hamilton or Buttonville or Oshawa has visions of grandeur, of becoming some kind of big international airport, he is dreaming in Technicolor. It is not going to happen. You find me an airline that will be prepared to change its national and international schedules to land and take off from Hamilton, Buttonville or Oshawa, bypass Toronto completely, and I will buy you a cigar. It is not going to happen. There is not a single national or international airline prepared to do that.

The ministry and the government could order them to do it. They are not going to do it. When you consider that it is bad enough getting from Pearson to downtown Toronto, can you imagine from Hamilton? Holy mackerel, you have champagne ideas with a beer market. That is your problem.

• (1730)

Do not peddle this Chamber of Commerce hype about air transportation and airports to me. It will not wash.

I do not see how, unless the government moves into the whole area of airport security, takes over complete control and operation of it and bills the airlines on a *pro rata* basis. Unless it does that, we are going to continue to have the spectacle of the lowest bidder with Air Canada, which by the way represents 18 other airlines at Pearson. It does the negotiating on behalf of all the other airlines, and my hon. friends are not aware of it. But Air Canada as the biggest operator does the negotiating. It gets the cheapest bid. Then we have the spectacle of an even larger turnover in security staff and a demand by the employer for those people to take $2 an hour less pay. At present they are probably getting an average of $8.

If people try to live on $8 an hour these days, if they have a mortgage, a wife and two kids, forget it. The government cannot leave things like airport security, the safety of human beings, to private enterprise. It is going to get by on the cheap. It is going to cut corners. The government cannot allow that. It cannot play fast and loose with the safety and security of travellers and the employees of those airlines. It has to put an end to it.

That is why I started off by saying that it was the unanimous recommendation of the transport committee some three years ago, which has been totally ignored. I do not even know if anyone in the department read it, but we were very proud of it. We worked hard for those three weeks in Europe looking into all the matters that we were given the authority to look into. We learned some things. There is nothing wrong in seeing what others do and then applying the elements that can be used in our country, and do it.

Nobody is 100 per cent right or wrong. If the ministry thinks it has solutions to all the problems, it is dreaming. It has left out decisions made in the transport committee, and our unanimous report. As far as I am aware, it did not even reply to our report. It was the first and only time the transport committee was allowed to go overseas and see what is being done in other places.

It reminds me of the story of the rooster running a chicken coop. He went out for a walk one morning and came across an ostrich nest and in it was a big egg. He rushed back to the chicken coop, rounded up all the other chickens, herded them out there by the nest and said: "Look girls, I am not complaining but I just wanted you to see what they are doing in other places".

I hope that the government will be amenable to accepting amendments to the legislation in committee that will allow for the implementation of some very obvious things, allow for airport runway expansion in a sensible and fair manner, and allow for the total responsibility by the ministry for airport safety and security.

We cannot have it any other way. If we do it any other way, we are taking a lot of chances.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, this gives me the opportunity within the confines of my debate to address the issues just raised by my hon. friend from Regina. He spoke of a large egg. The member has certainly laid an egg, because we now have it on record that it is the opinion and policy of the New Democratic Party federally that it is against airport expansion at Hamilton. That is just terrific. He asks: "Why expand Hamilton airport? Why would we bother to expand Hamilton airport? Why do we not just add more runways to Toronto Pearson International?"

People do not fly to Pearson International. People have to drive there. The member is from Regina. I have to drive to Pearson International Airport. I have to get on Highway 401 or the 403 at the godforsaken hour of 6 a.m. in order to get there at 8.30 a.m. because of the congestion on the highways, because of the pollution. I mean, it is all jammed up, Mr. Benjamin. It is jammed. So what do we do?

We have to look at a way of moving the passengers or the cargo, of dispersing it a little. Take it away. Take the pressure off Pearson International Airport. Move it around. Why not move it to Hamilton? It is logical. JFK and LaGuardia airports work hand in hand in New York. There is San Francisco International and Oakland International. In fact, there is even San Jose International.

Three airports working in concert, transferring and shuttling passengers back and forth.

In London, England, there is Heathrow Airport and Gatwick Airport. Those are major airports. Gatwick certainly did not start up all of a sudden as a big, major international airport. It was the size of Hamilton.

Do you know what it was that made it work? It was the vision. It was the policy that said let us look at this situation in a multi-modal approach to transportation.

Let us look at the situation, not try to funnel hundreds of thousands of millions of people a year into Pearson International Airport and then have our hon. NDP friend sit in a plane for an hour to take off, because our airports cannot accept all of the planes everywhere at one time. Planes are going to have to wait to take off because they do not circle any more. Why not offer those people an alternative? I am suggesting that Hamilton is the alternative.

I want to get back on track because we are discussing Bill C-5, amendments to the Aeronautics Act, including the increase of the maximum penalty for breaching noise abatement provisions. I do not have a problem with that. In principle I agree with Bill C-5. We will see what will happen when it is brought before a committee on which I will be a participant.

Where I take great exception is with the piecemeal politics being pronounced by the Minister of Transport. I say piecemeal and I will explain. The Minister of Transport, and my hon. friend, have sat on the transport committee for two years because the government did not want us sitting for almost a year. Six ministers of transport in six years. The latest Minister of Transport already—we have not even sat down with him yet—has begun to walk the same well-worn path that his five predecessors have worn thin. To my way of thinking, what is of paramount importance is consistency, consistency of security and consistency of vision.

• (1740)

It is incumbent upon this government to examine transportation and its policies in totality, a multi-modal transportation policy sensitive not only to the environment and to the quality of life of individuals and families living near and around airports but to any other mode of transportation.

I have great difficulty understanding the direction or purpose of conflicting back to back aviation studies released by Transport Canada. Conflicting, you ask. I have a report before me, *Aviation in Southern Ontario, a Strategy for the Future*. Then across my desk just last week was *Airside Development Project, Environmental Impact Statement Summary 1991*. We have a Transport Canada study of January 1990 and we have one for 1991.

I said conflicting because the January 1990 study outlines the current problems at Pearson International Airport. It examines the existing capacity of the facility and suggests options for congestion relief at Pearson International, among them diversion of aircraft movements to other airports. The document referred to the many—I think there are 52—land based airports within 80 kilometres of downtown Toronto. At least five airports have a potential role in resolving the congestion problems at PIA. That is what the 1990 study said.

The 1991 study just crossed my desk lists. Page 9, point 3, under "Diverting Traffic to Other Airports", refers to the airports at Hamilton, Toronto Island, Oshawa, Buttonville and Downsview. It says in conclusion that Hamilton airport has received significant investment infrastructure in recent years, and we are all aware of that.

It then goes on to say, if you can believe it:

> The fact remains however that airspace conflicts with LBPIA, lack of ground transportation to the Toronto market, consumer preference for LBPIA—

All these reasons and the reasons stated for other airports in the area:

> —preclude these sites from offering any appreciable airside capacity increase to southern Ontario—

Imagine, one report a year ago saying "let's look at the alternatives, let's look at the other airports surrounding Lester B", and on my desk last week a 1991 study saying "forget the area airport; it is just not going to work".

That is where I start to think that politics are starting to enter into this thing somewhere. The government to my way of thinking has to start to build a case for Pickering. It makes sense. It has an airport three-quarters built in Hamilton worth millions of dollars, but it is

going to build Pickering from scratch and funnel a few million more cars and all the pollution that transportation creates to a brand new airport at Pickering.

This 1990 report acknowledges that Toronto Island Airport has limited potential to relieve congestion at PIA. The main reasons for this are that jet powered aircraft are prohibited from using the facility and that no new runways or extensions to runways will be permitted. Toronto Island Airport has three runways, the longest of which is 1,220 meters, so it is out of the running. Oshawa airport has two runways, the longest of which is 1,060 metres in length. It has the facilities to accept several types of aircraft with limitations due to runways and navigation aids. The study notes that the facility is severely limited in terms of growth and is not equipped to serve increased traffic, especially commercial passenger traffic. Oshawa is out. Buttonville is a privately owned facility which has two runways, the longest of which is 1143 metres in length.

The report states that the facility is not amenable to expansion given the urbanized periphery. That figures. There are a lot of houses around there. You are going to have to spend a lot of money to buy all the homes around that airport. You are not going to be able to land planes into Buttonville without being sensitive to the environment and to the quality of life of those individuals who live in and around Buttonville.

The report states also that even if lands were available for the extension of the runway, Highway 404 would have to be realigned and some of the terminal buildings would have to be removed. You can imagine the expense there.

Then it talks about Hamilton Airport, the preferred airport to Pearson International.

An hon. member: Why is the NDP against it then?

Mr. Keyes: Preferred. I mentioned you were out taking the phone message and it mentioned it. Can you imagine the NDP being against Hamilton? Study after study concludes that Hamilton is the logical alternative to Pearson International, a venting for Pearson International, a reliever of congestion for Pearson International.

The study notes—this is the 1990 study of Transport Canada—that Hamilton has the facilities to handle all types of aircraft but that the distance that can be flown from Hamilton by various aircraft is limited due to the length of one principal runway. We have three runways.

The study agrees with the recommendations of the Hamilton–Niagara federal Liberal task force on Hamilton Airport in that with comparatively minimal expense to upgrading Hamilton could accept traffic from PIA.

I spoke earlier about the need for a multi–modal approach to transportation. GO Transit which operates a station at Malton, a mile away from PIA, has confirmed it is giving serious consideration to a link–up with Pearson.

Such a network of transportation would not only help solve some of the congestion at Pearson International but could ultimately be used to transport passengers with connecting flights to or from Hamilton Airport.

In addition, a new GO Transit station is currently under construction at Aldershot, Ontario; 15 minutes by GO bus to Hamilton Airport.

Access to Hamilton Airport from Pearson International and the southern Ontario region is quick and efficient although the Government of Ontario could play a greater role in the development of Hamilton Airport by improving road access to that facility.

An hon. member: That is the NDP government.

Mr. Keyes: Yes, the NDP government. We need help. We have a chicken and egg scenario, as I like to refer to it. As other individuals have said, Hamilton is prepared. The city is prepared. The Regional Municipality of Hamilton–Wentworth is prepared. The residents of Hamilton are prepared to accept an expanded, versatile and modern facility at Hamilton Airport.

The only thing that is holding us up is that the major commercial carriers, whether it be cargo or passenger, say: "We can't go to Hamilton because there is no access". There is this one little two–lane stretch of road that branches off from the 403, a major highway with its exit ramp already in place. I think it is about five miles from 403 to the airport. They say: "We can't do that until that is fixed up". Then the NDP government says: "We can't fix that up until the commercial airlines indicate to us that they are going to use the airport".

It is a chicken and egg. Somebody has to play the right card and say: "Listen, the feds say we have trouble at Pearson, too much traffic. We need to put in a couple of more runways".

Nonsense I say. Just create at a minimal expense some multi-modal approach to transportation between Hamilton and Toronto.

Travellers are aware of the difficulties associated with departing or arriving on time at Pearson International. Many have waited on the tarmac as my hon. friend from the NDP has indicated. The clock ticks by either for take-off clearance or for a space at the gate.

Considering that it would take roughly the same time to travel from Hamilton Airport to downtown Toronto as it would from Pearson International Airport to downtown Toronto, one has to acknowledge how Hamilton Airport could play a positive role in alleviating air transportation congestion in southern Ontario.

• (1750)

I will refer to the second report here. This latest report to cross my desk is in contrast to the first report that crossed my desk a year ago. As this Transport Canada environmental impact statement summary outlines, Hamilton Airport is too close to Toronto.

Mr. Boudria: I thought it was too far.

Mr. Keyes: It is too far because a person has to get on a bus to Toronto airport.

This report says: "It is too close". There are other examples of dual operating airports in the world, as was explained a little earlier, which function with great success. They are meant to compliment the services of each other.

Hamilton airport, 60 kilometres from Pearson International, is much farther than the 16 kilometres which separates two of the world's busiest airports, JFK International and LaGuardia. LaGuardia basically serves domestic flights, although American and Canadian carriers fly into the facility from Canada.

Passengers regularly land at LaGuardia on domestic flights and transfer by shuttle bus to JFK. Conveniently licking up the two airports in New York is an interstate highway.

In California, passengers transfer between San Francisco International and Oakland International on a regular basis. The two airports are some 90 kilometres apart straight across San Francisco Bay. A shuttle bus transfers passengers with baggage from one facility to the next facility in an hour.

Passengers also transfer from San Francisco International to San Jose International. There are three principal airports in sunny California.

Passengers arriving at or departing Heathrow International in London also transfer to flights in Gatwick, some 45 kilometres from each other.

Transport Canada must encourage the development of Hamilton airport as the second principal airport in southern Ontario and must co-operate with the province of Ontario to similarly develop an effective means of ground transportation between Pearson International and Hamilton. We cannot say it enough.

I have only a couple of minutes remaining, so I will conclude my remarks. There are other concerns related to Bill C-5 and to the over-all strategy which I think this government has failed to implement. It is an over-all vision for the future of transportation in this country. It is something that incorporates not just talking about planes today and cars on the highways tomorrow and the trains next week.

All of this has to be co-ordinated. The *Open Skies* agreement will surely increase pressure on that already over crowded Pearson International.

Testimony from the Dryden inquiry from Transport Canada indicated that because of delays at PIA, planes which are de-iced in the winter risk recurring ice contamination while sitting on a tarmac waiting to take off. There is that risk.

I talked to the airport management. It is already talking about putting one of those de-icing machines at the end of a runway. We will see.

We have agreed that in order to realize the expansion of Hamilton we need a commitment from Transport Canada and the Ontario government.

I want to conclude on a final note. Sometimes people think: "Keyes, you are just an opposition member blowing in the wind". The reality is that you are in opposition and have to oppose the government policies.

What I am trying to do is not oppose government policy because, really, there is not any. What I am trying to do is to try to help it create a solid policy for the distribution at that busy airport at Toronto.

It is not just me speaking. Transport Canada has mismanaged the nation's airports and has failed to plan for aviation deregulation.

An hon. member: Who says?

Mr. Keyes: Says who? Says the Auditor General, Ken Dye, on October 31, 1991. It was in all the papers. It is not just Keyes saying that they do not have it, it is the Auditor General who says: "They ain't got it." Let us get on with it and let us have another look at Pearson and Hamilton.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Transport.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 is deemed to have been moved.

CANADA POST

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to continue with the question that I posed to the minister responsible for Canada Post on May 24 of last week.

The question that I asked the minister concerned the rental of a box at the Skydome that Canada Post took upon itself to rent or lease. I raised it at the time because I do not think it is the type of signal that Canadians want to see Canada Post sending out at this particular time.

I would like to know what the exact dollar figure is on the rental of that box. The minister, obviously, did not give me the answer to that. However, I am led to believe that it was sub–leased from another corporation. The corporation from which Canada Post leased that box or sub–leased it paid in the vicinity of $200,000. Whether it is $200,000, $100,000 or $50,000, the point is that it is money that Canada Post should use for other purposes, such as reducing postal rates throughout Canada. It is just a symbol of the arrogance that Canada Post, from time to time, has displayed in this country.

I raise this because I have been in some of those communities in my riding that have felt the effects of the policies that Canada Post impose on some of smaller communities in Canada.

• (1800)

There are rural communities in my riding that no longer have the services they used to because Canada Post has taken it upon itself to remove those services. There are areas like Seal Cove, Grand Manan, Meductic, and Castalia, as well as many other places throughout my riding, that are suffering because of some of the arrogant policies of Canada Post.

While I am on my feet, I do want to give the minister some credit for what he has done. I know that he, himself, cannot be responsible for all the day to day activities of Canada Post, but I do want to give him some credit.

In 1984, we made a commitment to the people of Canada that Canada Post would cease to be a burden to the Canadian taxpayers. We as a government and the minister responsible have lived up to that commitment. We have taken a $500 million deficit and turned it into a $149 million surplus.

However, we have paid a price for that turnaround. Much of what we are doing, we are doing at the expense of rural Canadians. The problem, the mismanagement of Canada Post, is not at this rural level.

If the truth were known, I think most of it is at the corporate level. Rural Canada is certainly not solely responsible for some of the difficulties that Canada Post has got itself into in past years. Yet the small, usually poorer areas of Canada receive the brunt of every government policy.

I want to quote, before I finish, and I hope you, Mr. Speaker, give me the opportunity to finish on this note. There is a suggestion that the first class postal rate in this country is too high. That we are in fact subsidizing some

of the other services that Canada Post offers. So, if I may:

Glen Smith, President of UPS Canada Limited says—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order please. Your time is up. You only have four minutes.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport for two minutes.

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, Canada Post was established as a Crown corporation in 1981. This action had the support of all parties in the House of Commons as well organized labour, business and consumer groups. The post office needed purpose and direction. It was time that business values were applied to the operation of postal services in Canada.

By applying sound business management, increasing productivity and streamlining its operations, Canada Post has turned deficits of hundreds of millions of dollars into profits for the past two fiscal years. I hope it continues the same trend.

The Canada Post Corporation has achieved this goal through the hard work of its employees, which has promoted the growth of mail volume in a competitive environment.

Like many other Canadian corporations operating in a competitive business environment, Canada Post is active in the promotion of sporting events and is winning new clients because of it. Canada Post rents box seating for the sole purpose of conducting business. These rentals and the hosting of customers are normal business functions that help the corporation improve volume and revenues, acquire new customers and retain existing ones.

These activities increase revenues by promoting volume growth thereby ensuring the financial success of the corporation and job security for its employees. As well as being an active member of the business community, Canada Post contributes to Canadian society by supporting community, sporting and cultural activities. Canada Post participates in community activities such as Winterlude, Carnivale du Quebec, and the Calgary Stampede; in arts and culture activities such as the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the opera, the Nova Scotia Symphony Orchestra and the Music '91 Festival in British Columbia; and in sporting activities such as the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics, the P.E.I. Canada Winter Games, the Canadian Football League, professional baseball and the games for the disabled.

As well, Canada Post helps disadvantaged Canadians through its funding of literacy organizations.

The elimination of postal deficits has removed a burden from Canadian taxpayers and Canada Post profits now help the government reduce the deficit through the payment of a dividend.

In 1981, Canadians were wishing that the post office was run like a business, making money instead of accumulating a $600 million deficit. Well, now the corporation is and Canadians can be proud of that.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pursue a question that I asked the Minister of Transport in the House on Friday. It had to do with the fact that the Canadian Pacific Railway is intending to divert its unit coal trains through a place called North Portal, Saskatchewan, through the northern United States and up again to Thunder Bay, thus bypassing entirely the province of Manitoba.

I asked the minister whether or not the government was aware of this intention by CPR to bypass Manitoba. The minister said she was not aware of CPR's intention but said that even if she was, she would not do anything about it because it was strictly a business decision.

I do not think this is strictly a business decision. This is a decision made possible by policies adopted by this government, going back to the adoption of the Freedom to Move legislation in 1987, the transportation deregulation policies of this government which make it more possible and more permissible for Canadian railways to use American lines.

We predicted at that time that transportation deregulation—which, I might add, had its origins with a Liberal Minister of Transport, now the member for Winnipeg South Centre— would lead to the use of American lines and the disappearance of railway traffic in western Canada, and for that matter in Canada generally.

This attempt by the CPR to get a waiver of compliance from the FRA in the United States for its bathtub coal cars is just the tip of the iceberg. It is a precedent for what could become very widespread use by Canadian railways of American lines. This would have its effect not

only on Manitoba, as in this case, but on other areas of the country and ultimately on Canadian ports.

This concern has been expressed not just by me but by many who are concerned about the future of Canada's transportation system. The trend toward the use of American railway lines, because of the disadvantage Canadian railways now find themselves in *vis-à-vis* American railways, could lead not just to the loss of jobs in the railway system but also in Canadian ports.

We need to have a hard look at the ways in which railway transportation in this country is being disadvantaged by the tax system. In the meantime we need to call on the railways, particularly the CPR in this case, to act like good corporate citizens—perhaps for the first time in CPR's history—and maintain the use of the Canadian rail lines and the Canadian rail system, until such time as the government wakes up to what is happening and addresses the various ways in which the railways are being put at this disadvantage—whether it is through provincial fuel taxes or other issues the railways may have a legitimate point about.

I think they do have a point, for instance, with respect to fuel taxes. In many cases fuel taxes had their origin as a tax to pay for highways. The railways, by having to pay the fuel tax, are not only paying for their own roadbed, which they have to pay for exclusively out of their own revenues, but they also have to pay for highways, in other words for the roadbed of their competitors, through these various taxes.

I think the railways all have a point, just as individual Canadians might have a valid reason for cross-border shopping. However, they have a responsibility to seek changes in their own country rather than opportunities in other countries. That is the solution, not what the CPR is intending to do now.

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): At the outset let me say that I am pleased to have this opportunity to set the record straight regarding the alleged diversion of potash and coal traffic from western Canada to the United States destinations. What began as a sound business decision on the part of CP Rail to reduce operating costs has been distorted by many parties.

Let me explain. For many years now CPR has moved potash from mines in Saskatchewan and coal from south-eastern British Columbia to trans-border gateways either in Saskatchewan or in Manitoba.

• (1810)

From there these commodities are carried onward to destination points in the United States by interconnecting American railroads or from the mine sites entirely over Canadian Pacific lines to the port of Thunder Bay for vessel loading and delivery to ports on the Great Lakes.

There is no intention on the part of CPR to change these traffic routes. The real question deals with the fact that part of CPR's coal car fleet is made up of bathtub gondola cars that were manufactured in Canada and used domestically to export coal to the west coast. They are also used for the transport of low sulphur coal to power generating plants in Ontario, and CPR has a surplus of this equipment. These cars are cheaper to operate than the equipment currently used in transborder coal and potash service, so CPR applied to the U.S. regulatory authority for approval to operate these cars in the United States.

This approval is necessary because the cars were built in Canada and do not satisfy all the U.S. specifications. CPR has applied for a waiver of compliance on these specifications. The specifications do not compromise the safety of the rail car but are technically outside the United States design criteria.

It is looking for a waiver to avoid paying for the modifications solely for the sake of modifications. CPR's actions are a response to competitive advantages enjoyed by U.S. railroads.

I am sure the hon. member would be further interested to learn that CPR feels that its proposal to use these bathtub cars should not result in the loss of any Canadian railway employment. Indeed, if the proposal is accepted, CPR will generate increased traffic levels. To repeat, the use of the bathtub gondola cars is clearly an attempt to reduce the operating costs for the traffic in question.

Cost reductions of this nature will ultimately benefit Canadian exporters as they help Canadian rail carriers to remain financially viable and thus, capable of providing rail service at competitive prices.

The minister and his government support the efforts to assist Canadian shippers to be competitive in U.S. markets.

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House this evening to defend once again the economic interests of the people of the Montreal area.

It is not the first time I have raised this important issue, but in the light of the current situation, I think it deserves our undivided attention, Mr. Speaker.

During Question Period on May 22, 1991, I quoted the new provincial economic forecasts published by the Conference Board of Canada. According to the forecasts, the economic situation in Quebec was worse than expected and the recession's impact was more severe than in other provinces.

If we compare the unemployment statistics of the two most heavily populated provinces in this country, we will reach the same conclusion as the Conference Board, Mr. Speaker. In April, the unemployment rate in Ontario was 9.4 per cent, while in Quebec it was 12 per cent. And if we consider the two largest cities in the country, in Toronto the unemployment rate was 9.1 per cent in April, while in Montreal it was around 13.1 per cent.

Actually, Mr. Speaker, when we look around the Montreal area, the picture is even gloomier. As the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel remarked yesterday, Montreal looks like a war zone. Because of the severe impact of the recession on the Montreal area, I felt I had a duty to take part in this adjournment debate and ask the government to pay attention to the figures I am about to quote.

Mr. Speaker, 22 per cent of the population of Montreal, which means about one out of four, lives below the poverty line. We cannot tolerate this kind of situation. In the province of Quebec, 2,097 bankruptcies were recorded in April 1991, 62 per cent more than in April last year. And 79 per cent of these were personal bankruptcies. The remaining 449 bankruptcies were filed by businesses, the highest figure in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

That is why this problem requires special attention from the Conservative government. Even more discouraging is the Conference Board's forecast that the economic situation in Quebec will continue to deteriorate and that during the coming year, the unemployment rate will not drop below its current level, which averages 12 per cent across the province, Mr. Speaker.

I am here this evening to ask the government to table concrete measures for the economic recovery of this region. When will the government unveil its action plan to provide durable, full-time jobs for 223,000 unemployed workers in Montreal, Mr. Speaker?

On the weekend, 5,000 people in the Gaspé held a meeting to sound the alarm. They want to stay in their region, they like it there, but there are no jobs, there is no economic activity. In that region, and in the Montreal region as well—we saw this last weekend and it happens every weekend—busloads of people to leave to go shopping in the United States. Something has to be done. The situation is critical. I think that if the government fails to come up with a comprehensive solution to deal with our economic problems, we will lose jobs that will never be recovered.

[*English*]

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the Conference Board forecast mentioned by the hon. member for Saint-Léonard for the Canadian economy is similar to the forecast contained in the February budget. Its forecast, like ours, is for a resumption of economic growth this summer and for healthy economic growth to continue during 1992. I should point out that the Conference Board does not say, as I think the member said in his question, that the Quebec economy will continue to deteriorate. Its forecast is that the Quebec economy, like the Canadian economy, will as a whole begin to recover later this year.

Short term interest rates have declined by some 500 basis points over the last year and are continuing to decline. The differential between Canadian and U.S. interest rates has narrowed by over 250 basis points over the same period. This is helping to create the conditions

for the economic recovery that we and a consensus of private sector forecasters expect to begin in the very near future.

There are abundant signs that the economic activity is beginning to firm both in Quebec and nation-wide. Housing starts have risen and resale activity has picked up sharply. Export growth resumed in March and car sales have picked up more recently. Employment increased significantly in April after stabilizing in March. Business confidence has strengthened.

The Conference Board's business confidence index rose by over 20 per cent in the first quarter. These developments are consistent with a recovery in the second half of the year since they are precisely the indicator that one expects to respond first to a decline in interest rates. It obviously takes time for some business people and households to make specific plans for major new purchases once they see lower interest rates.

New orders in turn generate new production. This is why we are now seeing and will continue in the coming months to see a marked increase in economic activity in response to lower interest rates. The Quebec economy will obviously share fully in this pickup. The policies of this government will continue to create the conditions that will permit sustainable and non-inflationary growth.

CANADA POST

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I wish to come back to a question I asked the minister responsible for Canada Post last Thursday, regarding the imminent closure by Canada Post of some 200 rural post offices across Canada, including the post office in Mabou in my constituency.

The following day one of the minister's own backbenchers, the member for Carleton—Charlotte, asked the very legitimate question: why at the same time as Canada Post is jacking up postal rates and closing rural post offices has the corporation rented a penthouse box at the Toronto Skydome for its corporate friends? I am told that the rental on this box amounts to somewhere between $100,000 and $225,000 per year.

Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting question and one that the minister cannot so easily slough off by saying that his government no longer interferes with the business of this Crown corporation. It was his government that approved the corporate plan which is leading to the elimination of hundreds of post offices across Canada, including the one in Mabou.

The minister himself has been free with his opinion that Canada Post ought to be privatized completely.

This is one of the most short sighted and wrong-headed Tory government's policies, policies which are effectively leading to the decimation of infrastructure and the government presence in rural Canada.

What galls the residents of Mabou and Avonmore, Ontario, St. Redempteur in la Gaspésie and all the other places that have lost their rural post offices recently is not so much losing their post office, though that is bad enough.

It is the way Canada Post goes about it. It is the complete lack of consultation and candour. It is the trampling of the interests of the people in the communities Canada Post is there to serve.

It is Canada Post calling the residents of Mabou to a public meeting to tell them that Canada Post carried out a 12-month review and did not talk to anybody in Mabou.

It is telling the residents of that community, who are 100 per cent satisfied with their post office and their postmaster, that the closure is to provide better service but that keeping their post office and their postmaster, with whom they are 100 per cent satisfied, is not an option that is available to them.

It is calling a meeting to consult the communities after the decision has been made and telling them that the decision they are opposed to is irreversible. Some consultation that is.

It is this unbelievable arrogance that the mandarins of Canada Post know better than do those communities they are supposedly in business to serve, what is best for them. If they would just shut up and take it, later on they will like it.

The people of Avonmore, Ontario, of Mabou, Nova Scotia, and St. Redempteur, Quebec are not backward hicks who are totally resistant to all forms of change. They are proud and educated people who want a postal communications system that does not treat them as second class citizens. They are willing to work with Canada Post toward orderly methods of delivering on the Canada Post mandate.

In a meeting last week with senior officials of Canada Post the citizens of Mabou showed that they are willing to consider alternatives to achieve savings for Canada Post while providing quality service.

What they will not accept is to be patronized and marginalized by this corporation and by this government.

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, like many other organizations that provide service to the public, Canada Post has had to adopt new methods of providing service to respond to the evolving needs of Canadians. Canada Post is committed to making postal products and services more accessible. In rural Canada, the corporation is achieving this goal by using the resources and expertise of local business to increase significantly the number of places that offer postal products and services.

Canada Post is therefore changing the way it provides postal service in many rural communities. In contrast to some other service oriented businesses which have adjusted to changing times by withdrawing services, Canada Post makes every effort to maintain its retail presence in the community through its century old partnership with local business.

In order to do this, Canada Post has implemented a program which has been the subject of many misconceptions, the conversion program: converting from a corporate operated outlet to one operated by local business in a rural community. These outlets provide all of the retail postal services currently available, such as the sale of money orders and posting or picking up parcels and signature items.

Mail delivery is maintained within the community through a variety of methods such as postal boxes in a retail postal outlet, postal boxes in a postal delivery centre, or community mail boxes at one central site or at individual sites. Canada Post ensures that the community maintains its unique postal identity. Customers continue to be able to send and receive mail locally.

The retirement of the former postmaster of the Mabou Post Office in March last year gave Canada Post an opportunity to review postal service in this community. Customers were notified in writing on March 28 that changes would be made to postal service. A public meeting was held on April 30, where in addition to explaining the process and responding to local questions, Canada Post encouraged community input to assist it in determining the best type of mail delivery for the community. Canada Post is currently accepting applications from local businesses interested in the opportunity to operate a retail postal outlet.

In communities where changes have been deemed necessary but which are unable to support local retail operations, or where community efforts to retain the *status quo* affect the corporation's ability to maintain retail services, Canada Post has no other option but to offer these services from the nearest existing retail outlet. I can assure the hon. member that this option is clearly not one favoured by the corporation, and I urge residents to support local businesses should they apply to operate a retail postal outlet in Mabou.

Surveys conducted yearly since 1988 by independent research firms, the most recent being an October 1990 Decima survey, indicate that over 90 per cent of rural Canadians are satisfied with retail postal services offered through local businesses in their community.

Canada Post is a business and, like all businesses in any community, it must manage in an effective manner if it is to succeed. The conversion program achieves this and benefits the customer, the community's business base, and the corporation. When over 90 per cent of customers surveyed have expressed approval of postal services provided by retail postal outlets this government supports this program.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.24 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 29, 1991

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

ARMENIA

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was the 73rd anniversary of the independence of Armenia. The contribution of Armenian Canadians to the Canadian nation is a rich one. The preservation of Armenian culture and language is coupled with a deep loyalty to Canada and a determination to participate in virtually every area of Canadian life.

Multiculturalism means we are free to cherish our cultural roots while at the same time play a valued role in Canadian society. Armenian Canadians are a vivid example of this ideal in action.

The dream of the Armenian people has not been crushed. Their struggle for recognition and independence continues.

I call upon our government to follow the lead of the Government of France in recognizing the atrocities committed against Armenians as a genocide and to help defend the human rights of this courageous people who have suffered so much.

* * *

FUR INDUSTRY

Mr. Bob Wood (Nipissing): Mr. Speaker, something happened in my riding of Nipissing today that will shatter many stereotypes, instil pride in our community and set an example for many others, for today marks the opening of the deMidici North Bay Fur Tanning and Dyeing Plant.

This is a plant which will operate as a joint venture between deMidici of Milan and the Nipissing Indian band. It will be located in an industrial park on the Nipissing Reserve itself. When it is fully operational it will employ approximately 50 people of which the vast majority will be native. The production of this world-class facility will be almost totally for export and will bring to North Bay customers which previously would not have done business in Canada.

Indeed the cause for optimism has not left us altogether. Here we have an example where an Indian band aggressively sought a partner to integrate fully its fur trapping activities by developing export markets for manufactured products.

Why did deMidici set up shop with the Nipissing band? Because, in its own words, "the Nipissing Indian Reserve is a progressive community with an excellent work ethic".

That is right. While the Prime Minister is thousands of miles away preaching about the need for investment and competitiveness in his own partisan ways, we here in Ontario are trying to do something about the recession that his government created.

* * *

AT AND EAST PROGRAM

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, the removal of the At and East program in 1989 meant the closure of the grain elevator at Saint John and put in question the viability of the elevator at Halifax. These elevators are an important link to the viability of the livestock industry in the maritimes. They provide an essential role in the delivery of competitively priced feed grains to the maritimes. The loss of the Halifax elevator would also mean the closure of Dover Flour Mills and would deny grain producers of the only ice-free port on the eastern seaboard.

During committee hearings on this subject, the government agreed to conduct a study into the future of these elevators. The report concluded that both elevators can only be viable in the long term with an increase of export grain moving through these facilities. The report further concluded that this could only be accom-

plished by a freight equalization program. That is exactly what the At and East was. The government should openly commit itself to developing some program to ensure the long-term viability of these two elevators.

The APTC, the Atlantic Farmers Council, Dover Flour Mills and virtually every other economic group in the maritimes are concerned about this issue.

It is about time that the government takes this issue seriously and provides some real leadership on this important matter.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE

Mrs. Nicole Roy-Arcelin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, internationally, Canada has a reputation for tolerance and freedom. Our country has been much enriched by the contribution of hundreds of thousands of Armenian immigrants who found a safe haven in Canada. Their dedication and unconditional loyalty have enriched the Canadian mosaic.

Yesterday was a memorable occasion for our fellow citizens of Armenian origin who were celebrating the seventy-third anniversary of Armenia's independence.

I wish to join all Canadians in paying tribute to the heroic struggle of the Armenian people who want to regain the independence they lost under the Communist regime. The events that caused these valiant and brave people such terrible suffering must not be forgotten.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, we are told by the government that a new defence policy is forthcoming.

The Department of National Defence is doing a complete review of Canada's defence policy and how it spends its $12.6 billion annual budget. However, the review process we have seen to date has been unfair and irresponsible.

The government has permitted speculation and rumours about base relocations, base closures and our withdrawal from NATO. These speculations are running rampant without any opportunity for public input.

In my opinion this is unfair to Canadians who want a full and public debate about the objectives of our defence policy. It is unfair to the military personnel who have served Canada so well and unfair to the many Canadians who directly and indirectly depend on the military.

Canadians want a military that serves Canada's defence needs into the next century. Even more, Mr. Speaker, they want a defence policy that is fully debated by all—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member's time has expired.

* * *

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, according to a recent Gallup poll, 63 per cent of all Canadians and 65 per cent of Quebec residents think that the Official Languages Act is a failure.

Professor Robert Young of the University of Western Ontario advocates that every province should have full control over language, culture and communications because, according to him, bilingualism has not reduced support for independence in Quebec and it arouses anti-Quebec sentiment elsewhere in Canada.

If, as the Prime Minister says, the House of Commons is the greatest constituent assembly there is, then it is time we publicly discussed this issue. However, when we do, let's remember the impact that changes in language rights will have on the French speaking minority outside Quebec and the English speaking minority in Quebec.

* * *

THE CANINE CAPER

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, *The Canine Caper*: It is a real dog's life out there, unless of course you are a dog working for Revenue Canada in which case you get royal treatment.

Canadians are going to be howling mad when they hear that the government has built a dog house for 10 dogs for the less than humble cost of $375,000. That is $37,500 for each of the salivating residents of this luxury pad.

Canadians have been telling members of this government to keep their paws off their money. Instead the Tories dogmatically go on wasting tax dollars. Their behaviour is almost Pavlovian.

The political animals across the way are barking up the wrong tree if they expect Canadians to swallow this one.

This time the Tories have bitten more than they can chew. This could well turn out to be a dog's breakfast for them. Tory members of Parliament better watch out the next time they go near a "pole".

* * *

[*Translation*]

DISABLED PERSONS

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, since this is National Access Awareness Week, Integrating Persons with Disabilities, I would like to stress the dedication of many volunteers and agencies in my riding, including the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec, whose headquarters are located in Drummondville, and the Drummondville association for the disabled.

During this week I urge all Canadians to take active measures at the national, regional and local levels to eliminate the barriers encountered by more than 3 million disabled persons, and facilitate access for the disabled to employment, housing, transportation, education and recreation.

Mr. Speaker, as individuals or organizations, as small businesses or large corporations and governments, we should all consider this year's theme—Access is a right—and think about what we can do to make our communities accessible to all persons with a disability.

* * *

[*English*]

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, last evening I attended a reception to commemorate Amnesty International's 30th anniversary. There I met many people committed to ensuring that all people have basic human rights.

As opposition critic for human rights, I rely heavily on Amnesty International for information.

The organization, though non-partisan, has provided invaluable assistance and information to all parliamentarians involved in the advocacy of human rights.

I think back to a recent incident in which I worked with Amnesty.

• (1410)

Two Jamaicans were to be executed, contrary to articles 14 and 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. I, on behalf of Amnesty, appealed to the minister to intervene on behalf of those prisoners. As a result of this, the execution of these two men was stayed.

The 45,000 Canadians who volunteer with Amnesty must feel immense satisfaction with their work.

On behalf of my colleagues in this House, I would like to salute the 45,000 Canadians who work unselfishly to achieve basic human dignity for all people around the world.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AIR CARRIERS

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, a report submitted to the National Transportation Agency of Canada has concluded that the lack of consistent policies among large air carriers regarding services for the disabled may unduly restrict their travels.

The NTA has ordered air carriers to react to this conclusion within thirty days and to comment on the steps the NTA intends to take to remedy the situation.

If the remedy is approved by the NTA, standards for the transportation of disabled persons on board aircraft seating 30 passengers or more will be applied. These standards would come into effect on August 1, 1991.

Mr. Speaker, this conclusion was the result of a preliminary report submitted by two investigators who were asked by the NTA in October 1990 to survey the situation. The purpose of their investigation is to ex-

amine the policies of air carriers for the transportation of disabled persons.

* * *

[*English*]

PROVINCIAL BUDGETS

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, to hear the Prime Minister talk, you would think that the whole world is focused on Bob Rae's projected budget deficit of $9.7 billion.

Why make an international incident of it? Is he concerned if a Conservative premier has a deficit? Not if recent history is a guide. In 1986 when Premier Grant Devine of Saskatchewan, which had balanced budgets under the NDP, ran up a $1.2 billion deficit, we did not hear comments from the Prime Minister or from finance. They did not chide Alberta Premier Don Getty about his 1987 deficit of $4 billion–plus.

Ontario's deficit will be 3.4 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product. Saskatchewan's was double that at 7 per cent. Alberta's deficit took 6.9 per cent of its GDP. Surely the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister are being silly, petty and ridiculous. The country would be well rid of both of them.

* * *

FRASER RIVER FESTIVAL

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, this weekend the annual Fraser River Festival will be held at the Deas Island Regional Park in my riding of Delta.

A very special guest at the festival will be the Minister of the Environment.

This event is put together through the co–operation of the federal and provincial governments, as well as businesses and environmental groups.

The mix of sponsors is reflected in the events which celebrate all aspects of the Fraser River. The Fraser River Festival provides a special opportunity for families to learn more about how both people and wildlife use the Fraser River and its estuary through a variety of displays and entertainment.

It is a very popular event in the lower mainland. Last year almost 10,000 people attended and organizers hope for even more this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish the organizers of the Fraser River Festival the very best for a successful 1991 festival.

* * *

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, multiple sclerosis is the most common disease of the central nervous system, usually striking young adults in the prime of their life.

Since the month of May has been designated multiple sclerosis month by the MS Society of Canada, let us pause and remember those who must live with this disease and also those who take care of them.

I encourage my colleagues and all Canadians to support the carnation fundraiser–public education campaign, and I take this opportunity to recognize the worker of the society's many volunteers.

The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada is made up of 160 local chapters in communities all across this country. It is relentless in its pursuit of its goals in finding the cause and a cure of this dreadful disease.

On behalf of the federal government, I wish to express the gratitude of all Canadians to the members and the volunteers of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC'S REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. The Minister of National Health and Welfare has just announced the creation of a so–called new department of regional development for Quebec. However, he immediately added there would be no new initiatives, no new programs and no new money for this program. Could the Acting Prime Minister tell us what all the hoopla is about? Is the government trying to fool Quebecers?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the minister of health will be in the House a little later to respond more fully. The intention here is to focus on the regional develop-

ment problems and difficulties that exist in the province of Quebec, particularly in so far as they relate to the need for adjustment and restructuring.

The hon. minister of health will be providing a leadership role and working very closely with the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister responsible for International Trade.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr Speaker, I am glad to see the Minister of National Health and Welfare just arrived in the House. Perhaps he would care to remember that when he was Minister of Industry, it was his lack of initiative that put the Quebec economy in the catastrophic situation it is in today. In Quebec, more than 12 per cent of the labour force is unemployed. More than 400,000 people are looking for work, without success. In the Montreal region alone, 213,000 people are jobless. Every day, plants are closing down and employees are being laid off at Air Canada, VIA Rail, Canadian Pacific, Pratt & Whitney, General Motors and Canadair. Why doesn't the minister simply rise in his seat and admit that when he was Minister of Industry, he messed up and he is going to mess up again?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, when Quebecers hear the Leader of the Opposition giving economic advice, they should remember what happened when he was Minister of Finance, which should be some consolation.

Mr. Speaker, what was reported in *Le Devoir* this morning is simply an administrative measure that gives the minister responsible for economic development in Quebec a management framework. I must say there are quite a few contradictions in what the Leader of the Opposition is saying. He tells us we should look after Quebec's economy, but when we provide a framework for this purpose, Mr. Speaker, he doesn't like it. I don't know what his position will be tomorrow. As far as I am concerned, the federal government has for years been involved in Quebec's regional development through federal-provincial agreements. The responsibility I will have—as soon as a framework has been provided—for regional economic development in Quebec will be similar to the responsibilities I had as Minister of Industry.

Mr. Speaker, I think Quebecers have no trouble understanding these nuances, and the leader of the Opposition should be able to understand them as well.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr Speaker, I think the framework announced by the minister is just a house of cards. I would now like to ask him a technical question. Before embarking on this exercise in public relations, did he consult the Government of Quebec.

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, when the Government of Canada—and I trust the hon. member will agree—defines its administrative structures, I would be very surprised to hear that he did so when he was a minister and his government was in power. We have to consult the provinces on the way the federal government's obligations are to be structured. Mr. Speaker, I repeat what I said earlier. This has no connection whatsoever. Once again, the Government of Canada defines its administrative structures and it does so effectively, something the Liberal Party is not in the habit of doing.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the same minister, who just gave a fine example of why we have problems with national unity in the country. In announcing the development agency, the minister is doing in Quebec what his government did in the Maritimes with ACOA. It is a smoke screen to hide the cuts in funding for transport, research and development, transfer payments. The Atlantic Region has suffered a net loss of $3.4 billion. My question is: Can the minister promise that starting today, there will be no less funds for all economic development in Quebec? Can he assure us that he is not fooling Quebec as his government fooled the Atlantic provinces?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, first I will tell the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard that it is absolutely not an agency. I do not know where he got that idea from, probably from *Le Devoir*, but the reporter was careful enough to give both options. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the Liberal Party, which should applaud the Atlantic Agency initiative, seems to want to

refuse the same opportunity for Quebec. Why would what is good in the Atlantic and in the West not be good for Quebec, Mr. Speaker?

• (1420)

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): The problem is, Mr. Speaker, that it was good neither for Atlantic Canada nor for Western Canada or any other part of Canada.

It is nothing but window-dressing, Mr. Speaker! Quebec is the businessmen's Mecca. They need sensible policies in order to prosper. The truth of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that this government spends more time covering up than dealing with the real economic problems of this country.

Here is my question, Mr. Speaker. What good will this do if the minister and his government keep the Canadian dollar at 86 cents, maintain absurd interest rates and do not come up with any adjustment policy for continental free trade?

Mr. Speaker, what we need is not blue patronage garbage, but good policies. When will we get them from you?

[*English*]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to know that for the Liberal Party having Atlantic management is not good for those regions of Canada. I am very pleased to know that.

[*Translation*]

I want to tell the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard that, in fact, by creating a special administrative structure for the management of Quebec economic and regional development, it will be possible to find Quebec answers to Quebec problems. What is wrong with that?

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister and deals with the creation of a Quebec regional development department or agency.

Will this department or agency get more money? No. Will the minister institute a consultation process on regional development with the Quebec government and the people of Quebec? Does this government intend to appoint a committee to discuss with the people of Quebec how these regional development grants should be administered?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I do not think that this government feels it has to immediately inject new funds simply because an administrative structure is set up.

I am always amazed that the opposition party the hon. member represents is not aware of the fact that the government of Canada is operating, in Quebec and elsewhere, but particularly in Quebec, under federal-provincial agreements signed with the Quebec Premier in 1988. So, we consider this agency, department or whatever only as a framework already agreed to by the Quebec government in which funding is in accordance with the terms of agreements signed with the Quebec government, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

Across Canada, the rates of unemployment are shocking, just as they are in Quebec. Statistics Canada reports today that the number of Canadians receiving unemployment insurance is up significantly to 1.2 million Canadians. That does not even count the number of Canadians who are on social assistance and out of a job as a result of the policies of this government.

In light of those statistics and in light of the comments from the Bank of Nova Scotia reported today that the federal government's economic policies will prolong the economic downturn, I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister a question.

We have seen how effectively and how rapidly this government can institute damage control about events taking place in Japan when the Prime Minister makes comments on other Canadian provinces. Will the government do some damage control, get Canadians back to work and deal with the real unemployment situation?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that the slowdown was in fact predicted back in 1989. It was recognized then that there were tremendous inflationary pressures within the system that had to be checked. We wanted to do that to avoid the very horrendous kind of recession that we experienced in

1981–82 which saw inflation rise to 13 and 13.5 per cent and interest rates to 22 to 23 per cent.

What is encouraging is that we have developed a plan, a program for recovery based on the reduction of interest rates in relationship to our fight against inflation. Interest rates have come down by 5 percentage points in the last year. Employment is increasing, not decreasing. Consumer and investor confidence and business confidence are improving. Housing starts have improved. Housing sales have improved. Statistics Canada reported that it believes the recession has bottomed out.

There are positive signs that the economy is turning around. It is important that it is turning around in such a way that we will have a durable, sustainable kind of economic growth with price stability, and that is what we are all after.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, the facts from Statistics Canada today clearly indicate that the number of people on unemployment insurance is up considerably in the months of February and March, so I do not know how the minister can say that we are on a clear turnaround.

What is this government going to do in terms of innovative programs to deal with the very serious unemployment problem across the country?

I would like to cite one example. Yesterday Canadian Auto Workers and Chrysler came up with an innovative agreement that encourages investment and creates jobs. This sends a clear message to people who are interested in investing in this country and to investors from within this country that these kinds of initiatives can in fact create jobs here in Canada.

My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister. Will the government take that positive message here in Canada and abroad and encourage other corporations to enter into the same kind of innovative job creating investments here in Canada?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the very constructive nature of the question posed by the leader of the New Democratic Party.

Indeed we should all applaud the agreement that was reached between Chrysler and the Canadian Auto Workers' union. That is precisely the kind of co-operation that we need in working together to deal with the competitiveness issue, to deal with the productivity issue, to deal with the issue of adjustment and restructuring.

It is not a government issue only. It is an issue that all Canadians must face. The Minister of Industry, Science and Technology is in fact on that kind of a mission. He will be introducing a discussion paper which will deal with all the issues as they relate to the competitiveness of Canadian industry both at home and abroad. I welcome the hon. member's support for that, because I think in building that kind of co-operation and that sort of togetherness, we can deal with this issue.

In so far as her earlier comment about February and March statistics is concerned, I would only remind the hon. member that the April figures show a bit of a turnaround. I think the ones that she has referred to are history.

* * *

PORT OF HALIFAX

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, on Monday the Minister of Fisheries said that the crisis in the port of Halifax was due to a surplus of shipping space in the north Atlantic and not to government inaction.

Would the Minister of Transport admit that the surplus of shipping space and more competitive freight rates in the United States are what is squeezing Halifax out of business? Will he commit to a reinstatement today of subsidies to the Atlantic ports?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I fully understand the member's concern for the fate of the port of Halifax. She can rest assured that we will do all in our power to make sure that the port of Halifax handles its share of goods in and out of Canada. As a matter of fact, the Minister of State for Transport, who was going to be in Halifax today and tomorrow, has been asked to meet with the port authorities to discuss what can be done on the part of Transport Canada to help them, taking into consideration that in the past the authorities of the Port of Halifax have always been very innovative in finding ways to make sure that the port is used to its full capacity.

• (1430)

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, if the government is truly going to do all in its power to assist the Port of Halifax, that will be reassuring, as opposed to empty rhetoric.

If every region of Canada is important to this government, will the minister explain why his government has failed to intervene and undertake the necessary assistance to create a truly level playing field for the hard pressed Port of Halifax? We do not need mere words, we need some concrete action and we need it today. I would like to hear from the minister.

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I did not have the pleasure of sitting in this House at the time, but I am informed that in a previous sitting of this House in years past, this government introduced some legislation to do precisely that. The most vocal opponent to those measures was a representative from the Atlantic provinces.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Minister of Transport. It concerns the crisis in the Port of Halifax caused by the policies of Canadian National.

CN is a Crown corporation. The National Transportation Act clearly states in section 3(d) that transportation is recognized as a key to regional economic development.

My question is how do the rates charged by the CN monopoly contribute to regional economic development when it was exactly these rates that caused the loss of over 400 jobs and over $24 million annually from the Port of Halifax last week? Can the minister please tell me how that is in concert with the stated intentions of the National Transportation Act.

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, an individual, who probably knows more about shipping and the Port of Halifax than the hon. member, mentioned yesterday that a representative of the Halifax Port Authority, one of the officials on the board of directors, indicated that even if CN had reduced its rail rates to zero, it would not have prevented this move by the two companies that decided to take their business away from the Port of Halifax.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister.

Will the minister confirm that the real reason the government refused to act and allowed this crisis to develop was to force the province of Nova Scotia to come up with over $4 million a year to subsidize the leasing of new container cars by CN or run the real risk of losing thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars from the economy of Nova Scotia, which has already been badly battered by this government's economic policies? Is that the real reason for the inaction?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, if the member is interested in knowing the real reason for the decision by these companies, it is because of the over-capacity on the high seas. It has nothing to do with the railway rates.

* * *

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs. It is about opening up the constitutional negotiating process to the public.

I would like to ask the minister to elaborate on his ideas yesterday of an aboriginal panel to be attached to the constitutional committee next fall. I would like him to tell the House what kind of powers that panel would have and who would appoint the panel. Could he elaborate a bit more on that for us today?

Second, can he tell the House what ideas he might have for expanding that concept to citizens' panels for a number of other key areas in building the Constitution of Canada?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think we all recognize that the situation of aboriginal Canadians is not comparable of that of any other group in the country.

Having said that, I would not exclude the possibility of considering the application of the idea of panels or something like that for some other groups. It is a proposal that is still being worked out and considered by the government.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss it with other members of the House, perhaps most usefully, after the Beaudoin–Edwards report has been tabled, although I would be prepared to enter into discussions before that time.

What I am looking for is a way that would make it clear that the powers of decision at the end of the day would rest with members of the House of Commons and the Senate, but that we would recognize that there are some groups in the country whose interest in this process requires them to be treated as more than simply witnesses and that there is a need for some way for them to be heard very fully and with an opportunity to exchange views with members of the committee.

Those are the goals we are seeking. I am seeking to combine the best elements of a parliamentary system with the best elements of more populist approaches, and I very much need the help of the hon. member and others in the House in designing that kind of system.

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

Given his response to my colleague, I am wondering as we are both members of the Beaudoin–Edwards committee—the committee has worked very hard. It is working each night this week until 10 o'clock at night in drafting the report—if the minister would be willing to come before the committee to ensure that the Beaudoin–Edwards committee report is as worth-while an exercise as we all hope it will be.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, if the members of the committee think it would be useful for me to meet with them, I would be delighted to meet with them.

* * *

CITY OF WINNIPEG

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

For several months, Winnipeggers have been waiting for a federal plan to rebuild and revitalize the economy of their city. Instead of action, we have had the end of the core area initiative. We have had the unemployment rate double. We have had several thousand aboriginal families living in abject poverty, and still there is absolutely no word from the federal government.

When will the people of Winnipeg hear from the federal government about the plan to save jobs in our city?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the federal government has dealt with this issue on a number of fronts.

First and foremost, it is important to bring inflation down. We are doing that. It is important to bring the deficit down. We are doing that.

It is having an effect on reducing interest rates which, in turn, is spurring investment, housing sales and housing starts. These are the kinds of broad macropolicies that are required in order to get the economy revitalized.

In the agriculture sector, and we recognize that Winnipeg is indeed a very important city in relation to the agriculture sector, we have brought forward a new agriculture policy which will provide security and a safety net for the producers which in turn has a very good impact upon the total economy of Manitoba, and indeed all of rural Canada.

I think what is happening right now is that the fundamental policy changes that we have implemented are having an effect. We stand by our projections of a buoyant growth in 1992 with growth reappearing in the second half of this year.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, the only thing that this government has reduced has been the size of the city economy. It has not done anything in terms of its macropolicy.

Let me ask the same minister a supplementary question about a specific project.

Winnipeg is ready to expand its Convention Centre into a complex that will act as a major boost to the tourism industry. Twenty years ago, the Liberal government was there to help start this project.

Presently there has been no word from this government. In fact, this government has refused to help the Convention Centre and with its expenses of this project.

When will we hear from the government about the future of the Convention Centre and its plans?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, possibly I could help the hon. member.

He will know that a number of us have had meetings regarding the Winnipeg Convention Centre. I find it interesting that in his question, he made reference that the Liberals were there to help. Yet, the Convention Centre did not receive any money.

* * *

• (1440)

DISABLED PERSONS

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Secretary of State responsible for the disabled in this National Access Awareness Week.

With recent figures showing that approximately 60 per cent of disabled people are now unemployed in Canada, I want to ask the minister what new and immediate initiatives can disabled people expect from the government as a result of last week's announcements to help overcome the obvious discrimination against employing the disabled in Canada?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague opposite will well know the concern of the government for disabled people. We mentioned that very specifically in the Speech from the Throne.

This week is concerned about increasing awareness. It is the fourth year we have had a National Access Awareness Week. We are in the process of preparing a comprehensive plan for the disabled to ensure that they have greater access to employment, housing, transportation, recreation and education. Those are the themes that we are putting forward this week.

We will have a comprehensive program, to be announced very shortly.

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister.

Will these new government initiatives contain anything to have employers appreciate the tremendous resources and talents which are wasted by their refusal to bring disabled people into Canada's work force?

I wonder if the minister could be just a little more specific as to what he has in this comprehensive plan that will gain for the disabled greater access to recreation facilities, to training, to housing, and all those other things which the rest of Canadians take for granted and are largely out of reach for most of the disabled people in Canada.

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): Generally I can respond in the affirmative. Just for the record, I would like to state that in Canada 13.6 per cent of our population is disabled. We have 3.3 million Canadians suffering a disability, physical or mental. It is incumbent upon government to increase the access for those people to the very issues that I mentioned a few minutes ago.

The program will address that and it will also address it by dealing with increasing partnerships in this country, partnerships with other levels of government and also partnerships with industry. That will be front and foremost in the package of proposals that we are going to put forward.

* * *

EXTRADITION

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

A British Columbia man charged with 36 counts of sexual assault on boys and girls was held in the Philippines pending the arrival of extradition papers from Canada. The papers had to arrive within 45 days. With one week remaining, they were sent by third-class mail, a slow boat to Manila. They did not arrive on time and Martin Bakker was released.

No one, including Interpol and the Canadian embassy, knows the whereabouts of this man.

I want to ask the minister what she has done to ensure that this kind of outrageous incompetence, with such tragic consequences, will not be repeated.

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am very interested that the hon. member knows that the package is on a slow boat to Manila because if that is the case, she is the only one who knows the whereabouts of the package. Nobody else does.

I have indicated that I find the situation very disturbing and horrifying. It is a mistake that was made. We are not sure where. I have asked my department for a full investigation as to how it could have happened. I might add that when the second batch of papers were sent to

the Philippines, the extradition process could be continued, and we hope to apprehend the individual and extradite him to stand trial in Canada.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear that they will be able to extradite him, if they can find him.

I want to ask the minister what plans she has to locate this man, if in fact he is still in the Philippines. How will she find him? What methods can she use to bring him back here to Canada to face trial on these counts of child sexual assault?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I have indicated that we have every intention of proceeding with the extradition and to that end we have the full co-operation of the Philippine authorities.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FORESTRY

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Forestry. Is it true that the Quebec Minister of Forestry unilaterally decided to deprive woodlot operators in eastern Quebec of some of the seedlings required for private reforestation, on the pretext that they receive federal funds from the plan for eastern Quebec?

[*English*]

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, I cannot confirm or deny any of the reports that we have heard on the news in the last couple of hours. I would have been very disappointed, particularly in light of the very productive and cordial discussions that have gone on between myself and the minister of forestry for the province of Quebec, if he would have taken any precipitous action that would make life, particularly at this point of the planting season, more difficult than it already is for our private wood lot owners.

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC'S JURISDICTION OVER EDUCATION

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, the government announced in the Speech from the Throne an unprecedented federal invasion into education and training. In this House, only the members of the Bloc Québécois rose to denounce such interference. Today, only a few hours ago, Liberal and PQ members of the National Assembly of Quebec almost unanimously passed a motion denouncing the federal government's interference in the sacred field of education, which is in provincial jurisdiction. My question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration is as follows:

In view of this position taken by both the Government of Quebec and the National Assembly, will the government finally withdraw its plan and agree to respect both the Constitution of Canada and the nearly unanimous political will of the Quebec National Assembly?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no attempt or intention on the part of the federal government to interfere in a provincial jurisdiction like education. If the hon. member were fair about the Speech from the Throne, he would recall that it fully and frankly recognizes provincial jurisdiction. If the Bloc Québécois member wants to deny Canadians and Quebecers an opportunity to discuss the need for developing a learning culture in Canada, well, I simply say that Canadians need more than education in brick buildings; they need to develop a learning culture in this country. This is what we want to do nationally—invite discussion.

* * *

QUEBEC'S REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, we now see what is behind the mask. Just when this government is promising Quebec a thoroughly renewed federalism that takes into consideration Quebec's aspirations, it decides to launch an unprecedented offensive—something Pierre Elliott Trudeau himself would never have dared to do—and intrude in fields like health, education and regional development. My question is directed to the minister responsible for Quebec and regional development. I want to ask the minister, who

knows perfectly well that the Quebec government has always wanted to be master of its own regional development, I ask the minister, who is so proud of the fact that he voted yes in the May 1980 referendum, I ask him to tell us why he now wants to impose on Quebec a structure that symbolizes federal arrogance and interference?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, last year, when I became responsible for the Department of Industry, Science and Technology, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean was a member of this government, and at the time, I was also given responsibility for regional development. So it is rather surprising that today, he is rending his garments and would have us believe—since I am maintaining the same responsibility, I would ask—I trust the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean agrees the minister responsible for Quebec has the right to intervene to help Quebec with its regional development, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

• (1450)

[*English*]

PASSES FOR CONVICTED PERSONS

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Solicitor General regarding passes for convicted rapists. Larry Takahashi was charged in 1984 with sexually assaulting 138 women across Canada, most of them in the Edmonton area. He was convicted of 16 of those charges and was sentenced to three life sentences.

Will the minister tell the House why he is now being allowed out on a "supervised recreational pass" in Agassiz, B.C. Will he tell us whether he will revoke this pass, especially given the fact that the Parole Board has repeatedly denied all forms of parole.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am obviously not aware of the case of which my hon. friend speaks. I will undertake to look into the matter and get back to him.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): This is not the first case. We have had Daniel Gingras in Alberta as well, and two people are dead because of it.

Will the minister not only review the case, but review his policy which allows abominations like this to occur? Is he aware of the fact that women and men are concerned about violence in this country and about the fact that victims do not get deals, but convicted offenders do?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I met with the corrections officers from all across Canada last evening. I think it is fair to say that this is a group that is trying to rehabilitate people. For the most part their successes are never brought up on the floor of the House of Commons. But, yes, there are some things that escape through the net and those are brought up.

I stand behind a policy of trying to rehabilitate people. I know that there are instances where, when they are brought up in this manner, they look like they are out of whack. But basically, what we are trying to do is put people back in society and that is what the policy is designed to do.

* * *

EDMONTON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport and concerns the transfer of the Edmonton International Airport to the local authority.

The original memorandum of agreement, which was signed by the Deputy Prime Minister in 1989, was a lease to purchase agreement. Today the document is merely a lease agreement.

My question is this: Given that the local authority plans to spend tens of millions of dollars over the terms of the lease to improve the infrastructure of the airport, will the minister restore the purchase clause in the agreement?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I would like to mention to him that with regard to the leases that are contemplated between the Minister of Transport and the Government of Canada and the airport authorities in the various places where we are discussing the possibility of developing the operation of the airports, these leases are going to be for a very long term period. The local airport authorities that will be investing in the improvements of the airport will have plenty of time to fully amortize their

investment. Therefore, we have no intention at this time of changing our policy of devolution of airports, not a privatization of the airports.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC'S REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare, the new minister responsible for this new structure.

I would like to ask the minister why, after announcing there will no new money and no new programs, only a new structure, he is indulging in this kind of provocation, while he knows perfectly well that everybody in Quebec, and especially the people involved in regional development, wants Ottawa to withdraw from this area. Why this kind of provocation today?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I have always admired conversions, and I am sure Quebecers would have been delighted if this one had taken place 20 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I may remind the hon. member that this measure makes perfect sense. When I was given responsibility for the department, and I am referring to regional economic development in Quebec, obviously this responsibility does not come under the responsibilities of the Minister of Health. Considering the needs and priorities involved, we found it it was necessary to have a structure that would, for the time being, administer the same content and the same responsibilities and would make it possible for us to intervene effectively in regional development.

And I trust a member from Montreal will not contradict me on that score, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister. At a time when there is talk of a new distribution of powers between Ottawa and the provinces, of eliminating duplication and all the administrative red tape that unfortunately exists now in the field of regional development, when all Quebec spokespersons at the Bélanger-Campeau Commission unanimously told Ottawa to get out of that field, I ask the minister why he heavy-handedly involves the federal government in a field from which Quebecers want Ottawa to withdraw?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I will not comment on the last parts of my colleague's question, because it would be very ironical and Quebecers would take it very badly. I will just say this: I would agree with my colleague if the recommendations of the Bélanger-Campeau Report or any approach to constitutional change applied tomorrow morning. But in fact, my colleague is asking, if an agreement for constitutional renewal is reached in two years, whether or not I will then be working as minister responsible for regional development to help Quebec develop its economy. No thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

[*English*]

MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY ACT

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

Canada has always had a strict safety code that Canadian auto makers must meet. Recent changes to the Motor Vehicle Safety Act have given American cars exemptions from some of the codes and even special status. The same considerations were not given to the Canadian industry and will result in lost Canadian jobs and a double standard for safety.

Will the minister move immediately to correct this incredible situation that allows Americans to sell products in Canada that are against the law for the Canadian industry to sell by creating one standard for the entire industry.

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of any recent relaxation in the regulations, but my hon. colleague is asking a very pertinent technical question that I will be glad to take under consideration.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. The Toronto production of the *Phantom of the Opera* required a new lead. Apparently the producers thought that no Canadian was qualified for the role, so they hired one Peter Karri. There was only one problem: he was not a Canadian citizen, nor a landed immigrant.

He is British. Even though he was living in Britain, his application was somehow magically processed in Detroit, Michigan, in a matter of days.

I ask the minister, why was Carey's application fast-tracked while thousands wait for years?

An hon. member: Double standards.

An hon. member: Look at all those hockey players who get in.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I will acknowledge that sometimes people do intervene. Members of Parliament often do in order to try to speed up the admission to Canada of someone. In the particular case in question, I will look into it and get back to the member.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC'S REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. We learned in this morning's *Le Devoir* that the government is thinking of establishing a department or agency to oversee Quebec's regional development. A question was asked about it but went unanswered. I want an answer. Did the government consult Quebec and the Quebec minister? If so, whom and what was the answer? Finally, was the former Minister of External Affairs consulted?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I answered that question just now, but for my colleague's benefit, I will repeat what I just said. When any government in Canada, federal or provincial, defines an administrative structure, it does not consult other governments. The structure is defined by the government and secondly, it is quite obvious that my colleague is not at all opposed to our setting up mechanisms for regional development in Quebec.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1500)

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 36(8) of the Standing Orders, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 11 petitions.

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

* * *

ORDER IN COUNCIL

TABLING OF APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of Order in Council appointments which were made by the government.

Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1), these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committee, a list of which is attached.

* * *

PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

FIRST REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Chuck Cook (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first and last report of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections in relation to the subject matter of the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River in relation to the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General.

The committee heard from the various parties involved in this case: the then Solicitor General, the hon.

member for Scarborough—Rouge River and the acting Privacy Commissioner. The committee also sought opinions from the Law Clerk, from Parliamentary Counsel's Office and from three distinguished experts.

After careful examination, the committee recommends that the House adopt an order requiring the Solicitor General to provide to the Justice Committee, within 30 days, the unexpurgated versions of the report by Mr. Weir governing the escape by David Gingras and the report by the Board of Investigations concerning an offender, all pursuant to section 8(2)(C) of the Privacy Act, section 18 of the Constitution Act, 1867, section 4 of the Parliament of Canada Act and section 108(1) of the Standing Orders.

I would also state briefly that I wish to compliment the member for Scarborough—Rouge River for his detailed and important work regarding the supremacy of Parliament, which is important to all of us. Although I sit opposite from him, I compliment him on his work.

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

* * *

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

THIRD REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the third report of the Standing Committee on House Management. I intend to move concurrence in the report later this day.

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

Mr. Kindy: Mr. Speaker, I am not giving unanimous consent to the presentation of that report.

Mr. Speaker: I wonder if I could perhaps assist the hon. member. There is no need for unanimous consent at this stage. The hon. member might want to consider the rules and later, when the report is moved, the hon. member might want to take advantage then of whatever rights there are.

[*Translation*]

UNEMPLOYMENT ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-211, an Act to amend the Unemployment Act (temporary community service).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to introduce this bill to amend the Unemployment Act (temporary community service).

The purpose of this bill is to ensure that individuals in temporary service to the community as jurors or emergency workers are not disqualified from unemployment benefits simply because of their participation in such an activity.

[*English*]

This amendment will ensure that persons in temporary service to the community as jurors or emergency workers are not regarded as disqualified from unemployment benefits because of their participation in such activities.

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

* * *

HEALTH AND WELFARE, SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SENIORS AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN

AUTHORIZATION TO TABLE REPORT

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That further to the order of the House made Friday, May 17, respecting the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors and the Status of Women, the committee be authorized to table its report no later than June 21, 1991.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

CONCURRENCE IN THIRD REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I move that the third report of the Standing Committee on House Management, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not consent.

* * *

PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

CONCURRENCE IN FIRST REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I would move that the first report of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, we have not had an opportunity to look at the report. I wish the member would give us the time to reflect on it before concurring in it.

Mr. Lee: Very well, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

PETITIONS

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, once again it is an honour and a privilege to present a petition on behalf of a number of constituents from Kamloops, Clearwater, Logan Lake and Avola, British Columbia, who are concerned that the government has decided to cut back on support for the RCMP. They are concerned that this may result in increased levels of lawlessness and obviously reduce the effectiveness in terms of offering police protection. They are calling upon Parliament to urge the government to restore proper funding to the RCMP so that it is able to fulfil its mandate and role as the only visible and viable police force for communities across British Columbia and remain as a visible and viable symbol of Canadian unity.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I also have the honour to present a petition to the House pursuant to Standing Order 36. This petition deals with the CBC and expresses the concerns of many residents of Victoria about the cutbacks to the CBC. They urge the government to consider restoring proper funding to the CBC so that it can fulfil its mandate and they urge the government to re-examine its priorities in this area and look to the issue of CBC's service in the capital city of British Columbia, the city of Victoria.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and privilege to present yet another petition from 150 residents of northwestern Ontario, from Schreiber to Thunder Bay to Kenora to Keewatin.

• (1510)

All of these petitioners have one thing in common. They are supporters of rail passenger services. Unfortunately, they have another thing in common. None of them have access to it any more.

The petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to support the NDP plan to restore VIA Rail service, —which was cut on January 15, 1990—maintain and where appropriate upgrade remote services on which many Canadians rely, provide a legislative mandate for VIA Rail and make available to VIA the resources which it needs to become a modern, passenger rail system in a class with those throughout the rest of the western world.

In short, they want to put Canada back on track.

TAXATION

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to present a petition to the House today signed by residents from primarily the Prince George, B.C., area.

They call upon Parliament to bring in a fair tax system.

CANADA POST

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition presented to me by 132 members of the community of Briercrest, Saskatchewan, which is a small community in the southern part of my riding.

The petitioners are concerned about the loss of their post office and other post offices throughout rural Canada. They know that the post office is an integral part of rural Canada. They call upon this government to reverse its policy on closing or converting rural post

offices and to keep the post offices open in Briercrest and other rural communities.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise under Standing Order 36 to present a petition on behalf of various people in British Columbia.

The concern here is that the federal government is either cutting back on policing or adding additional cost to the tax base of municipalities to come up with extra money for policing.

These people in British Columbia have stated that the federal government is uncompromising in its negotiations with its provincial counterparts by maintaining that their share of funding will be reduced as of March 31, 1991, resulting in additional cost to the taxpayers and municipalities.

The petitioners are urging the government to consider restoring proper funding to the RCMP so that it will fulfil its mandate and role as the only visible police force for communities across British Columbia and remain as a viable symbol of Canadian unity.

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, the petitioners on this petition, through me and through Standing Order 36, want to draw to the attention of this House that many Canadians feel that Marie Sklodowska Curie, a servant of mankind, a scientist whom fame could not corrupt, should be honoured by Canada as she has been honoured by many different countries of the world for her discovery of radium.

There is an organization in Canada using her name to honour her contribution to mankind and to Canadians. It will be very fitting. The petitioners call upon this Parliament to see that Canada strikes a commemorative stamp on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of her birth, which falls on November 7, 1992.

I might remind the House that is when we celebrate 125 years of the birth of our country.

Speaker's Ruling

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Shall all questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all the notices of motions for the production of papers also be allowed to stand.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: So ordered.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

REINSTATEMENT OF BILLS—SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: Yesterday morning a point of order was raised relating to Government Business No. 1 which concerns the reinstatement of certain bills from the Second Session. Yesterday afternoon, to accommodate a request from the three House leaders, I informed the House of the Chair's decision on the matter, undertaking to return to set in context that decision. I would like to do so briefly at this time.

[*Translation*]

I do not propose to restate the arguments which were presented yesterday but I would like to thank the hon. member for Cape Breton–East Richmond, the hon. member for Kamloops, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, the hon. member for Ottawa–Vanier, the hon. member for Annapolis Valley–Hants, the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russel, the hon. member for Nickel Belt and the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader.

[*English*]

Before looking at the terms of the motion itself, two concepts must be examined: the concept of prorogation

and its effects, and the notion of the reinstatement of the business of one session in the subsequent session.

Prorogation has the distinct effect of interrupting the business of Parliament and, possibly, altering its agenda. Its most significant impact is on the legislative process.

[*Translation*]

According to Beauchesne's Edition, Citation 167:

"(1) the effect of a prorogation is at once to suspend all business until Parliament shall be summoned again. Not only are the sittings of Parliament at an end, but all proceedings pending at the time are quashed. Every bill must therefore be renewed after a prorogation, as if it were introduced for the first time."

[*English*]

Bourinot's fourth edition, pages 102 and 103, states this in even more explicit terms:

The legal effect of a prorogation is to conclude a session; by which all bills and other proceedings of a legislative character depending in either branch, in whatever state they are at the time, are entirely terminated, and must be commenced anew, in the next session, precisely as if they had never been begun.

Thus prorogation gives Parliament the chance to start anew in dealing with the business of the nation.

While the effects of prorogation are clear, there have been many occasions when the Government has sought the permission of the House to reinstate legislation considered in the previous session. This has always been considered an extraordinary procedure. In fact, on two separate occasions, July 22, 1977, and March 22, 1982, the House amended its Standing Orders to permit certain bills to be reinstated in the next session. These and other instances of reinstatement—including several proposed in this Third Session—have been dealt with by unanimous consent.

In the situation before us, the Chair appears to be facing an "unprovided case" as I understand the terms of Standing Order 1. In considering this case, I am mindful of the words of one of my predecessors in his ruling of March 23, 1966:

It is only in exceptional circumstances and when there is little doubt about it that the Speaker can intervene and of his own initiative, amend the resolution proposed by an hon. member.

I have carefully reflected on the learned ruling of Speaker Macnaughton on June 15, 1964, which I commend to the attention of hon. members. I have had, reluctantly, to conclude that this is indeed one of those exceptional instances to which Speaker Lamoureux referred.

The Chair can find no precedent for the reinstatement of bills by way of motion, following notice. Hon. members may wish to refer to a ruling on June 13, 1988, which offers certain useful parallels. However, despite the unprecedented nature of this situation, the Chair has found nothing in the rules of the House or in our practice which precludes such an approach and accordingly will allow the motion to proceed.

However, if this approach to the reinstatement of business is acceptable, the form of the motion poses some difficulties. Some hon. members contend that the motion must be divided so that a separate debate and a separate vote can be held on each item of business addressed. The Chair views the subject of the motion as the reinstatement of business, not the individual items of business to be reinstated, and therefore concludes that a single debate will give members adequate opportunity to express themselves on the motion.

Nevertheless, the effect of the motion is to reinstate several distinct pieces of legislation and members must be afforded an adequate opportunity for assent or dissent on each of those items. Accordingly, separate questions will be put on each of the bills to be reinstated.

The reference to Bill C–73 also causes some concern since it was reinstated by unanimous consent on May 23, 1991, and has now been disposed of by the House.

[*Translation*]

Citation 424(1) of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition notes that the Speaker:

"has the unquestionable authority to modify motions with respect to form".

Accordingly, no question will be put on this item.

[*English*]

In summary, government motion No. 1 will be dealt with in the following manner: there will be a single debate and five separate questions will be put, namely, on the reinstatement of Bill C–26, Bill C–58, Bill C–78, Bill C–82, and Bill C–85. No question will be put on Bill

C–73. The enabling and final paragraphs of the motion will, as appropriate, form part of each question put.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1520)

[*English*]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

MOTION THAT DEBATE BE NOT FURTHER ADJOURNED

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That debate on the motion relating to the reinstatement of certain bills introduced in the Second Session of the 34th Parliament, Government Business No. 1, and on any amendments proposed thereto shall not be further adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Call in the members.

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

(*Division No. 4*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bourgault
Brightwell
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Yellowhead)
Cole
Andre
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Bouchard (Roberval)
Boyer
Browes
Cardiff
Chadwick
Charest
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins

Cook
Corbeil
Côté
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Della Noce
Dick
Domm
Edwards
Feltham
Fretz
Gibeau
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Horner
Hudon
Jacques
Johnson
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Martin (Lincoln)
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van de Walle
Vézina
Weiner
White
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—125
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Danis
de Cotret
Desjardins
Dobbie
Duplessis
Epp
Fontaine
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hogue
Horning
Hughes
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Larrivée
Lewis
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Mayer
McDermid
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Venne
Vien
Wenman
Wilbee
Winegard

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Assad
Barrett
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
Catterall
Comuzzi
Crawford
Dionne
Ferguson
Fisher
Fontana
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvard
Howdebo
Jordan
Althouse
Arseneault
Baker
Bélair
Berger
Black
Breaugh
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Copps
Dingwall
Edmonston
Finestone
Flis
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Heap
Hunter
Karpoff

Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Kindy
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)	Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte	LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay	MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLaren	Maheu
Manley	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	McCurdy
McGuire	Milliken
Nault	Nowlan
Nunziata	Nystrom
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Parent	Peterson
Phinney	Pickard
Prud'homme	Rideout
Riis	Rodriguez
Simmons	Speller
Stewart	Stupich
Taylor	Tobin
Vanclief	Volpe
Walker	Wappel
Whittaker	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—90

• (1600)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

When debate ended, the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier had 10 minutes remaining.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

REINSTATEMENT OF BILLS

The House resumed from Tuesday, May 28, consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre (p. 655).

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I must tell you that we are very disappointed with the ruling on Motion No. 1. We had serious reservations about this proposal, but we will put up with it because we have no intention of appealing your decision. We accept, somewhat reluctanctly shall we say, that this government be once again allowed to disregard the principles of parliamentary democracy with yet another special measure. We consider it special because they used a motion to reintroduce or reinstate five controversial bills which were found wanting last session.

Mr. Speaker, as I already explained, every item on the Order Paper at the time of prorogation is supposed to die on it. However, since the government has introduced a motion to reinstate these bills, we have to consider them now.

[*English*]

Since I began my remarks on the government's heavy-handed motion to reinstate certain bills, for which it could not receive unanimous consent because they are indeed not very good bills, a new element has been introduced into the debate—closure. It is now using its majority, the tyranny of the majority, to impose upon the rest of us its will.

That is far from being democratic. Here we have an abuse of power by the majority because the government happens to have the numbers and it can impose upon the minority a process which, to say the least, is objectionable.

Obviously the Conservative government in power has become an old hand at closure. The media do not pay attention to it any more. The government uses closure, abuses it, anytime for anything.

It should be noted that in the five years, and I have the statistics to give the House, the Conservative government has used time allocation 31 times to limit debate, compared to previous federal Liberal governments which used time allocation 29 times in 19 years. Between December 1986 and December 1990 the Conservative government used closure 18 times. In the 77 years before 1984 governments, all governments, used closure 19 times.

Most recent, this government used closure to terminate debate on changes to our Standing Orders, many of which placed greater limits on the opposition, limiting debate and our ability to better oppose the measures the government puts forth.

• (1610)

Now the Tories want to re-introduce certain bills at the stage these bills were abandoned like hot potatoes. When they prorogued the House, they abandoned those bills. They knew what they were doing and yet they proceeded because they said: "We have the numbers." Again, that is a tyranny of the majority.

There were good reasons why these bills were abandoned. They were abandoned because they were flawed. They were controversial. They were publicly opposed by many. They were obviously not a priority for this government, since it let them stand not for months or weeks but for years. Some of those bills have been standing on the Order Paper of this House for years; they cannot be a priority. What is the hurry all of a sudden? Why could the government not go back, take the comments made on the debate on these bills, readjust the proposals and come back with an amended proposal?

Let me emphasize that the Official Opposition has agreed to the reinstatement of certain bills at the stage at which they died. We did it unanimously, which was the way to do it. The traditional way in Parliament is to go to the opposition and say: "This bill died at prorogation, not because we did not want to have it, but because of the circumstances and would you please accept that it be re-introduced". We did; Bill C-73 is an example. Last week we were asked for unanimous consent and we gave it, but not for the five other bills under study at this time.

Instead of taking the opportunity to introduce better bills, bills which are more responsive, considerate and constructive, the government provided the opposition with absolutely no alternative but to oppose this motion No. 1, which is a grab bag of five bills which the government wants to reinstate.

One of them is Bill C-26. I want to go through the five bills because I think it is important.

Bill C-26, an Act to amend the Railway Act (grain and flour subsidies). As we have said in this House in debate, the bill will devastate economic things in the east. It will have an impact on parts of the agricultural and transportation industries and cost jobs in southwestern Ontario and in Atlantic Canada. We said that in this House. Was it adjusted? No.

Bill C-58, an act to amend the Young Offenders Act and the Criminal Code. Here we had an opportunity to make much needed changes to the legislation. We have approved and endorsed that. Instead of providing greater opportunities for the rehabilitation of our children, this bill steps away from it and that is hardly a sign of progress for our justice system. It is a cop-out.

Look at Bill C-78, an act to establish a federal environmental assessment process. Clearly the government wants to get this through, since it was promised by the previous minister. He is in the House right now and I salute him for what he ever did on the question of the environment. Unfortunately he was moved.

Many of us know on this side, and I remember when I spoke about it, that the bill was flawed and could be improved. The government did not improve it. It came back with the same bill; no improvements, nothing. With its numbers it is going to impose that on the House again. Bill C-78 is full of loopholes. It gives the government total discretion to decide whether an environmental assessment process should be implemented.

There is a lack of guarantees for the Canadian public that every project under federal jurisdiction will undergo present or proper assessment. One clause of the bill gives the Governor in Council the power to make the regulations determining which projects will be assessed. When we were considering the bill in this House during the last session, we had no regulations to study to determine how strong or how weak they would be. Such a clause leaves the government open to political lobbying. Can we hope in such a case that those lobbying for environmental protection will prevail over those lobbying to have the project exempted from the assessment process?

That is the key to that bill. That is what we were saying in this House. Did they listen over there? Did the government amend the bill? Did they make the bill a little more sensitive? No, not a thing.

Finally, I want to talk about Bill C-85. Bill C-85 is a bill concerning the privatization of certain airports. The government wanted to give municipal authorities some control over these airports.

We mentioned in this House in debate—and I was the one who made the point—that the protection we were looking for was basically with one small aspect of that bill concerning protection of official languages.

We had serious concerns that the principle of institutional bilingualism may be compromised if and when local authorities take over the management of airports. It is a point that we wanted to make because we are worried that this government, not having too much direction, is possibly going to get rid of official languages and give it to the provinces or to other jurisdictions. The government wants to get rid of it like a hot potato. We said that we will try to convince it to look at this bill and do with Bill C-85 what we did with Air Canada, that is subject this group or these airports to the entire impact of the Official Languages Act.

The legislation in its form at this time provides that Part IV, Part VIII, Part IX and Part X of the Official Languages Act apply. These parts relate to communications with and services to the public, responsibilities and duties of Treasury Board in relation to the official

languages of Canada, the Commissioner of Official Languages, and the court remedy.

Why did the government exempt Part V, Part VI and Part VII? Part V dealt with the fact that English and French are the languages of work in all federal institutions. Officers, employees and employers of all federal institutions have the right to use either of the official languages at work.

Part VI gives English and French speaking Canadians equal opportunities and the right to gain employment or advancement in the federal institution of their choice.

Part VII was a commitment of the Government of Canada to enhance the vitality of English and French linguistic minorities in Canada and to foster pro-recognition and use of both French and English languages in Canada.

It is difficult to understand why the government chose not to apply these parts of the Official Languages Act to Bill C-85.

Do I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the Official Languages Act was passed some three years ago, I think it was July 1988? We are now into the spring of 1991 and we still have no regulations pertaining to that bill.

That may be part of the problem. If it is, government members have the power to move. They have the numbers. Why do they not use their numbers to impose upon the issues that are important? Indeed, why do they not use the numbers to do the right thing instead of using them all the time to try to get things done their way and doing things which in our view are not democratic or parliamentary?

We object strongly to the motion of closure being put on this Motion No. 1. We will vote against it.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I suppose I should say that I regret having to rise in the House today to debate the particular motion before the House which is currently being considered.

Before commenting on the substance of the motion, I would like to go through the course of events that has brought us to this stage now.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we are not dealing with a nebulous concept such as some some of the practices of Parliament. What we are dealing with in the House today is a very serious move by the current government to ram through a motion which will enable it to bring back to the floor of this House and its committees, legislation that by all rights should have been started fresh in this Parliament when the House prorogued just a short time ago.

• (1620)

Let us go through what we have dealt with so far. As the previous speaker mentioned, we are dealing with five bills which originated in April 1989 with the throne speech beginning the government session after the free trade debate. Those bills were introduced and made their way through the usual processes and readings in this House. The members on this side, and undoubtedly on the other side as well, had concerns about these bills and were bringing them forward in the House and in committee.

For whatever reason, the government did not feel they were important enough, or felt there was so much opposition to them, it did not make it a priority of this Parliament to deal with those bills prior to prorogation of the House.

Following prorogation, the House returned with a throne speech and, rather than seeking unanimous consent of the House to reintroduce these bills, as was done with one bill, the government has now introduced a motion which will in essence go back in history in but a day's time for this legislation to be dealt with.

With the introduction of this motion, questions were raised by members on this side of the House about the nature of this motion and the procedure the government was following. I read the brief ruling on what this government is doing this morning and heard it read in the House this afternoon. I think the government is putting the Speaker in the position of making difficult rulings. While we will, and have to, abide by the rulings, we hear in the wording of this ruling that the Speaker of this House is really giving an important and serious signal to the government about this kind of action.

I noted that the decision said that these were exceptional circumstances and unprecedented. These were the words used for the ruling that has allowed this particular motion to be before the House. What next? We have, of all things, a closure motion brought in a short time ago by this government meaning that by tonight when we

vote on this particular motion, the five bills that are before us are going to be back into the process and system.

In a short time today, through this motion, the government has been able to abrogate a great deal of the responsibility and duty that a government in our parliamentary democracy is supposed to accept, or we were led to believe should accept, when bringing forward legislation. That has put these bills in a difficult and unfortunate situation. Of course we will continue to debate them in committee and in the House when they make their way through the various stages.

This is not really a great deal different than if the government was to introduce in one day a series of bills and by motion, through closure, pass all that legislation quickly in one day. Why bother having Parliament sit and debate and have legislation reviewed by committee? There is no sense, from the government's point of view, in bothering to debate any of this legislation at all. What we might get from this government is that we might sit two days a year: one day in the spring and one day in the fall, and that would be about it. I think what that really is doing is challenging a lot of the duties and responsibilities—not just of Parliament—but of the government of the day, to ensure that when it is the government's job to bring forward legislation that it is brought forward in a reasonable and timely fashion and the rules that we have got accustomed to in this House are followed.

As you know, the rules of this House are there for a reason, to give members of Parliament time to deliberate on various motions and legislation being brought forward by the government. It gives Parliament through its committees an opportunity to hear from various groups and individuals who have particular concerns or expertise in an area. By doing that, we end up with better legislation because it does give people in a particular sector, for example people who are affected by a proposed law, it gives them a chance to make their views known. There is that important public input into the legislative process that we would not have. That is why we follow some of those old-fashioned principles, and I don't think there is anything wrong with some of the old-fashioned ideas about how Parliament has run itself.

We know that there is a need to balance the demands and needs of modern government against time, especially the time that Parliament and parliamentarians need to debate and review legislation. Finding that blend is often a difficult course to follow. I suggest, though, that this particular case is an example where the government has not taken the opportunity to try to find that blend or that balance between a modern government and the demands, needs and responsibilities of Parliament.

When we see what the government of the day has done, I think it just adds more and more to the concern that many Canadians have that Parliament and the government rides roughshod over the concerns of many Canadians. It is no wonder that people would start to feel that way when they see and hear what is being done, particularly by this government.

I would hope that after the next election, when the New Democrats form the government, that these are not the kinds of rules or motions that we will bring forward to this House. These are the kinds of rules that have really led people to seriously question our form of government.

Many in this Chamber, and probably most Canadians, would appreciate some of the approaches and attitudes toward Parliament that members from all sides have had, but in particular, Mr. Stanley Knowles. He was an outstanding parliamentarian from our party who really gave most Canadians an opportunity to see what it meant when Parliament was run the right way.

I am afraid that the government today is not helping any of us in this House in attempting to defend the institution of parliamentary democracy in which we all participate, argue and defend. It is often very difficult to do when we have a government doing exactly as it is doing today. It is attempting to accomplish, in a two-day debate or within a few hours, what traditionally should have taken some time to ensure that the bills before us are given the time needed for a proper course of debate, a proper review in this House.

I am hopeful that as this session of Parliament goes on, as we have heard the calls from the government members opposite, from the cabinet ministers in particular, they are talking about a new non-partisan approach to dealing with the issues in this country. Hiding behind those words while using motions and closure, as the government is doing now in this Chamber, does not lend any effort to a non-partisan role and leads members on this side of the House, and I think rightfully so, to

challenge what the government is doing with this motion and with closure on these bills.

• (1630)

In wrapping up, the point I wanted to make as best I could was that the government, through this motion, the use of closure, is actually ramming through bills in this House that should have had the proper time for debate and review. This government has really thrown out the window a great number of very important traditions that Parliament has established over the years. It just gives rise to more and more resentment for our form of government and, in particular, against the Conservative government that is in office now. I hope it can learn a lesson in this session of Parliament. If not, I hope Canadians teach the government a lesson in the next election campaign.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, this particular motion before the House of Commons is a very interesting motion. As you know, everything that is done in the House of Commons is done by a motion. Somebody has to put a motion to do everything that is done in the House of Commons.

The House of Commons has evolved over the years as an institution with a procedural framework that is there for a particular reason. It is difficult to understand, I am sure, as people would wonder, why we have traditions such as the Leader of the Opposition being separated from the Prime Minister by two sword lengths. That is kind of difficult to understand in this day and age, or why somebody in the gallery is not allowed to take notes.

The traditions in Parliament have evolved over years and years and years. The procedure has its basis in the prorogation or the dissolution of Parliament. It is such because a Parliament has got to start and a Parliament has got to end. A Parliament ends with a general election. The adjournment of the House is usually made and then the dissolution takes place.

The Speech from the Throne, together with the budget speech, form the two main segments, the two pillars of the House of Commons and of every legislative body under the British parliamentary system. They are there for a reason. The Speech from the Throne calls members back to the House of Commons to tell members why they were called back to the House of Commons. In other words, it outlines the government's legislative reason for bringing parliamentarians back here to Ottawa.

What becomes of the Speech from the Throne, and why would we call it a Speech from the Throne entrenched with its tradition of outlining a legislative program, if the government of the day in 1991, using its majority, says: "We don't need a Speech from the Throne because we are going to use our majority to bring back bills that were presented to the House last year, or the year before or the year before that"?

The Speaker has made a ruling. I respect that ruling. I would respectfully submit that if there is anyone who is really in a mood to condemn the procedures adopted by this Chamber, then the condemnation should be on the shoulders of the government of the day.

This motion now before the House is an historic motion, perhaps the most revolutionary change to the rules of procedure brought into this House at any one moment in time in our history. The government has said that: "We will take five bills that were before the House of Commons in the last session", which could be two years ago, "and we want them now brought into this House at third reading, at the committee stage. We want them brought in and we want them at the position they would have been if the House did not dissolve". That is what the motion says. In other words, it is going to bring back five bills in one motion and it is going to put them where they would have been if the House did not dissolve, as if nothing has happened.

What do we have? Let us take any of the bills. There is a bill to amend the Railway Act; a bill to amend the Young Offenders Act; a bill to amend the Crown Corporations Act; a bill to amend the federal environmental assessment process; a bill to amend the act concerning the port wardens of Quebec and Montreal; and a bill relating to certain matters of employees' pensions and labour relations in connection with the transfer of certain airports to local authorities. Montreal, that is Dorval, is being transferred to a local authority. Vancouver is also being transferred and so is Winnipeg and some other airport.

There are six bills. One of them is already passed so we are left with five. Take for example the federal environmental assessment process. The government can take it because it is not worth very much. It is through the House of Commons, with all of its rules, with its checks and balances, that the government is accountable to the people of Canada. Every member of Parliament sits down and speaks to the second reading, the principle of the bill, and is given certain assurances by the government. The bill then goes into committee. All of a sudden, the members discover the government is not prepared to do really what it said it was going to do.

Just suppose the members of the House of Commons then say: "We are now going to stall this bill". That is a legitimate rule of procedure. There are not very many rules left on which a private member or the backbenchers in this House can exert any pressure. The accountability of the Government of Canada to the people of Canada has eroded over the years because of these rule changes.

• (1640)

A minister no longer needs to know what is going on in his department because of this erosion. A member's power in the House of Commons has so decreased over the years that the House of Commons has merely become an institution of lists.

Here we have the members of the House dealing with bills and having the power to say: "We are not going to pass this. The government has fooled us. To the Environmental Act it is not prepared to accept amendments. We are going to stall it until dissolution".

Along comes dissolution and along comes the government again next year and calls the bill as if it has passed all of these procedures and gone into committee. In other words, the government can do whatever it wants. It does not have to go back to the beginning again.

We have environmental bills. We have the Clean Water Act; we have the Clean Air Act; we have the Environmental Contaminants Act; we have the Fisheries Act. We have acts coming out of our ears to protect the environment and then we ask under this legislation: Is this going to now solve the problem of, say, polychlorinated biphenyls being used in transformers on telephone poles? "Oh, no" says the government.

Is this going to solve the problems we have in all of our wilderness areas of the use of aerial spraying of herbicides, for example, or insecticides such as fenitrothion, Matacil or any of these toxic substances sprayed over large areas? The groups concerned discover that this bill is really not going to solve that problem.

Those of us who were interested asked the question: "Will the bill be able to solve the problem of the total destruction of our fishing resource on the east coast of Canada by foreign nations, licensed by the Government of Canada? The answer was no. We are still giving out the licences to the Russians and to the fleets from Japan, Cuba, Denmark, Poland and Germany; some of the countries which operate massive factory freezer trawlers within Canadian waters, destroying our environment and the fishing resource. All because the Government of Canada has decreed that fisheries in this nation shall take its guidelines from the Department of External Affairs.

I discovered just the other day that France has not even paid its bill from 1987 for its licences. The federal cabinet met two years ago, I discovered, and passed an Order in Council forgiving the French $450,000 of their licence fees and they promised to pay the remaining $355,000. They have been doing so since on the instalment plan. They paid three times two years ago. This year the federal government got a cheque on March 27, and France still owes for its licence fees back in 1987.

The Soviet Union still has not paid the $997,000 it owes for its fees for last year. Here is a Canadian fisherman who cannot get a licence unless he has his fees paid for. Here are men and women today who look out at the ocean and see nine foreign nations fishing 12 miles off their coast and they are not allowed to get a licence. Why? To protect the resource of Canada.

We look at this legislation and we do not want it to go through because it does not cover the polychlorinated biphenyls in the transformer, it does not cover the fenitrothion in the forests and it does not cover the fishing resource which is being destroyed by nine foreign

nations licensed by the Government of Canada through the Department of External Affairs.

We went through that two years ago and last year. Now we know what the government was up to. It was up to passing something that really did not mean all that much. As an example, and I am just using it as an example, now the Government of Canada can come along and say: "By a majority vote, we are going to bring back a bill introduced two years ago that went through all those stages and we are now going to take that and have it marked 1991 as if it has passed all the stages again in 1991 that took place two years ago."

The entire framework of the passage of legislation and the accountability of the government to the people of Canada have suffered an incredible blow by this decision of the Government of Canada. Somebody can ask today a legitimate question: Why do we have a Speech from the Throne? The Speech from the Throne outlines the legislative program. Why do we have mechanisms in place to protect the people of Canada against bad legislation? Now that all goes down the drain because the Government of Canada, by using its majority, can say: "We will bring back a bill from last year, from two years ago, from six years ago, from 20 years ago, from 50 years ago" because we see dissolution under the rules of procedure going back to Erskine May. The rules of procedure always dealt with dissolution and prorogation in the same paragraph. That is the way it is presented. Everything on the Order Paper comes to an end.

There has only been one exception to that and that was when there was unanimous consent, and this dates back quite a number of years. Everybody concerned in the House of Commons was saying: "Well, we have gone through all of these hearings on a particular bill and everybody really wants this bill, it is good for Canada, it is good for us, so let us all agree now to bring it back at the same stage as we had it before." That is legitimate. It is a legitimate use of the majority vote of the House of Commons.

The House of Commons can do anything it wants with a majority vote. This motion, which deals with five bills before the House of Commons, is not a legitimate use of the authority of the majority of the House of Commons and it strikes another blow against the accountability function of the House of Commons on behalf of the people of Canada.

• (1650)

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise in this House to speak against a motion to reinstate a series of legislation which in its content and substance is inept and incompetent.

I am especially pleased to do so following upon my colleague who is not only one of the finest orators in this House, but undoubtedly one of the finest orators in this country. What he has said about this motion and the specific pieces of legislation contained therein were comments with which I am sure all Canadians, certainly all Newfoundlanders, would agree and stand proud to be with him.

I will use Bill C–78 as the specific example of why this motion should not pass, why this legislation should not be reinstated, why it should be allowed to die on the Order Paper, as indeed under the proper legislative process it should be allowed to do so if this government had any understanding of what democracy was all about.

[*Translation*]

I am pleased to speak to the motion for the reinstatement of Bill C–78 concerning the environmental assessment process. The very principle of environmental assessment is the basis of a new perception of our global ecosystem whose resources are not unlimited.

According to the Brundtland Report, the environmental assessment process plays a key role in the search for sustainable development. I unconditionally support the principle of an environmental assessment legislation in Canada.

However, Mr. Speaker, Bill C–78 is so flawed it will in fact undermine our existing standards for environmental assessment.

As Steven Hazel, from the Canadian Arctic Committee, said, and I quote: "With Bill C–78, Canada now has environmental guidelines that have the force of law and a bill that is no more than a set of guidelines".

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, Mr. Hazel is right and that is why I am against this bill being sent back to committee.

[*English*]

Bill C-78, this government's incredibly incomplete environmental impact assessment bill, this government's view of the way in which a modern society ought to approach the environment, spent five months in committee.

There were briefs presented by environmentalists, by industrialists, by legal organizations, by aboriginal groups, by virtually every segment of Canadian society. Virtually without exception, every single witness opposed the bill.

These were witnesses chosen by ourselves, but also chosen by the government to come and defend its bill. Yet, upon reading, upon sitting there, and upon questioning, they unanimously said that this government has no idea of the way that a modern society ought to evolve in the treatment of the air we breathe and the water we drink.

The reasons that were given ranged from the fact that the bill was vague and incomplete to the fact that it attacked the very integrity of the ecosystem.

A great number of groups presented very serious amendments and they were extensively discussed. Indeed, with the former minister we sat and discussed them. We were told on numerous occasions that the government would be bringing forth amendments.

We were told that the bill would be made whole. We were given promise after promise that the press releases of the government would eventually come to reality, and the bill would be changed.

Appointment after appointment was broken. Amendment after amendment which was promised was never delivered, and there were rumours of cabinet fights, divisions and debates.

Unfortunately, in this government the environment minister does not count for much. Senior ministers, such as the minister of health, the minister of energy, and the minister of foreign trade consistently came in and said: "This Conservative government cares not a whit for the environment".

Now, we find ourselves in the situation we are now in. The bill died on the Order Paper. In its supreme arrogance and lack of understanding, this government comes to us and says: "we would like to reinstate it", of a bill unanimously rejected by the people of Canada.

If there has ever been a government which is out of touch with reality, it is this one. If there has ever been a demonstration of that fact, it is in this government's treatment of Bill C-78.

The premise of the bill, to begin with, is entirely wrong. With the world-wide presentation of the Brundtland report some years ago, the notion of sustainable development became the fundamental principle of environmental assessment. The term "sustainable development" is now learned by children in grades 1, 2 and 3 in every school in every province of this country. Yet, the term "sustainable development", as if the government was afraid to express the words, does not appear once in the bill. If there is any indication of how far behind the thinking of this government is, it is surely that.

There is no modern country that does not understand that it cannot have a sound economy in an unsound environment. There is no modern country that considers the environment to be in opposition to the economy. There is no government, except for this one, that does not understand that the air we breathe, the water we drink and the soil in which our food grows are not free goods; that in depleting them as the country is we are not only devastating the environment but we are devastating our economy.

If you wonder why our health costs are rising, take a look at the air we breathe and the water we drink. If you wonder what is happening, why there is such a huge deficit—if you think the economic deficit is great, I simply ask you to examine the environmental deficit which we are in the process of leaving to our children.

Today's most successful nations—Germany as an example—are nations which understand the total integration of the economy and the environment. Japan, not necessarily a nation known for its environmental awareness, has nonetheless cut its wastage by 42 per cent. It has cut its energy costs by 30 per cent and is now one of the most energy-efficient nations in the world.

Those are environmental objectives. Yet this government seems to wallow in some 1850s philosophy that simply says that we can produce and produce garbage and simply waste resources as if it makes no difference.

Sustainable development is vital to Canada because our economy is so terribly dependent on natural resources. Sustainable development must be the cornerstone upon which modern legislation is built. Therefore, it only stands to reason that sustainable development must be the cornerstone upon which the environmental

legislation of this government or any government must be built.

There are other problems as well with Bill C–78. The scope of the environmental assessment in this bill has been narrowed—not widened but narrowed—to the point where those of us in this country who would seek to involve every project that affects human beings find ourselves in the situation—and I will elaborate upon this—where the government can declare exemption after exemption, as it has done in the case of Kemano, Rafferty and Point Anconi.

The assessment is not mandatory. In other words, this government can decide who its friends are and who its enemies are, and treat them differently.

• (1700)

Closer examination has demonstrated that, outside of the United States, there is no government that has brought in an environmental bill with this amount of discretion, without objective standards of assessment, with no way that anyone can plan ahead and no time limits on the assessment.

When the business community appeared before us, the conclusions they drew were exactly the same as those of the environmentalists who appeared before us. They said that they cannot live with this bill. They also said that it was impossible for us—

An hon. member: I agree with the hon. member, absolutely.

Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard): The member opposite stands up and speaks for all that side of the House and says that I am right.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, I do not understand that interjection. That side of the House has stood up and unequivocally agreed with me. I want to congratulate that side of the House. I congratulate the members opposite. For once in their lives they understand what a terrible thing they are doing to this country.

Oh my God, this is indeed a great day for Canada. Finally, for the first time in my history in this House an intelligent word has been spoken on that side of the House.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Martin (LaSalle–Émard): Mr. Speaker, I do not understand how other members can come in and start to laugh. I suppose they find the environment a laughing matter. Oh no, please stay, do not leave.

The environmental assessment process in this country must not be open to political manipulation. We must have clear rules that people can understand. Environmentalists must know how they are allowed to go forth with their objections or their modifications. Indeed, members of the business community must be able to plan and arrange their financing. Yet, that is not what the government does.

This government stands up here day after day mouthing vacuous statements about how it will get the economy moving. Yet, it turned to the business community and said: "We will not give you a bill that will allow you to plan. We will not give you a bill that will allow you to finance. We will not give you a bill that will enable you to create new jobs. We will not give you a bill that will enable you to compete around the world. We will give you a mishmash of political statements that essentially will reward our friends and destroy our enemies." That is not the way to run a modern country.

As far as the environmentalists are concerned—that vast army of people from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the great north who, every day for little pay, totally concern themselves with the protection of this planet—when they come forth and say they want intervener funding, when they say they want to be able to come to the table, they want to be able to match the great governments and the great corporations with their war chest, they want to be able to provide intelligent and profound objections, they want to be able to show how projects can be mitigated. Does this government say: "We will provide intervener funding"? Does this government say: "We will provide you with the ability to be able to stand up to your opponents"? No, not at all. This government says: "This country is for the rich and the

large institutions. Go away, little interveners. Go away environmentalists." There is no money provided in the bill for intervener funding. It is an absolute disgrace.

The essence of democracy in a modern state is that third parties must be allowed to come forth and complete the process of investigation. All the power and knowledge does not solely exist within this House, it exists in thousands of communities across this country, people who have deep knowledge. They have to be provided with funding. It is the way to operate a modern state. The fact that this government refuses to do it is one more proof that what we are seeing on the opposite side is simply the finest 16th century thinking that the world has ever generated.

When we take power in two years, I can guarantee that no member of Parliament will have to stand up and wonder if the water that he is drinking is safe.

Mr. Speaker, you are asking me to sit down and I am certainly going to bow to your will, but let me simply say that Bill C–78 is a very flawed piece of legislation. Defeating the bill would not leave a legislative vacuum. Unfortunately, Bill C–78 is weaker than the existing guidelines which have subsequently been strengthened by court decision.

My feeling is that if we have to go with Bill C–78 or none, go with none. Go with the existing guidelines that were introduced by a Liberal government.

[*Translation*]

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, this government should recognize, as we all do, that this legislation will create more problems than it would solve. This bill should immediately go back to the drawing board. The environmental assessment principle is so important that it would be harmful to continue to examine such a half–baked piece of legislation.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to participate in this debate today, but I must say that I am getting rather tired of having to deal with closure and its effects, and the way that this government mistreats the precedents and the practices of this House.

An hon. member: A new definition of democracy.

Mr. Milliken: A new definition of democracy, as the hon. member says. That is what this government is trying to introduce to Canada. Frankly, I think it is time we exposed the fraud that it is trying to perpetrate on the people of this country by moving this kind of motion today and then closuring it. I suggest it is perhaps one of the worst outrages that has been perpetrated in this House in many years.

I want to deal with the propriety of the motion that the government has introduced. I suggest that it is contrary to all the practices of this House for the last 124 years. It is a breach of the proprieties of this place. While the Speaker has ruled that the motion is in order, and I respect that ruling, I suggest that it is still morally wicked of the government to proceed with this motion and particularly then to apply closure to the motion and thereby curtail the debate on it.

What the government is doing by this, and let us make it perfectly clear what is happening here, is short–circuiting the legislative process on five bills. On one of those bills it is doing something that I suggest is completely unprecedented— frankly, the whole practice is unprecedented—and that is declaring the bill to have been passed by this House. In other words, tonight, when the vote occurs on this motion, a bill will be deemed to have been passed by this House which has never been introduced or debated at any stage in this session of this Parliament.

I suggest that this wrong. It is wickedly wrong. It is a gross violation of the constitutional principles on which this House has operated on since Confederation. Indeed, it is contrary to the whole practice of British parliamentary tradition for 900 years. Nothing like this has ever been tried before. I suggest it is wrong. The government knows it is wrong.

That is why there is not a single minister in this House showing his head. They are so disgusted and ashamed of what they are doing that they have all run for cover in the lobby or into their offices. I suggest that it is their obligation to be here and listen to this debate. They should be ashamed of their actions. I see every one of them has fled.

I want to thank the three members on the other side who are here to listen to this debate. I think it is wonderful that they are participating in this way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member has been here now for six years—

Mr. Milliken: No. Two and a half—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Two and a half years. It seems like six years anyway. I just want the hon. member to know, and I do not think I have to direct this to him, because he is knowledgeable about the procedures of the House of Commons, that you do not talk about who is and who is not in this Chamber. The fact that they are outside watching you on television, or looking after constituency work, I would hope that the hon. member would carry on with this very interesting debate. The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I was careful at the end to make reference to the presence of the three that were here. I thought that I was referring to their presence, not to the absence of the other 160, but that is beside the point.

I want to turn to the arguments advanced by the parliamentary secretary yesterday in the course of the procedural argument about the propriety of this motion. I want to say how outrageous his arguments were and I want to expose them for what I suggest is a fraud on the people of Canada in what he said.

• (1710)

I want to turn, first of all, to page 651 of *Hansard* for yesterday where he said:

> We have precedents. We have precedents of reinstating business in this House of Commons. We are dealing today with a different process but the precedents are very clear.

There are no precedents for this kind of motion to be debated in this House. I searched back to 1938—the parliamentary secretary was invited to produce his precedents—and I could find no precedent where a motion to reinstate a bill had ever been debated in the House. On the occasions when such a motion was presented to the House, it was agreed to by unanimous consent. There was never a debate. There was never the moving of a motion and a vote. There was never closure used on such a motion. Every single time the very particular and special procedure of unanimous consent of all members was sought and obtained before any bill was reinstated.

The principle of unanimous consent is a very fancy, unusual practice. It may happen often, but it is very fancy and very unusual. It is very particular, and it allows this House to do almost anything that this House could possibly do.

It has been used in the past to allow the government to get around having to go through all stages of a bill. What the House is in effect doing is saying that we agree that this bill has passed through the stages up to a certain point. Beyond that point, we will then discuss it.

They are saying to the government: "You do not need to go through each of the stages with debate". It is a short-circuiting of the normal legislative process, but it has always been done by unanimous consent. Yet, here the parliamentary secretary said there were precedents. He was asked to produce a precedent. He has never produced a precedent. There is no precedent. This is a violation of all past practice.

The hon. member for Kamloops, in an extremely able submission, pointed out that even the *Précis of Procedure*, in this House, an excellent publication that I know members of the staff of this House have worked on for many years. They have produced an excellent volume. It has indicated that the practice of this House through 124 years has been to require unanimous consent for the reinstatement of bills.

Yet, today we are witnessing a gross breach because it is not one bill that the government is moving on here. It is five bills. It already has two by unanimous consent in this session. Since May 13 when we started again, two bills have been reintroduced by unanimous consent.

The second reading stage was avoided on both of them. I think on one report stage was avoided as well. Fine. We agreed to that. All members of this House agreed. Every single one permitted the bills to go to that stage, but that is not the case today.

Now we have five bills being moved forward in this way. The government says: "Not only are we going to force those five bills to be put into the House at these stages, but we are going to move closure on the motion because we are not going to permit discussion of the merits of this motion and the putting of the five bills". That is a particularly disgraceful aspect of the current proceedings.

The second point he raised was at the bottom of page 651. He said that there were precedents for another matter. He said:

> Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you check through your precedents you will find one which says that what has happened here is that the House has taken action on a part of a motion and therefore that part of the motion becomes mute, becomes silent.

Again, he did not produce the precedent. The Speaker rooted through what the parliamentary secretary referred him to and his guess is as good as mine on this point. I do not know what he is talking about. He never produced any authority, and yet he makes these blanket statements designed to hoodwink the Canadian people into thinking that this is somehow normal and regular.

It is not normal or regular. If this was so usual or common, the parliamentary secretary surely would have cited a precedent from the British Parliament. There are 400 years of records he could have dug through to find some precedent that might have supported this.

He is always telling us how much we should emulate the British Parliament, what a great institution it is, and how if we only followed British practice we would be way ahead. Yet he is not following British practice in this case. If he is, he has no authority for saying so. He has not produced a single tittle of evidence to support this gross breach of our practice and I suggest that it is totally inappropriate.

Then we go to his other suggestion. The first point was that what we were doing was unprecedented and therefore out of order:

> If we were to take argument that any time a decision, action, or process is new it is therefore out of order, or because it is different it is unprecedented, and therefore cannot be done, the judges, lawyers, the Speaker of the House, I, in my role as parliamentary secretary to the House leader, the House leaders of the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party, would not be able to proceed because all we could do if we were to rely on precedents would be to simply follow what our predecessors have done.

Well, our predecessors have done quite a lot. There is lots of room within the sphere of parliamentary practice and precedent for the parliamentary secretary to work. What he does not want to do is allow this House to debate bad bills that this government in its incompetence, bungling, and fumbling wants to introduce into this place.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Milliken: He is ashamed—and he should be—to produce these bills in this House and allow them to be discussed because he knows that if we have a full debate on them the Canadian people will, as they have so often with this government, rise up and say: "Let us get rid of this bunch. How long can we stand to see our country torn apart by this Conservative mob? They are no good". They are at 14 per cent in the polls. That is the evidence of their incompetence and the distrust and dislike they have sown across this country from one coast to the other and to the other. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, they have had enough.

If the parliamentary secretary had any courage he would be in here allowing debate on these bills and introducing them in the proper course. Instead, he brings in a motion and says we want to deem all these bills virtually passed. "We will limit debate on that motion. We will put closure on it and shut off debate so Canadians cannot hear how badly we are performing. They are going to hear how awful we are as a government. We do not want our faults exposed in this House". That is what they are doing by this.

Let us look at the things they have left out. Let us think of the bills they did not put in this motion that were on the Order Paper. What about the conflict of interest bill? Where is that? I think it was introduced in November 1989, and we have never seen it. It has never been called for debate. The Prime Minister in the last election said we will have special conflict of interest legislation so that members of Parliament are not found in conflict. We want to run an honest administration. Yet no administration has ever had as many members charged with criminal offences as this one has.

That is the kind of thing that should have been dealt with in this legislation. The government introduces it and then does not call it. It sits on the Order Paper. Why did it not bring that back in and deem it to have had first reading in this motion? I know why. The government's own backbenchers, the ones who are having trouble, the former members who have been convicted are saying they cannot have that kind of bill. That is why we do not have it.

Yet the government should be introducing this kind of legislation and proceeding with it. We have asked it to move on it for two years and nothing has happened. It is afraid to proceed with that legislation and it should be ashamed of itself.

It will move with other taxation measures that impose taxes and charges on the people of Canada, and take away their benefits. It will proceed with its weak-kneed environmental legislation. We have just heard from the hon. member for Lasalle-Émard in a very capable speech about what it will do on this issue. We heard from

him how bad the environmental bill was and that is one of the ones it is proceeding with under this special order.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, it is wrong, it is unprecedented, it is improper, and the government should not be carrying on in this way. As the hon. member for Halifax says, it is pernicious. I quite agree with her.

He then says, and I quote again the parliamentary secretary who obviously does not know what he is talking about, on page 652: "It is part of our practice and to reinstate this particular bill at this stage is completely in order". He is talking about a bill that is going to be introduced under this motion when it carries tonight. I am sure the members who are not here now will reappear and vote to put these bills back on the Order Paper. One of them will never appear on the Order Paper because it is going to be deemed to have passed. That is what is happening with this other one.

The parliamentary secretary says: "Part of our practice and to reinstate this particular bill at this stage, that is the stage of having been passed, is completely in order and is consistent with what I have said earlier, that in fact what we are dealing with is not a cutting off of debate, but a continuation of a bill at a stage it was at prior to the prorogation of the House".

• (1720)

In all the precedents I looked at back to 1938, and I will lay a bet with the minister at any time, there was never, ever a case where a bill was put to the point where it had passed this House. Every precedent I looked at back to 1938, and frankly there were precious few reinstatements in the period, brought the bills back to no more than the completion of the report stage, or its former equivalent, completion by the Committee of the Whole.

In other words, there was always a debate allowed at third reading of every bill that was reinstated. But here in this motion today, we have a bill that is deemed passed by this House, so there will be no debate at any stage on this bill.

An hon. member: That is terrible.

Mr. Milliken: It is a national disgrace.

An hon. member: It is a travesty.

Mr. Milliken: If this kind of thing was reported in parliamentary journals around the world, the Canadian Parliament would become a laughing stock because of the outrageous conduct of the government in introducing this motion. It violates all the constitutional principles of debating bills at three readings in the House of Commons. That is the standard practice in every British parliamentary institution and has been for hundreds of years, and this government is violating that practice.

Who is to blame for this practice aside from all the members on the other side? The government itself had a choice.

They had a choice. Remember those words. Hon. members opposite may remember them because they came up in a debate. They had a choice. They chose to prorogue the last session and leave the business unfinished on the Order Paper. They sent us away through April and early May and said: "We do not want you in Ottawa. We do not want questions every day. We do not want to listen to you. We do not want our sins exposed to the people of Canada on national television here on the floor of the House of Commons".

They sent us home instead of sitting around and dealing with that business. They could have had us here debating Bill C–26. They could have had us here debating Bill C–58. They could have had us here debating Bill C–78. We could have debated Bill C–82, or at least the other place could have continued with it. We could have debated Bill C–85, but no, no, the government decided that we should go home. It got this House adjourned and sent us home.

Members went back to their constituencies and did their thing for a month. Then the government said: "Well, we are going to prorogue the session now". It did so on May 12, by proclamation of the Governor General, and brought the last session to an end.

We in the opposition had nothing whatever to do with it. We were never consulted. That was done by the government; it was its choice and at its time. It ended the session and thereby killed everything that was on the Order Paper.

An hon. member: Shame, shame.

Mr. Milliken: That is provided for in the law. The government is entitled to do it if it wants. We did not sit around and say you should not have done that. We said:

"That is your executive act and responsibility", and the government ended the consideration of those bills at the stage they were at at the time.

Having done so, it started a new session and now it is saying: "Well, we are going to pretend we did not do what we did. We are going to pretend we did not prorogue the session in relation to these five bills. We are going to reinstate them and we are putting them back where they were. One of them was passed by the House of Commons. We are going to say it is passed again, and pretend there was no prorogation".

The government made the choice to prorogue and now it is saying it will pretend it did not happen, at least on these bills. However on others it does not like, such as the gun control bill and the conflict of interest bill, it will just continue as though they are dead. It will do what it wants with them later and come up with new bills on those items.

Of course, we have not heard anything about conflict of interest. It was not mentioned in the throne speech. It was a big item during the election campaign in 1988, but we have seen absolutely nothing since. It is just like day care and all the other broken promises that this government has made over the years. I do not want to go through that kind of list.

Finally, I want to turn to one more point that the parliamentary secretary made in his argument. He said:

> Yes, we could go back and go through these five bills again. We could debate them once more at tremendous cost to the House in time, at tremendous cost to the taxpayers of Canada who are saying to us as members of this House: "Quit fooling around, get serious, do some business, cut out the partisan games".

The government has been talking all this non-partisan nonsense, saying that this House has to stop being so partisan. Then it comes and does a trick like this, breaching every parliamentary precedent, I suggest, that ever existed. It is breaking new ground, limiting debate and cutting members off from their opportunities to speak.

This House has not been slow in passing bills. This government has got away with closure something like 14 times already. This is the fifteenth time it has used closure in this Parliament. We have had bills moving through this place at record speeds.

The evidence of that, if the hon. member argues that point, is the number of lengthy adjournments we have had where the government has sent us away: "We do not have anything more that we have to do today. Thank you. You members can go home for a month or two months". That has gone on repeatedly in this Parliament. The hon. member knows that.

This government is a dry well, a dry hole when it comes to new innovative ideas. It has not got any. It does not want Parliament sitting here debating rehashed ideas and junk legislation which it is bringing forward to keep us occupied.

What it is doing is saying: "We will limit debate. We will jam everything through in three weeks and then our members can go home to try to revive their electoral fortunes". That is what is going on here. This is part of exactly the same game: ram the bills through five at a time in one motion like this, two days debate, and then some of them will never get discussed in the House and the others are at least at a stage where we can get the debate finished in two days. That is what is going on here.

The people of Canada are being hoodwinked by the parliamentary secretary's smooth talking words about non-partisanship in this House and the need to get together and co-operate on business. He says: "Co-operate as long as it is on my terms and if I suggest it, it is non-partisan. If it comes from the opposition, it is partisan, and we are not going to play those games". That is the kind of message we are getting from this government and it is dead wrong. It is cheating. It is deceiving the people of Canada.

We are not here to be told that our suggestions are partisan and the government's are not. No one is more of a partisan player in this House than the government House leader, and members on the other side know that perfectly well. His parliamentary secretary is falling into the same bag of tricks.

We on this side of the House will oppose this kind of abuse of the procedures and practices of this place.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to be speaking on this day, especially following the hon. member from Kingston who so eloquently put the argument about the nature of the debate we are having today.

Here we are debating a motion of closure dealing with bills from another Parliament. It seems to me that the decision the government has taken in this case is very, very peculiar and probably sets a very dangerous precedent for governments of that ilk down the road. Hopeful-

ly the only solace that the Canadian population can take in this is that the next government it elects to sit on the other side of the House and support the will and the needs of the people is going to be a government which cares about the people, understands democracy and will produce what the people want.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister McLaughlin we expect that is exactly what will be delivered.

The matter has seriously been addressed by my colleague from Kamloops and by other members who have spoken today. I want to add a few words specifically about one of the bills included in this list before us. That is specifically Bill C–78, the environmental assessment legislation, which I consider to be the most important piece of legislation that this government could deal with either now or in the future.

We are trying to deal with that legislation now. We had dealt with a considerable amount of witnesses' testimony and work that was put into Bill C–78 in the previous session. I am totally surprised that the government would seek to reintroduce Bill C–78 as if no testimony and no work had been done on that legislation. Virtually every witness who appeared before the committee argued strongly—and I was on that committee—for substantial amendments to Bill C–78. Almost every witness who appeared before us provided us with many pieces of paper containing strongly worded, very technical amendments to Bill C–78.

I brought with me today just one–third of the briefs of witnesses' testimony that appeared before us.

• (1730)

These were witnesses such as the West Coast Environmental Law Association, the Canadian Bar Association, the Rassion Academy of Aquatic Science, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, the Sierra Club, the Canadian Wildlife Federation, and a whole host of others.

They were witnesses who came to us and not only said that this bill needed amendment but suggested the amendments to us.

I am quite surprised that the government decided to reintroduce this bill because even members of the department were indicating that the bill would have to be amended.

I am not normally a betting man, but I am willing to bet that when this bill comes back before us the government is going to make some amendments to it because of the evidence that it has heard and agreed to.

This was an ideal opportunity for this government. It was an opportunity which it has completely missed, an opportunity to take the wealth of information that was presented to us, to review Bill C–78 in the context in which this evidence was presented and redraft the most important bill that this Parliament is going to have to deal with, rewrite it and present it to us in a new form, a form that perhaps the members of the opposition could accept and deal with quickly because of its importance.

Is the government going to take the opportunity given to it with the proroguing of Parliament? No. It is going to sit back and, in the lazy–handed way that it has dealt with this legislation so far, it is simply going to throw it back on the table and then take its lumps on it.

There are going to be a lot of lumps on this one, because you cannot compromise on the environment in Canada. The people of Canada and certainly the New Democratic Party are not going to sit here and allow this to happen without expressing concern.

Bill C–78 is a fatally flawed piece of legislation and it has been told to us, as I indicated, by many who appeared before us.

I have a couple of comments that I want to put on record from the Canadian Environmental Law Reports. They relate to an article that appeared in the March 1991 issue, written by Ted Schrecker who, according to this, is with the Department of Political Science at the University of Western Ontario.

He talks about the substantial need to amend the bill as well, arguing that the legislation in front of us is actually weaker than the environmental guidelines which have caused this government such incredible distress over the course of the last year on things such as the Rafferty–Alameda dam in Saskatchewan, the Oldman River in Alberta, and the James Bay II project in northern Quebec.

Because of lack of time and because the arguments are so extensive, I jump to the conclusion of this piece by Ted Schrecker.

He concludes: "It is hard to escape the conclusion that it would be preferable were the government to scrap the legislation". After reviewing and examining all the contents of Bill C–78, he concludes it would be better to scrap the whole thing, start over again and deal with a real commitment to the environment.

The government had many opportunities, some of which even I presented to it, to deal with Bill C–78, to substantially amend it and to rewrite the bill so that we could deal with it in this House.

Prior to the prorogation of Parliament, after the suggestions of the Minister of the Environment I presented to the Department of the Environment and to the committee studying Bill C–78 my own 111 amendments, which I considered minimal to salvaging the existing bill.

The government has had many weeks to examine the amendments that I and others have put forward, but I would like to consider that it would at least look at the ones that I, a parliamentarian and a member of the study committee, put forward. These amendments could have created a very substantial and stronger bill.

Some of the changes included in the 111 amendments which I gave to the government are as simple as the establishment of a parliamentary auditor on sustainable development, and the inclusion of the words "sustainable development" in the preamble of the bill. That is something not very difficult to do, but it does not exist in the existing bill.

The government had the opportunity to present a brand new bill into this House, and it chose not to.

My amendments also wanted to include all areas of federal jurisdiction within the context of environmental assessments. That means expanding it to include Crown corporations and foreign aid programs of this government. My amendments also included the ability to order parties to comply with mediated agreements. There are all sorts of provisions in this legislation which call for mediated agreements, but there is no compliance required. What good is mediation if it can be ignored?

The legislation in front of us right now does not have any provisions to allow for a halt to any project should it be found to be environmentally damaging.

We can prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that a project will damage the environment, but unless the Minister of the Environment has the political will to move, the legislation does not provide any opportunity to halt the project or halt the damage being done or would be done to the environment. This is a major, a fatal flaw in the legislation that the government had an opportunity to correct and chose not to.

I am also suggesting we close a lot of the loopholes in the legislation that give broad discretion to the minister to exempt virtually anything he wants from the assessment and to include joint federal–provincial endeavours under the terms of the existing legislation.

I also wanted to see intervener funding included in this act because it talks about public participation, but public participation cannot occur unless the public has the funds to participate in that project.

Most important to me, I would like to greatly expand the aboriginal rights provisions in the context of environmental protection and ensure that they are written directly into the act so that there would be no guessing, no need for interpretation of what aboriginal rights means in terms of the application of environmental assessment to land not only held for the Indian people, but also land in which the Indian people themselves have an interest.

I would also like to ask the government to include, through my amendments, the power to force groups or developers to participate in the process and abide by the decisions. In other words, there are no provisions in this act that actually would force a developer to work through the environmental process. To me, that is very important in all of this.

I would be very interested to hear the Minister of the Environment or the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, who sat through most if not all of the committee hearings on this bill, come into the Chamber and argue in this debate why Bill C–78 has to be brought back in in its original form. I cannot believe that either the new Minister of the Environment or the parliamentary secretary could actually stand and defend the bill as it stands now.

The testimony has been overwhelmingly against the bill as it exists. The department is planning a significant number of amendments to this legislations which will

substantially improve it. Perhaps their amendments will not be ones that I will agree with wholeheartedly, but they are amendments that will take the bill from .0 to at least .5 on a scale of 10 in terms of acceptability to the Canadian environmental community.

• (1740)

The bill as it stands is a big zero and the testimony says: "Throw it out or substantially amend it". The government has indicated a need or desire to amend it, but instead it brings it back and it includes it in this package which, very peculiar as it is, is put in front of us to look at holus-bolus. I do not want government members in the Chamber today who are looking at this list to say: "We have done all this work. How can we afford to lose it? Bring back the bill and start up where you left off".

Where we left off on Bill C-78 was precisely the point which said: "Start over. We have the evidence which shows us how to do that, so start over". The government gave up that chance, gave up that opportunity, and just decided in its lazy fashion to bring it back, introduce a couple of amendments hopefully to appease the members of the environmental community and then get on with business.

In the meantime, we are going to continue to have massive developments in this country go without adequate environmental assessments. We are going to have parts of our environment, sea, land and air, subjected to environmental catastrophes that need not happen if we have the proper and adequate legislation in place to deal with it before the dangerous times occur. That is what Bill C-78 is supposed to do: to get in before something happens, not after.

This government is great at dealing in crisis. It is in crisis constantly but, by golly, we have to do something and this is a legislative opportunity to prevent a crisis from occurring. As far as the environment is concerned, there is nothing more important.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this motion. I have two major points to make: one general and one specific.

My general point really echoes the arguments of my colleague who spoke earlier today and spoke so eloquently, the member for Kingston and the Islands. He talked about the unprecedented action of this government in taking bills that had died on the Order Paper of the last Parliament and ramming them through, doing something which has never been done in this House in its 124-year history and, indeed, for which no precedent can be found in the British House of Commons in its nearly 1,000-year history.

I can only say that the government should hang its head in shame. One wonders today why the government prorogued the House of Commons last time. Why did it prorogue? We heard a Speech from the Throne which did not appear to tell us anything new or different. It did not appear to give us any new blueprint for Canadians. It was remarkably low on specifics about its program. Yet we had the prorogation. One presumes it was because the government wanted to get away from here, take some time, regroup and come back with some fresh ideas.

Instead of fresh ideas, we have today this pernicious—and I underline that word—motion of the House leader ramming through five bills. We are just supposed to pretend that prorogation did not take place. We are just supposed to accept the government's decision that these bills will come to this Parliament in the state in which they were supposed to have died in the last Parliament.

My learned colleague from Kingston and the Islands, although only in this House as I have been for two and a half years, not six, is certainly much more of an expert on procedure than I am.

There is one thing which has taken up, to some degree, our time here in this House recently, time that all of us as members of Parliament on both sides of the House have used in talking to the media. It has been discussed on television and in the newspapers across the country. It is the theory of a less partisan style of politics in the House of Commons.

I believe it was here, in this very House, that Sir Winston Churchill responded to the question of the neck of England being wrung like a chicken by saying: "Some chicken, some neck". If I may paraphrase Mr. Churchill, if I may take the liberty of doing so, may I say to the government members present: "Some form of non-partisanship". If this is the best that can be done, I am afraid that the people of Canada, already disappointed with the direction in which their government is leading them, will only have that disappointment increased to a point of

absolute disbelief and disrespect for this venerable institution, the House of Commons.

We, on the opposition side of the House, have listened to the pious mouthings on the other side, about how partisanship must be dropped in the best interests and the honour of the country. What happens today? Today five bills are being rammed through with the government's favourite Draconian measure, closure. This evening we will be forced to vote on these bills because of a total disregard for the history of this Chamber, for the tradition of British Parliaments and, most specifically, a contempt for the people who are represented by the members of this House.

I would like to get a little more specific. There is one bill among these five that is of particular interest to me as the member for Halifax, and indeed is of interest to all Atlantic Canadian members. I refer to that wonderful Bill C-26.

For those who are not quite so aware what Bill C-26 is about, let me refresh your memories. Bill C-26 is the bill that takes away the At and East grain subsidies, the subsidies to the Atlantic ports. Today in this House I heard the Minister of Transport say that this government would do everything possible, everything possible, to assist the beleaguered ports of Atlantic Canada, and particularly the port of my home city, Halifax.

The Port of Halifax has a long, honourable history. In 1749 Cornwallis founded that city. From 1749 until this government got its hands on it, the Port of Halifax thrived. Haligonians, because of their port and the spinoff from it, managed to survive in good times and bad. That is coming to an end because of the policy of this government.

For weeks now I and my colleague, the member for Dartmouth, have been pleading with the government to do something about the absolutely unacceptable situation in the Atlantic ports, and particularly the Port of Halifax. The unfairness of freight rates between Halifax and central Canada have been a rallying cry for Atlantic Canadians since Confederation.

We have talked a lot about what various people gave up when they entered into Confederation and what we sacrificed to become Canadians, what we are proud to have sacrificed to become Canadians, because being Canadian is, to us, the single most important facet of our lives. Being Canadian is intrinsic to our existence. It is what we stand for, it is what we believe in.

However, we are human. We know what we gave up in Confederation. One of the things that we in Atlantic Canada gave up, and particularly in Halifax and Nova Scotia, was the thriving north-south trade. We gave it up because we said: "We want to be part of this country. This country is important to us, we are committed to it and we will stay committed to it".

Look at the polls. From then until now, who have been the strongest federalists in this country? Who are the ones who remain most strongly committed to the concept of Canada? Every time—and my colleague from Newfoundland knows this—they are Atlantic Canadians. Atlantic Canadians believe in this country, they want this country to succeed, despite the fact that governments, and most particularly this government, seem to take some perverse pleasure in kicking us when we are down.

• (1750)

I refer again to the comments made today by the Minister of Transport. He said: "We will do all we can, all that is in our power". That is what he said. I heard him. You heard him, Mr. Speaker. You were there. He said: "We will do everything in our power to assist the Port of Halifax".

One of the things in the power of this government is to take Bill C-26 and consign it to the garbage can where it belongs. This bill has an interesting history. On July 15, 1989 the At and East subsidy was cancelled, flat out cancelled without legislative enablement. It was just cancelled. The government in its wisdom said: "That is it for the At and East. It is gone". Since that happened, the grain elevator in Saint John, New Brunswick has closed and the grain elevator in Halifax is working at a quarter its capacity.

Has there been a bill to enable this cancellation? No, indeed, or at least not passed. Bill C-26 was introduced in the very late fall of 1989 and immediately received strong opposition from this side of the House. I want to pay tribute to my colleague, the hon. member for Lambton—Middlesex, who certainly increased my knowledge in the area of grain subsidies and the history of the At and East subsidy and its role in bringing Ontario grains to the Atlantic ports. Without the assistance of the hon. member for Lambton—Middlesex, I

would not have had the knowledge or learned the facts and figures I needed to know to make representation in committee and in this House against the cancellation of this subsidy. I definitely want to say thanks to him.

This bill went to a legislative committee. With my colleague from Lambton—Middlesex, and the support of witnesses in the grain industry and the transportation industry and the support of the mayors of Saint John, New Brunswick, Halifax and Dartmouth, we stopped this bill cold in the legislative committee. It stopped there. It did not come back for third reading. There was lots of time. This bill was stopped cold in the legislative committee months before last month's prorogation and the government did not attempt to bring it back.

What does the government do? It reintroduces the bill under this pernicious, and I use the word again, pernicious motion. Is it not interesting? Is it not ironic that on the same day, the very same day that the Minister of Transport says: "We will do everything in our power to assist the Atlantic Canadian ports, and in particular the Port of Halifax," that Bill C–26 raises its ugly head, the ghost of Christmas past. Bill C–26 is back here being rammed through with closure by this government.

If this is everything that is in the power of the Government of Canada to help the Port of Halifax, it is no wonder that the government party is at 8 per cent in the polls in Atlantic Canada, 8 per cent. I have been hearing for days and days that the Conservatives are at 14 per cent. Well, not in the Atlantic and Bill C–26 is part and parcel of the reason.

Atlantic Canadians are committed to this country. They are committed to federalism. A poll last week told us that Atlantic Canadians have the strongest belief in the country in bilingualism. Atlantic Canadians, the most tolerant people in this country, are absolutely right.

Atlantic Canadians have taken just about every brickbat and every bomb that the government can throw at them. However, there comes a point. The point has come with this bill not only being reintroduced when the government did not have the face to bring it in for third reading after its disgraceful behaviour in the legislative committee, but being rammed through, forced through on the same day that we hear these wonderful promises from the Minister of Transport. This is unacceptable. It is unacceptable to Atlantic Canadians.

All of us stand here in front of you—there are three members here from the Atlantic in the House now, my colleagues from Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba—and say: "This must stop". We have heard the eloquence of the member for Kingston and the Islands on the unprecedented behaviour of this Parliament, unprecedented in Canadian or British parliamentary history.

We have heard the eloquence of the member for LaSalle—Émard on the question of the environmental bill that is supported by virtually no one in the environmental sector in this country.

We will hear more, and we will hear it soon, but I say that if this government does not want to see people marching in the streets, this government had better look to its own advice. We are supposed to be in a less partisan House of Commons. The people of Canada know when the wool is being pulled over their eyes and they will not accept it.

The people of Canada understand when this government is trying to hide behind empty phrases and foolish words and at the same time is continuing to attack certain regions and certain sectors of this country. Mr. Speaker, 8 per cent; just wait. Very soon this government will deservedly be in a minus position.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, after the fine speech given by the member from Hamilton just a minute a go, it is hard to know where to continue on in this type of debate.

I guess what it brings to mind, and the reason for joining in, is that as the rules of the House of Commons were changed since the last session, it takes a while for the impact of these rules to begin to sink in for individual members, particularly those of us who are new to the House of Commons.

What has struck me, as I have watched the House reorganize itself, is just how democratic the motive behind these changes has been. I do not say that loosely and I do not say that without some sadness. I think it is important that the members of Parliament maintain their confidence in this institution and show Canadians how it can work.

When we returned and looked, for example, at the case of the reorganization of the committee system in the House of Commons, we found ourselves into one battle after another to make sure that people across this country had an opportunity to discuss the issues before a committee. We have found out that they are all cut back and have less of a mandate. They are not able to generate the discussions we thought they would at one time.

In the case of international human rights, we found it in fact to be cut entirely from the mandate of the human rights committee. I know there are many Canadians and groups such as Amnesty International, which yesterday celebrated its 30th anniversary, which look forward to having a chance to speak to a small group of parliamentarians in the subcommittee on international human rights. The fact that opportunity is being taken away from them because of the change in rules and the change in the structure of committees is something that will be regretted in the months to come.

I know too that in the health and welfare committee there is a great deal of concern. There are huge areas to be discussed, from poverty, to changes in the health care and income support systems in this country. If they do not have a broad representation from all the parties in the House of Commons and if they do not have an opportunity to listen to the groups coming in, they will be pushed very hard to develop the expert reports we have seen from the House of Commons committees in the last few years.

The House reconvened last week after the Speech from the Throne. I guess one of the reasons why the government does not wish to have this House sit as regularly as it did before is that it is watching the decline in the fortunes of the government since the House was reconvened. If we think back, it was only a few weeks ago that the House heard the Governor General in the Senate chamber deliver the Speech from the Throne, outlining all the commitments that the government was going to be making.

Then we found out within a few hours that in fact no matter what the government's publicly stated agenda was, it was breaking rules on immigration and the Prime Minister was on a trip overseas. It is similar to the one of the last Conservative Prime Minister whose government fell around the jokes created by a trip overseas to Asia. Here is our Prime Minister right now making as many errors and showing as bad judgment as his colleague, the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs. It is a government which has been plagued by stupid mistakes, by bad judgment, by not understanding the true wishes of Canadians to be governed responsibly. In changing the institutions, it simply wished to restructure the House instead of dealing with the real issue: if Canadians had a chance to deal with this government directly in a general election, these guys would be dismissed out of hand as being one of the most inappropriate and undemocratic governments seen in the history of this country.

• (1800)

Although we have to struggle to deal with the government every day in Question Period and try to show Canadians just how incompetent it is in so many areas, we must remind the country that we, too, share in the desire to see that the House is restored to being the focal point of public debate and to see that the rules are restored in a way that makes it not only easy to criticize the government, but easier to work together as a team on all sides of this House to produce good legislation.

The government decided to ask us to restore legislation, and it actually did that with several pieces of legislation, including the Railroad Act, the Young Offenders Act, an act to provide for the dissolution or transfer of certain Crown corporations, an act to establish a federal Environmental Assessment Process, an act to amend an act to provide for the appointment of a port warden. Some of these are small pieces of legislation and others are very important.

The government is operating in an undemocratic fashion by pushing these pieces of legislation forward for the last two years, rather than by going back and facing the basic faults in its legislation and facing the very serious and thoughtful amendments put forward by other members of the House of Commons, including my colleagues from Newfoundland and from Kingston and the Islands. The government wishes to start as if these amendments were never presented and the legislation is perfect.

The role of the opposition is to be a thoughtful opposition and a thoughtful critic of what the government is trying to do. But the lack of opportunity, as posed to us in this particular case, makes it very difficult for an opposition party to continue to deal with the

government when we do not feel the government is being honest in its motives.

We could go through a number of these cases. Take, for example, just how controversial the Young Offenders Act is. You cannot deal with the Young Offenders Act in isolation.

In this country right now, we are going through a crisis on questions of safety and security. We find that Canadians are very concerned that they cannot walk down their streets. We have women who are extremely worried about violence in the home. We have, for the first time, reporting systems on violence against women. We have a caucus colleague here, who is supported by this caucus, who wants a royal commission on violence against women. There are several groups now, for example social policy and social planning groups across this country, which are interested in safety issues. The Young Offenders Act is sort of the tip of the iceberg. But if this government only wants us to deal with the tip of the iceberg, how will we ever get at the heart of the matter?

We see the reports from Statistics Canada this week that violent crime is up dramatically in almost every Canadian city, with the exception of Toronto. We read in the newspapers of this rise in crime—such as today, about a couple of particularly violent people who are allowed to be out on parole—and that upsets Canadians.

We cannot deal with the issue of safety and security by only dealing with the issue of criminality. The issue of security is that of using the role of the federal government to make sure that our society is safer and to make sure our larger cities are safer. Jail is the end product of a system which is unsafe. It makes people in this country feel unsafe in their daily activities, whether it is walking to work, walking home in the evening, living in an apartment by oneself, being an elderly person going out on payday when the old age cheque comes in, or on payday if they are between 55 and 65, and finding themselves in confrontation with people who wish to take away their grocery money.

In our city this happens frequently. We need to reach out, but we cannot reach out if the government presents us with situations where we cannot have good discussions about this. If you take away the committee system and if you take away opportunities to debate specific pieces of legislation brought forward , then we are left dealing with the end product of a bad system and not the system itself.

Let me continue on for a minute with the question of safety. If you want to deal with the question of young offenders, you have to deal with gangs, race relations, employment opportunities and training and education issues. There are a whole number of things which come into play. The fact that they have failed is the reason that we have to deal with the issue of the Young Offenders Act.

The government came back to us and said: "We consider this to be all finished. It has passed report stage." We said: "Well just a minute. Let us discuss what we are trying to do here in the House. Let us listen to Canadians. Let us realize that Canadians are looking at safety for an unsafe city and nobody is there to protect them. We would like to use this opportunity to expand discussion, to see that our amendments are taken seriously and produce a wider debate in this House of Commons."

In the case of the federal environmental assessment, this party has taken the environmental process as being the benchmark of good government. When the so–called green plan was put forward we stood up in this House and, at that time, said: "This is a fraudulent process. It is not well thought out in its legislative framework. There has not been consultation with groups and with the provinces, and the minister does not know what the government really means by certain sections. We do not even think the money is in place." We stopped and said: "Let's review this environmental review process because this is a test of faith among Canadians for how the system should be working."

If you ask Canadians what really makes them proud in this country they will tell you that the one thing that makes them the most proud is the great sense of wilderness, the unspoiled space. We have a country so large and so full of resources that they do not want to see it put at risk. They ask the federal government to please show leadership. They ask the government not to get into discussions on devolution but to show leadership and assert the federal assessment process on environmental matters.

The government provides a piece of legislation which is very weak and one in which the Canadian people do not have confidence.

If you watched television last week, *The Journal* on CBC, you would have seen the treatment of the B.C. forests. It may not be the scare scenario sent out by German television but let us assume that there is a problem there. Where is the environmental review process? The famous dam in Saskatchewan which has led to several court cases, the Rafferty-Alameda dam, is another example of the federal government's flawed process.

We find that there are people who now have to take the federal government to court over the Oldman dam in Alberta.

We could go across the country, one province after the other. We could look at the future developments in northern Quebec, northern Ontario and northern Manitoba. The purpose of the opposition is not to obstruct government but to co-operate with the government when the interests of Canadians have been thought about and taken into account. We all heard in our constituencies that people are concerned about the integrity of government and integrity in the governmental process.

Do we hear a thoughtful response to integrity? No, not at all. What do we hear?

An hon. member: The government does not even know the word.

Mr. Walker: It is a faint memory from its parents and it certainly has lost it. The government does not know that Canadians do not want to hear about more things being rammed down their throats. They want this government out and if the government is going to stay, they want at least a few responsible pieces of legislation.

The member for Kingston and the Islands, who is our watchdog on the way that this government tries to ram one thing down our throats after another, can tell the Canadian people that so many pieces of flawed legislation are presented to this House of Commons that it is a record in Canadian history. Because of the influence of members such as this, we strive to review pieces of legislation and to improve them. We want to see a better environmental review process. That is why we are forcing the government today to explain to us, more clearly, why it does not want to start over again and produce a better piece of legislation but rather wants to push ahead.

My guess is that its green plan is to fill all those green seats over there with the Conservatives. It does not care about the green of Canada, it cares about the green on the government side.

• (1810)

I want to say that there are going to be a lot of empty spaces there after the next election. That is going to be green for Canadians because all the members sitting there are going to be gone. They are going to be gone because they are irresponsible. They are going to have to face the music.

All these pieces of legislation that have been presented, including the ones today to be hurried up, are just going to be a testimony to how little they understood what was going on in the country.

When the Prime Minister returns from his overseas trip—and trip is a good acronym for what he is doing; he is falling all over himself and being a total embarrassment to all Canadians—he is going to find out once again that the measures of the people he left in charge are being rejected by Canadians. What people want is a working organization.

There was grand talk in the Speech from the Throne about the reform of Parliament. There were discussions about free votes, about making Parliament a more responsible organization. There was an expression when I was in university which said: "The next day is the first day of your life." Today has to be the first day. If you are going to reform Parliament, do not wait for a report from a committee. Do not wait for some grand scheme from the Prime Minister's Office or the Privy Council Office. Start out by saying: "Today we are going to do things differently. Today we are going to respect Parliament. Today if the opposition wants to bring to the attention of the government that these pieces of legislation should be reviewed, we are going to take them seriously. We are not going to just jam them down everybody's throat".

When we hear and see the government taking this seriously, then we will know that in fact we have a more democratic institution.

As I think about these issues and as I look for signs from my colleagues as to whether we will be successful today in stopping the government in its actions, I can hope that many more will join me in speaking out against the government's actions. We will be able to see that each and every one of these pieces of legislation today

will be returned to the committees and to the proper stages for full consideration, and that the precedent of ramming these things down our throats will be stopped.

There are many other things I could refer to, but I see there are many colleagues who wish to join me in this debate. I thank you for the opportunity to ask the government to stop what it is doing and to reconsider the arbitrary nature of the new rules of the House of Commons.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take advantage of this opportunity to join in the debate this evening with my colleagues from Winnipeg, Kingston and The Islands and with others in the House.

We see the decision by the government today to put this motion before the House as the confirmation of the destruction, and that is what it is, of our parliamentary system of government.

We have heard a lot of talk in the last few weeks, including discussion in the throne speech—

Mr. Walker: On a point of order. Could the Speaker indicate who is representing the government in the House right now?

An hon. member: Riding roughshod over Parliament.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I think it is against the rules and precedents of this House to call attention to the presence or absence of members. The previous comment was out of order, I believe.

Mr. Dionne: It is also mandatory that a minister of the Crown be in his seat at all times when Parliament is in session.

An hon. member: Hear, hear.

An hon. member: All afternoon there has been no minister in this Chamber.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): On the same point of order, the hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I just want to confirm and support completely my hon. friend from Northumberland—Miramichi.

The nerve of the government Whip. He has a lot of nerve, and he can use it in his own government caucus. We are debating the motion before the House, which is a complete abrogation of tradition and history of this House.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order! I think members from both sides have had an opportunity to raise points of order and messages were sent back and forth. The hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte has the floor again.

[*English*]

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I think the points of order that have been raised illustrate the point that I tried to make at the beginning of my speech. That is the following.

Parliament is being systematically destroyed by the government. Canadians watching this debate are wondering what the fuss is. The Government of Canada has introduced a motion putting a series of bills that died on the Order Paper at various stages of progress in the last Parliament before this Parliament, after a new throne speech, and has deemed those bills to be reintroduced at whatever position or progress they had made in the last Parliament.

In hundreds of years of evolution of parliamentary government, such a motion has never been put before any parliament anywhere in the British parliamentary system because it is a form of executive dictatorship.

It is a government saying: "It is does not matter whether Parliament has proposed,"—government proposes and Parliament disposes—"we are going to introduce these bills. We are going to deem them to have been already considered by this Parliament and we are going to dispose of them in advance of a proper examination of the legislative matters put before the Parliament of Canada."

This government has been talking about trying to introduce a measure of civility into Parliament. It is trying to introduce a measure of non-partisanship in Parliament. That is what it has talked about. What it is really talking about is: Will you give a particular party, the governing party, a break? Will you be gentle as we go into the night with a particular party, the governing party?

This governing party should not ask for gentleness from the opposition. It should not ask for understanding from the opposition. It should not ask for compliance

from the opposition. It should not ask the opposition to accept being manipulated by the governing party when the institution is being destroyed. Parliament is being destroyed by the governing party today.

That is why Canadians are cynical. Canadians have a profound sense of fair play. It does not matter whether you are talking about a Canadian on the farthest point on the east coast on the craggiest rock in Newfoundland or a Canadian in St. Louis du Ha Ha, Quebec or a Canadian in Prince George, British Columbia. They understand the institution.

They understand that this is the place that belongs to the commoners. It does not belong to the Prime Minister in his ornate chambers at 24 Sussex. It does not belong to the Leader of the Opposition and it does not belong to the leader of the third party. It does not belong to independence. It does not belong to corporate Canada and it does not belong to Bob White.

It belongs to the people. Any time you tear up the rules of Parliament, any time you take short-cuts in Parliament, any time you say that hundreds of years of tradition of Parliament can be done away with, you do not short-change the opposition. You do not-short change corporate Canada.

• (1820)

You don't short-change the Canadian Federation of Labour. You don't short-change me. You short-change the people, because it is their institution. It is their Chamber, to ensure that their voice is heard and they have a chance to comment on the decisions of the governing party of the day.

The governing party of the day regrettably for the country—a country in desperate need of leadership on the constitutional front, a country in desperate need of leadership on the economic front— does not have the confidence of the people. Even as a member of the opposition, one who wants to replace the governing party, I say it is regrettable for Canada that at this time in our history only 14 per cent or 12 per cent or 8 per cent of Canadians have confidence in the government of the day.

What does this government do? Does it attempt to lay bare before the people of Canada its agenda? Does it attempt to persuade the people of Canada and the elected representatives of the people of Canada of the value of its agenda? Does it say that it has a vision for Canada and such a profound belief in our vision for Canada that we are prepared to debate it and to defend it?

No. It uses the tyranny of the majority. It uses the temporary trust given to this party as a consequence of an election two and a half or three years ago to bulldoze its legislative measures through the Parliament of Canada, to deny the people of Canada a chance to be heard, to deny the elected representatives of the people of Canada—not an opportunity to speak, but their obligation to speak, their responsibility to be heard in the proper examination of bills.

We may as well be blunt in this Chamber. What do we have? We have in Canada today the worst possible combination of governmental systems. We have a Prime Minister who wants a presidential system, a Prime Minister who wants to rule with absolute power and who assumes that the members of the Conservative Party are automatically supporters of every government measure, a Prime Minister who takes for granted that the members of the Conservative Party will support any and every government measure, a Prime Minister who sees not a Parliament with all it entails but sees purely a majority, a Prime Minister who has hauled off the velvet glove and exposed a brutal fist of a party with a majority in a parliamentary system, and who wants to behave in a presidential fashion.

However, a president who attempts to act in that fashion has imposed upon him the checks and balances of a congressional system. He is subject to the veto of a congressional system. There is no veto in this place. The greatest power belonging to the people in this place is the power of public opinion. The only ability the opposition has to represent the people is through Question Period and debate. We do not have the ability to out-vote the government. No matter what is proposed, we do not have the ability to stop the government. Only an appeal to public opinion, only in examining legislation in detail to point out its flaws and suggest improvements and put pressure on the government through an appeal to public opinion can opposition parliamentarians influence the government.

We cannot out-vote the government. No matter what it proposes, we can only expose its program and examine it.

If we take away that ability to expose, to examine, to debate, to propose amendments, to make changes, to seek to improve, to stop dead in its tracks what is worthy of being stopped dead in its tracks, we do not have a Parliament any more. We have a lovely gilded Chamber, rich and ornate, reflecting the history and evolution of the country, but absolutely neutered in its responsibility to reflect and echo the voice of the peoples of Canada in every region of this country.

That is what has happened today. This is serious business. As this governing party sinks deeper and deeper in the polls, it becomes increasingly removed from the people of Canada and from the values and views of the people of Canada, increasingly withdraws into Fortress Ottawa, increasingly withdraws into its offices and the sheltered existence of a member of Parliament, a particular one who cannot go home any more.

As this party finds itself reduced to that state, it increasingly takes away from Parliament and from the people the responsibilities of members to be heard. It shuts this place down.

What are we reduced to? We are reduced to the Speaker sitting in his chair presiding over a debate, quietly, pleasantly nodding his head, hoping for order. We are reduced to members like myself and others in the opposition, the independent member from Nova Scotia, feeling a burning sense of outrage, and raising our voices in anger, hoping that our anger will reverberate, resonate, and echo across this land because only the people can put a stop to this tyranny.

We are reduced to government members not even caring in the face of this unprecedented action, not even caring about the destruction of the institution, hidden away in their offices, wondering whether they have any future after this Parliament.

Where are the media? Well, if it cannot be said in four sentences, if it cannot be reduced to an eight-second television clip, if it cannot be reported as a sensational front-page headline, if the story cannot be told in the space given to a columnist, newspaper journalist, or a television reporter then it is a story not worth telling. The story that is unfolding in this Parliament today does not make an easy headline. It cannot be described in an eight-second clip. It is the story of the destruction of a tradition that is 800 years old, the British parliamentary tradition.

It is the end of the bloodless revolution. It is a bloodless counter-revolution bred by indifference when the institution is dismantled, regrettably with the acquiescence of the Chair. I hope that members are paying attention to this debate, particularly members who are here for the first term. I have only been here a short while, a little more than a decade. It does not take long to begin to understand that the statues out on the grounds of Parliament Hill, of McGee and Diefenbaker, Pearson, St. Laurent and Laurier, leaders of this country, are more than just bronze relics collecting dust. They are part of the institutional memory of this place. They stand and give testimony to the struggle to build a country. The one behind the Library of Parliament, of McGee, who died at 43, is a testimony to the struggle for Confederation itself, to the contract entered into by many peoples, to the institution in which the voice of a country could be heard.

Those kinds of parliamentarians would be absolutely outraged, would feel a sense of betrayal. They would suggest, I am sure, that what is being done today by the government in the name of efficiency, in the name of making it easier, in the name of ducking one's responsibilities, is a betrayal of the parliamentary evolution in this country.

I hope Canadians will understand that the debate today is not a procedural argument. The debate today is not about whether the government should have an easy time reintroducing four or five bills. The debate today is not about whether or not the government should have an easy time reintroducing four or five bills. The debate today is not about whether or not the opposition has been denied some ability to tackle in greater measure four or five pieces of legislation. The debate today is about whether or not a government half way through its term, a government at record low levels in the polls, a government showing record disdain for the views of the people and the Parliament of this country will be allowed in the interest of its own partisan convenience to destroy hundreds of years of parliamentary tradition.

• (1830)

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you the people of Canada, when they become aware of what is happening here today and when they become aware that their institution is being destroyed, will not stand for it. I say to you that unless this Prime Minister is absolutely convinced that his record is beyond redemption and therefore it makes no difference, unless this Prime Minister and this party want to wear the label of tyrants—dictatorial tyrants—in the history of this country, then the government should recant, come to its senses, withdraw this bill and show

some basic respect for democracy, some respect for Parliament and ultimately, respect for the will of the people of Canada. It should withdraw this bill immediately.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I guess I am happy to participate in the debate. I am sorry the debate is here. I just want to share the views in perhaps a more restrained way than my hon. friend from Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte. I agree with almost everything he said.

I have sat here through this debate and I should be somewhere else, as most members should. It is a beautiful night outside here at the House of Commons in Ottawa. Summer has hit finally and most of us should be somewhere else.

I think the intervention of the hon. member for Miramichi, who is a member of longstanding, who pinpointed and really cuffed the ears of the government Whip, illustrates the reason why I wanted to participate in the debate on this motion. I argued before the Speaker made his ruling that this is one of the more fundamental rulings that, as far as I am concerned, has ever been made by the Chair, which is going over a period of time. The precedent that this sets will affect in a most adverse way the whole reason why we are here.

Number one, I will come down to the procedural point because, quite frankly, I want to take on the Chair. I just want to mention that I could not believe—I am just horrified—that the Chair made the ruling it made. It is the grossest interpretation of the rules that we have ever had. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Chair forgot something.

We had a Prime Minister some years ago who wanted to do certain things in terms of our Constitution. He wanted to patriate it. Thank God he did. With all the criticism that he gets for having patriated the Constitution and the revision of history that in effect Quebec was left out—and of course, with a separatist government it was never going to sign anything—he at least brought our Constitution document back here. This gave us the opportunity to have something called Meech Lake.

Having said all that at one time, the Prime Minister, with the persuasion of premiers and/or public opinion decided to go to the Supreme Court to see if the Constitution Act 1982 was valid. The Supreme Court of Canada said, among other things in a most interesting decision, a little vague in some definition: "Oh, yes, Mr. Prime Minister of the Government of Canada, you can do what you are going to do but there is something called a convention. The convention says you should get some approval of the provinces".

Without going into that too far, this fundamental issue we are debating tonight, and I agree with my hon. friend from Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, is not the five or six bills that are there to be reinstated. We all know there is to be reinstatement. I thank the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre who, in effect, asked if there was a government minister in the House.

I know I am sort of moving around and have not zoned into what I want to say. But that intervention by the member for Winnipeg North Centre asking that simple but fundamental question about the whole parliamentary process: "Is there a minister of the Crown here?" and finding out there was none, illustrates the problem we are debating here in the House of Commons with this notice of motion.

I cannot believe it, knowing a lot of my good friends on the opposite side, that they have amnesia in terms of parliamentary tradition. I know tradition can suffocate us all, but it is not tradition for tradition's sake. It is tradition for the sake of the people. As has been said here before in the debate, the whole reason we exist is not to come here and make crazy speeches or stand up on points of order. It is to try to represent the people to see if the public purse is being spent in the way it should be spent, according to the mandate the public has given to the government and/or the bills given to the government.

The very fact that there is no minister of the Crown here responsible for the public purse is a denial of the very reason why we exist. I was going to be rather restrained earlier tonight, but we had the government Whip, who may be able to whip all the eunuchs on the government side into submission, having the nerve to come up here and try and defend this fact under another

rule of the House. This may be debated another time because of the intervention of the member for York Centre. The very fact that the government Whip should have known better, but who obviously does not, is one of the reasons we are debating this notice of motion tonight. No government in the history of the Parliament of Canada, no government in the history of the Parliament of England has ever tried to have this motion debated in their respective Houses of Commons.

For some 20 years I sat as an hon. member of the opposition with a government party called the Progressive Conservatives, and I do not regret that too much. But, my goodness gracious, Mr. Speaker, if I had not bolted a year ago, I think I would have bolted tonight, when I heard the government Whip answering the member for Winnipeg North Centre on the fundamental reason why we are here: do we spend the public money in a proper way?

The whole essence of the thing is that it is not answered unless you at least go through the formality. We know the minister of the Crown here, and I am glad she is here—or another minister—is not going to really listen and/or take all the points of view. It is at least, however, a recognition of the principle of the power of the purse. The people send us here, pay us good money, give us good pensions, give us good perks and we are supposed to debate the public purse. My gosh, this is the first time in the 26 years I have been here that I have not seen a minister of the Crown to, in effect, defend the Crown, defend the spending of the public money, as the member for Winnipeg North Centre mentioned.

The Associate Minister of Defence had better not laugh. She has a beautiful smile and she is a lovely person. But I am suggesting that one of the reasons the government is in total trouble today is because they do not understand certain basics. One of the basics is Parliament. The Prime Minister never earned his spurs. He did not come up through the ranks. He won the leadership of my party. I supported somebody else. That may have been part of my problem. But he never earned it, he never sat here. I agree we sit here too long.

But for the government Whip to come in here and try to justify the unjustifiable was something.

I am going to get down to the motion. I know the public watches this on television and they might not understand this. I quite agree with the earlier comments of other colleagues. I am not going to get into the different bills involved. Quite frankly, sitting in the opposition, understanding the procedures of the House, I have sometimes wondered: why do all bills die in a prorogation and then you have to bring them back?

• (1840)

This is why I am horrified by the Speaker's decision. There was a timetable with the opening of Parliament and a prorogation. The timetable was like a person going to the gallows, it helped to focus attention on the bills in question. We know a lot of bills go through by consent, others are debated too long, some are debated fairly, but then comes the end of Parliament. A summer recess is okay, but we come to a prorogation which is the termination of that session, historically—for 124 years in this Parliament—it was time to focus attention on what was left on the Order Paper. It was the time that government and opposition got together and, often by unanimous consent, agreed on a legislative package of bills which were read and approved.

I listened to my hon. friend, who is a good parliamentarian and one of the better, as far as I am concerned, from Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, make a very passionate speech about two or three hours ago condemning the government. I am not going to agree with everything he said because the opposition has to bear some of the responsibility for what we are facing tonight. The opposition has to decide when it is going to draw the proverbial line in the sand. When is the opposition going to stop agreeing and doing things by consent?

We cannot adjourn Parliament as we adjourned it three or four times in this most unusual year of Parliament–on, Parliament–off, Parliament adjourned, Parliament called back. In my experience I have never seen a more hiccup period of Parliament. We hiccup on for two or three weeks, then we hiccup off, then we take another lozenge and come back and hiccup this way and that. The opposition had better smarten up, it had better decide what it is going to agree on.

I know there is competition between Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and the other party which thinks it is going to be Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, regardless of what Premier Bob Rae is doing in Ontario—and I am not going to get into that of course—but the opposition has to decide before it agrees to adjourn. It has to say: "Okay, government House leader, we will agree to adjourn but what bills are we going to pass? What bills are we going to turn over to a new Parliament."

From what I understand as a result of some of the discussion and debate here today, I do not think that was discussed or defined very well. I am suggesting that the opposition had better start to decide whether it is an opposition to a government that it, from its point of view, quite properly, and from the public point of view, has properly condemned. It had better decide whether it is really going to oppose, not obstruct but oppose, or whether it is going to be a hypocrite and oppose in rhetoric and then cave in when the moment of truth comes.

I do not know if this debate is going to go its full course. I know that, from a government point of view, we used to discuss this. We would say: "Oh don't worry about the opposition, it is going to cave in at about eight o'clock or nine o'clock. Don't worry fellows, at eleven o'clock you will be able to catch your planes."

There is some of that feeling here tonight. The government will start to pick up its ears. Government members are as human as any of us in the opposition or in the independent row. I am the dean of the independents. They are all there to my left. I start the row here. They are all human and they do not like to be here either. They want to know if we are really serious or not. Already, when this motion was put this afternoon, I saw two chairpersons over here talking to opposition members, obviously looking for consent on certain things. Either the organizational committee is meeting tomorrow to set up the committees or whatever.

The opposition has to decide, if this government is as odious as it says and the public and polls believe, to oppose, not obstruct but oppose. The opposition cannot oppose by making a rhetorical speech in the House of Commons on rule changes. In effect, this opposition has already been sandbagged on the rule changes that came in before we got out on one of those hiccup pauses. It got bamboozled on the rule changes and now we have a motion like this and I really do not know if we are even going to carry the debate until eleven o'clock.

I will come back to what I said before, as Prime Minister Trudeau found out—and thank God he brought the Constitution back. I used to be a lawyer, and I am not going to argue with the Supreme Court decision about the convention, which in effect said: "Mr. Prime Minister, you can do what you are doing legally, but the convention says you should have some approval from the provinces."

There was another federal-provincial conference and we all know what happened. Thank God the Constitution came back, for which I give Prime Minister Trudeau full credit. All the talk about Meech Lake, all the things said by the present Prime Minister and his revision of history, is totally intellectually dishonest. If we had not had the repatriation of the Constitution, we never would have had the opportunity for Meech Lake, even though it was botched a year ago today. Even then, with the Prime Minister speaking, with a majority government, the Supreme Court said: "Hey, Mr. Prime Minister, there is such a thing as a convention".

I am fundamentally disappointed and sick in my heart that the Speaker of this House, a friend of mine, made a peremptory decision to allow this motion to stand in order. I said in the preliminary debate before he made his ruling that there are no precedents. I asked the government parliamentary secretary: "What precedent do you have for what you are trying to do"? The parliamentary secretary knew, and I knew before I asked the question, that there was no parliamentary principle. There was no parliamentary precedent to try to do what we are doing here.

I have been in Parliaments before where, by consent, before we prorogued we made a House order putting bills A, B, C, D and E in the same position in the new House as they were in the old House. Also, when the new House came in, by consent order, we agreed to elevate certain bills into the stage they were at before prorogation. All of them by consent. However, we have, this time, a complete abdication and ignorance of the fundamental parliamentary tradition allowing the opposition to speak and hold the Parliament and the government to a time clock—and if it does not beat the time clock and get all the bills through by prorogation it would be able to make a deal, or at least try to make a new deal,

or it goes back to start again. That is the way the system works.

That was a convention of this House for 124 years. It was a convention, and is still a convention in the House of Commons in England, the Mother of Parliaments, for all its hundreds of years. Some may ridicule the member from Kamloops as the parliamentary secretary did in his rebuttal yesterday claiming that his argument was extreme. It is not extreme.

Once the government has this precedent on the books, why should it worry too much about what the opposition says at any time about any bill? It can say: "Let them debate until the cows come home. Then we will have a prorogation some time, and then we will bring in an omnibus and ominous motion to put all the bills that we, the government like, put them all in one hat and throw them into the House of Commons. With a majority government we do not have to worry about debating each individual bill. We can put them back on the Order Paper at whatever stage they are at".

That, to me, is a convention that breaches fundamental rules of this institution. I am sad that the Speaker has made that ruling that forces us to debate this issue tonight.

There are so many things that can be said. That type of ruling ignores the practical working of this House, just by what has happened tonight and for the government Whip to say what he said. I cannot draw attention to the interest of members. This is not a sexy issue in terms of the public but as far as I am concerned, this is one of the more fundamental rulings the Chair is ever going to make and I am sad. I have sat here and missed three opportunities to participate in a small way, knowing that the ruling has already been made and knowing full well that the government majority is going to have its day because you have turned the clock back and you really make this place a charade by this type of ruling.

• (1850)

I know it is useless to talk now. The government's motion will pass. I just hope the opposition decides to oppose and I hope the debate continues until the appointed hour when we vote. I hope that having been sand-bagged on the rules changes and on this notice of motion, somewhere in the collective opposition there is going to be a willingness to say to the government: "Hey, we know you have the numbers, but we are not going to give this by consent".

We all know, if you have been around here long enough, that three-quarters of the things done here are done by consent. I just cannot believe that having been sand-bagged on the rules changes, on this motion and some other matters that there is still going to be that receptive nature to do things by consent. The opposition has been whip-sawed enough and it should tell the government to change its ways because nothing is going to be done here by consent with this type of motion.

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have a chance to speak on this motion, although, like the previous speaker, I am sorry that it is necessary to do it. I cannot match the eloquence of either the member for Annapolis Valley—Hants or the member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte but I agree with the point they are making, that this motion of the government is a step toward destroying the power of Parliament as a place of real debate by people elected by the people of Canada.

It is only one step in a long process but what is happening, to put it briefly, is that the government has invented a totally new rule yesterday and today in Parliament. It never discussed the rule with the opposition, which was the usual way, until the last few years, of changing the rules. It just announced that it is going to do it differently. It had prorogued the last session, that is to say it ended it, and according to all the experience of centuries in this and other Parliaments, that means the legislation died. It could be brought in again and started afresh with fresh debate, and previous governments have used that system to good effect.

Now the government is just saying it is not going to bother with that, it is going to run five bills through, which have no connection with each other; five bills it wants through, in one motion, limiting the debate to one day by closure. In other words, each person gets a chance to speak for at most 20 minutes and he has to talk about five different bills which have nothing to do with each other. After people have spoken until eleven o'clock this night, it is over.

That is not by itself dictatorship but it is part of a pattern of dictatorship. I remember nine years ago when the same Tory party was in the opposition and it objected wildly to the then Liberal government doing something like that. The Liberal government brought in a motion to control or regulate the oil companies. The Tory party objected wildly on behalf of its friends in the oil companies and it shut down this House for two weeks. It hijacked this House by abusing a rule that was then customary. It was not written in the books. It was a customary rule. The Speaker, a member of the government party, had to uphold the rule until the opposition party blackmailed the whole House into agreeing to change the rule.

The rule was simply this: Because the opposition had demanded a recorded vote according to its rights, it refused to come in. It refused to re-enter the House to let the vote take place.

Nothing was done for two weeks in Parliament. This is the same Tory party that is now complaining that we debate things. "We waste time," it says "debating." It wasted two weeks doing nothing in order to blackmail the government party and the Speaker of that day into agreeing to change certain rules, including the rule that it had used to get those changes.

The rules were changed by agreement then and once since then. In the last three years this government has not wanted to waste time getting agreement to change the rules. It just lays it down and says: "This is how it is going to be. Like it or lump it." That is what it did yesterday, and the Speaker liked it.

We can lump it. That is the government's attitude. No more attempt to have rational discussion. Just: "We are the boss. Do what we tell you."

Debate is slowly being cut down to next to nothing. It means that the people who elected opposition members to speak for them in Parliament are being cut out of their voice. Bills will be passed so quickly that the public will not have any idea of what is happening because the newspapers do not publish the full detail of the bills.

A few people may find out but the general working public will not know what is being done to it by the government in Parliament with the opposition being more and more, month by month, gagged by this kind of rule change, one-sidedly.

Previous speakers have made that point, as I say, very powerfully and eloquently. I want simply to agree with them in that outline and then take the matter a little bit deeper.

Why is the government doing this? This government is clearly the ally or the tool of the Business Council on National Issues. This is a group formed in the mid-1970s. It is composed of 150 of the chief executive officers of the biggest corporations in Canada. They are worth, perhaps, $1 trillion, one thousand thousand million dollars. That is a lot of money in Canada.

Some of them are American-owned companies. They are calling the tune for this government. They asked for a free trade agreement, and they got it. They asked for cuts in the social programs, and they got it. Their third demand was for an increase in the military. We will see whether they get that.

In order to do what the Business Council on National Issues, made up of the richest corporations and the richest men in this country, is demanding, this government is using these more and more dictatorial measures.

It has rammed through the goods and services tax, which takes off the tax from the owners of property. Not one penny of the cost of the property of the manufacturing company is in the form of tax. Only the work of the workers turning steel into washing machines, leather into shoes or cloth into clothing is taxed in the goods and services tax.

The workers must pay more as workers and as consumers while the owners pay less. That has been the progress of this government for the last seven years and it was the progress of the government before it, but it did not move as quickly.

This government is dismantling Canada Post. It wants to privatize it so that it will enrich some of its friends who will be able to buy it up for a song. It is chopping down the unemployment insurance system which has established and stabilized the life of this country for 45 years.

It has completely withdrawn any government responsibility for the funding of it and it has stolen hundreds of millions of dollars out of it for training purposes which have nothing to do with the original mandate of unemployment insurance. There may be people out there in the public who will say "who cares?" The people on bread lines care. The working people who know that wages have gone down in the last 10 years care. The people in Toronto and metro Toronto who cannot buy a

home, cannot rent a home, care what this government is doing to them.

• (1900)

There will be others, the comfortable ones, who will say: "Well, fair is fair; the Tories won the election in 1988". Was it fair? In the last two weeks of that election there were huge and expensive advertisements, the estimate is that they cost more than $50 million. That would be two or three times as much as the Tory party or any party would be allowed to spend in the constituency campaigns in 295 constituencies. That would have been illegal if it had been spent by the Tory party. It was not spent by the Tory party, it was spent by its friends in the Business Council on National Issues and by the subordinate groups of sometimes smaller businesses that it directs.

With the help of that $50 million spent by the richest people in Canada and in the United States on that last two weeks advertising campaign, letters were sent to their employees saying: "If free trade loses the election, you lose your job". That is quite a threat. I was shown some of the letters by working people in my riding.

With the help of that, this government now feels it can do anything it wants to do and tell the opposition to go jump in the lake. It can do anything that the Business Council on National Issues tells it to do on behalf of the richest class in this country, to the detriment of the working class in this country. By "working class" I do not mean people such as I was when I worked in a factory wearing dirty shirts and dirty jeans, working with dust and grease and ink, and so on; I mean all the workers, including the mental workers, school teachers, and many professionals who are becoming mobilized into the same situation as wage and salary workers. Almost all of them are being hurt by the changes this government is making in the laws. The government is ensuring its power to make those changes without opposition in this Parliament by the way it changes the rules.

When it comes to the next election, if it takes $100 million instead of $50 million to buy the advertisements and mislead and intimidate the public, the Business Council on National Issues will do it.

The richest class in this country has seized control of this government and it will not listen to the opposition or to the public. It believes—it is very confident, very cocky—that it can do it again and again throughout this Parliament and again in the next election.

Some of my colleagues have been saying: "You will not be back in the next election". One hundred million dollars can buy a lot of brainwashing, especially through the very powerful companies that own so much of the newspapers, radio and television, and that are destroying the small publishing companies, the small printing companies and the small weekly community newspapers which might have a more independent opinion. It is doing that through the GST and through extortionate raises in postage rates for small papers.

Parliament is not in itself the power in this country. Parliament is only an instrument, an instrument used by somebody. A few centuries ago when "Bad King John" thought he could do anything he liked, the barons got together, got him out on the island of Runnymede and presented the charter to him and said: "We would really like you to sign this". He looked around and he did not have enough of his own men to fight the barons and so he signed it, the Magna Carta. A few centuries later, King Charles I forgot about that. He thought he could tax people without the permission of Parliament. The English common people who fought the civil war cut off King Charles' head and established the principle that Parliament shall rule over taxation. No king or queen ever tried that again in England.

My friend says it was tried in the States.

We are getting this presidential style of executive power, copied in Canada by the present Prime Minister, from the dictatorial presidents of the United States: Reagan and Bush. It is done at the behest of the same rich corporations in the United States and in Canada. They are running the show and calling the tune.

Someday, and I do not think it can be very long, the people of Canada are going to decide that it is enough; electing people to Parliament is a waste of time. The Prime Minister senses, or his pollsters have told him, that the people are getting fed up with Parliament.

No wonder, when they see that the people who represent them are either on one side where they just vote like trained seals for anything the Prime Minister calls for, or are on this side where we are more and more gagged and cannot speak out against it to tell the public what is happening and to warn it of what is down the road.

The food banks are growing with people who cannot feed their children properly. Some people cannot find a decent place to live in our big cities. Four hundred thousand jobs have been lost as a result of the trade deal and the recession. The recession was made worse in Canada by the government's high tax policy, which was not to keep inflation down. Inflation was already down. The high interest policy and the high tax policy were to make sure that Canadian goods would not compete in the U.S. market and thus make the U.S. partners unhappy.

This makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. The working people in Canada, which forms the huge majority of the Canadian population, are not going to stand for it indefinitely.

Last summer a small handful of Indians got fed up with delays, and delays, and delays for 200 or 300 years in their land claims. The government turned out 4,000 Canadian troops against them. What will happen this summer? A month ago, the workers at Caterpillar Tractor in Brampton occupied the plant; a sit-in, in order to demand a better settlement than they had got from a company which was making high profits in Brampton but had decided to close down. Because of the free trade deal it was profitable to move to Alabama where unions are practically prohibited by law.

The Rae government of Ontario negotiated that situation to a peaceful conclusion. There was no violence at Caterpillar Tractor thanks to Bob Mackenzie, the Minister of Labour in the NDP government.

It does not change the situation, which is growing worse and worse for working people in Canada. It does not change the situation in which they see that it is no longer possible for them to express their will through elections which are perverted by third party advertising and through a House where the opposition is being gagged.

If this government continues to follow this course, it will build up the conviction in the people of Canada that they cannot do what they need to do for themselves through Parliament. They will have to use other means. That will be a sad and painful day for Canada. The responsibility for it rests on the people across the other side of the aisle.

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, I have been in this place now for some 13 years. I have seen good days and I have seen bad days in the House of Commons. I have never seen a worse day than today. Unless we smarten up we are going to destroy our own institutions.

• (1910)

The government should be the custodian of Parliament and the opposition should be its watchdog. Today, this Parliament was treated by the Government of Canada in absolute and total contempt.

For hours this afternoon there was no minister of the Crown in this House. I am glad the Minister of Justice is here to hear what I am saying because she should be the one most concerned about how the laws of this country are promulgated.

Mr. Della Noce: Spit it out, spit it out.

Mr. Dionne: If you have something to say, Mister, get up and say it.

Maybe we need another Cromwell around here for a little while to clean out some of these people who have no respect for the democratic process.

Mr. Della Noce: We let you speak. That is democratic.

Mr. Dionne: You let me speak? I thought I had a right to speak in this place. I thought I had a right to speak anywhere in this country. You let me speak? You are damned right you let me speak, because you cannot stop me. If you want to try, come across here right now.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Dionne: What we have seen today in this House should never be seen in this House. It is an absolute disgrace and it falls squarely on the so-called government of this country.

If we go on like this, bunching bills together, having one or two members of the government party sitting in this Chamber with no ministers here, no one account-

able, then we are going to fall into anarchy. We have seen this happen over and over during this Parliament.

This has been, in my years in Parliament, the worst day of Parliament that I can remember.

An hon. member: That is right. They are arrogant.

Mr. Dionne: The arrogance of that crowd opposite is boundless. Not only if it does not like the rules does it abuse the rules, but it does not even have the good sense to try to change the rules properly.

What has gone on here today is very disturbing to anyone who has any notion of how this institution is to function and protect the fundamental rights of the citizens of this country.

The rights of the citizens of this country were not protected today when business of government was being carried on in this House without a minister present, with sometimes not even a member of the government in the House.

Mr. McDermid: Where were you?

Mr. Dionne: I was here, Sir.

Mr. McDermid: You were not here all the time.

Mr. Dionne: Where were you? You must have been wearing invisible clothes.

An hon. member: He just snuck in.

Mr. Dionne: It is obvious that there is not much point in saying anything to these people over here because they do not have any sensitivity for this institution.

If this institution falls because no one has stood up and spoken for the rights of the members of this Parliament, then every Canadian will have lost and we will have a system of anarchy.

From the Chair on down, we have to guide and guard the rights of the people in this Chamber and we have to ensure that the basic rules of this Chamber are adhered to and are enforced.

An hon. member: They are now.

Mr. Dionne: Not today they were not.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, I was going to start off by saying that in the less than three years I have been in Parliament, I do not think I have witnessed heretofore the kind of anger I have witnessed tonight. There is a lot of anger on this side of the House. There is a lot of frustration. We saw the anger just a few moments ago.

I think I know my hon. colleague from Miramichi, and he is a gentleman. Rarely have I seen him raise his voice. Tonight we have seen it. It is a measure of the deep frustration and the deep anger that is felt on this side of the House.

We are dealing with very serious business here. We are dealing with a government that is deliberately gagging the opposition and showing utter contempt for this House and for our democratic institutions and for the people of Canada.

Mr. Milliken: Repugnant.

Mr. Harvard: Yes, as my colleague from Kingston and Islands says, it is repugnant. What it is doing is repugnant.

I have noticed that we have not had the pleasure or the benefit of any of the government members speaking to the issue.

Mr. Milliken: They are ashamed.

Mr. Harvard: Are they ashamed of their own measure? Are they ashamed of their own motion? I would have thought they would be proud of this and that they would stand up and support it and speak to it. No, they sit there silent. They say nothing. Absolutely, nothing.

An hon. member: Absolutely ashamed of themselves.

Mr. Harvard: I really think that is just another form of contempt of this House and of this Parliament.

What are we talking about here? We are talking about a pernicious motion that would allow this government to go back more than 100 years to the first Parliament and resurrect some bill that died in the first or tenth Parliament or twentieth Parliament. Resurrect that bill and just continue on with it at the stage at which it died.

I suppose that the government would say: "Oh, no, no, we would never do that. We would never do anything like that. After all, we have great respect for this institution. We have great respect for democracy."

It has done it. It has never been done in this country before. It has not been done in our Mother of Parliaments. The government feels it can do this. I think it tells us how out of touch this government is with the Canadian public. It is out of touch. All you have to do is read

the papers, watch television, listen to radio and read the polls and you will discover how people feel about this government.

An hon. member: Fourteen per cent.

Mr. Harvard: It is totally and completely out of touch. What it is doing in the House here today is just another example of that. It would not do anything like this. No government would want to resurrect a bill that was deemed dead some time in the past. This is what this government is doing.

An hon. member: It does not have anything else to do.

Mr. Harvard: It seems to me that this government does not want any kind of opposition, no kind of irritant. If there is an irritant, if there is an obstacle, if there is an impediment to its juggernaut, then by God it is going to move it out of its way. It is so arrogant it believes that what it does is right. It is hardly even worth debate. If there is going to be any debate, it will not put up with it very long, because it has a Draconian device, a Draconian mechanism called closure. If you deign and if you dare say anything in opposition to the government's proposals or to its motions, it will cut you off.

• (1920)

It will gag you with something called closure. The government has used it over and over again.

I believe it has come to the end of the line and I know that it has come to the end of the public's tether. People are fed up. They are sick and tired of this arrogance, this approach.

When Canadians went to the polls in 1988, they elected a Parliament. They elected 295 representatives. Regardless of party stripe, they expected us to do a job. In the case of the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party, who found themselves in opposition after the election, they expected us to do our job to fulfil the role of opposition. They want us to oppose. They want us to scrutinize. They want us to examine everything that this government does.

We are all imperfect human beings, but I do think that we try hard. The government obviously takes a different tack. It has a different idea. It apparently feels that when Canadians went to the polls and made their collective decision in 1988, they had elected a government with a full and complete mandate that was more or less a dictatorship. It did not have to pay attention to the traditions of this House. It did not have to pay attention to the opposition, to rules, or to regulations. After all, it was given this mandate, this right to rule, this right of Tory rule which should not be questioned.

Canadians disapprove of this style of government, they disapprove of it vigorously and they will show their disapproval at the next election.

A motion like this does not draw a lot of public attention. A motion like this should draw considerable public attention, but it does not. One of the reasons it does not is that we live in the television age and television relies on pictures with lots of action, lots of movement. Television does not like talking heads. Even if the talking heads make a lot of sense, television is not really interested.

We talk about this matter in the House of Commons and it is not going to turn Peter Mansbridge on, it is not going to turn his producer on. You can say the same for Lloyd Robertson and for the anchorperson over at Global. This is not good television. However, just because it is not good television does not detract from its importance. Not on your life.

We are talking about a tradition, a convention in the House that should be respected. After all, we have rights on this side of the House. We have a job to do and I would hope that this government would show some respect for the opposition. It can do its job. It can push through its agenda as much as it likes, but it should show respect for this side of the House.

The government may not realize it, but this side of the House is just as important as that side of the House. The government has its role, it has its function, and we have ours. Unfortunately, I think we find ourselves in a situation where, because of the kind of presidential system adopted by this Prime Minister and by this government, we do not have the sufficient checks in the system that we should have. Maybe the founders of our parliamentary system never thought we would come to this stage. Yet we have.

We are going to have to rethink this process. We cannot continue on with a government that continues to batter away at this House and batter away at its tradi-

tions. There is only so much there. After awhile there will be nothing left.

How far can the government take it? If the government in effect says to heck with this House, to heck with the opposition, to heck with precedent, if that is the view of the government, how much more down the road can it go? We all know how low it is in the polls. What if we have not had an election by the summer of 1993? What if we have not had an election by the fall of 1993?

An hon. member: Heaven forbid.

Mr. Harvard: According to the law of the land, we are supposed to have an election. Will this government find some reason to postpone the election? Will it find some reason? Is it possible that this government would decide, in its self-interest, that an election in the fall of 1993 would be an unfortunate irritant, an unfortunate obstacle? This may sound kind of apocalyptic, but if it can do whatever it likes with the traditions of the House, why not postpone an election? We might as well try the whole ball of wax.

I hope this debate can continue. I would hope that something would strike the government and it would realize, for once, that it has gone too far. It has really gone too far. This is an example of trampling on Parliament, trampling on the rights of the opposition, and of course by extension, trampling on all Canadians.

I suppose we should not be surprised. All we have to do is look at the record of the government. We can recall all the stories the government put out about the proposed free trade deal back in 1988 and how it was going to be a Godsend for us, it was heaven-sent to us. Of course, if we rejected the free trade agreement the country was going to fall apart, its economy was going to fall apart. Remember those days? Well, here it is, more than two years after the implementation of the FTA and yes, the economy is falling apart.

We are cognizant of what this government tells the public. What did it tell us about the goods and services tax? The then Minister of Finance told us that prices were going to go down. After all, manufacturers would not be paying the old 13.5 per cent manufacturers' sales tax anymore. Of course, since they would not have to apply the old tax anymore, that saving would be passed on to the consumers. Remember that story? Remember how the government told us that story over and over again? Do not worry about the GST, it is the greatest thing since sliced bread. If we could only get rid of the old MST and apply the GST, it would do wonders, lower prices, boost the economy, increase exports. Remember all that? Remember that wonderful story the Tories told us. They went from one end of the country to the other and told us it over and over again. It did not matter what Canadians said. As many as 85 per cent of Canadians said: "We don't believe you. We think it is a pack of lies. We do not think manufacturers will pass on the savings, certainly not all of the savings. So we do not believe you." But the government said: "No, we are moving ahead. We are going to bull our way through this."

• (1930)

The government did move ahead despite all the petitions, protests, hearings and speeches in the House. Despite how bad the polls were against the GST, the government said: "No, we are going ahead with this bill." And they did.

Here it is, just a few months after the implementation of the GST, and what do we find? We are discovering surveys, which of course the government would like to question, which say prices are not going down, prices are going up. Why have the prices—or at least most of them—gone up? It is because—surprise, surprise, surprise—the manufacturers did not pass on the savings from the removal of the old manufacturers' sales tax. In other words, a lot of the manufacturers just took the 13.5 per cent and put it in their pocket.

That does not surprise me and I do not really think it surprises any Canadians, except maybe this government, particularly at a time when the economy was in recession. Why would beleaguered and besieged manufacturers not reach for anything, including the old manufacturers' sales tax or the removal of same, and take those savings and not pass them along to the consumers of Canada but put the money in their own pockets? It makes a lot of sense, particularly in an economy where you are trying to survive. So that is what the manufacturers did. It came to no surprise to anybody in the country except this government.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I am hoping against hope, but I would hope that the government would rethink this motion. It is a bad motion, it is going to hurt this Parliament and it is going to increase the cynicism that is felt in this country. People are already in a bad mood. They are in a sour mood. They are down on us. They are down on all of us. They are particularly down on the Prime Minister. All of us in this House feel that. We are all getting a blast from the people because of how

Canadians feel about the Prime Minister and about this government.

I wish the government would do some rethinking because this place is very important, in fact this is the highest court in the land. This is really the place where the decisions should be made and this is where the voices of Canadians should be heard.

In my final words, I would love to hear the Conservatives stand up and defend this motion. I am prepared to stay here until the bells have to ring at eleven o'clock. I would be more than happy to hear what they say. I want to hear their defence of this motion, but I doubt whether they will be speaking. I wish they would withdraw this motion.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, I usually begin my debate by saying how pleased I am to rise and address the motion before the House, but in this case the pleasure I would ordinarily take is less than normal here.

As I have watched and listened to the debate this evening, I have taken note of the absence of participation in the debate by members opposite. I am not suggesting that there are not members opposite, there are lots of them, but over the last couple of years, having had an opportunity to work with a lot of the members on the government side, I have a feeling, in fact I think I know, that they are a little cautious about participating in this debate tonight because I do not think any one of them can really articulate the reason why their government wishes to proceed in the way it is this evening. There is a feeling there, I can feel it on this side of the House, amidst all of the rhetoric that they are a little bashful about this. They may even be a little sad about it. But I would like to remind the House of six or seven lines from Beauchesne's, which may have been referred to earlier in debate, and I am sure members have read it all before. It is on page 1, chapter 1, paragraph 1. It is the first thing you read in Beauchesne's.

The paragraph recites what for all parliamentarians are the principles of parliamentary law. I know we have all heard it but I cannot get through my remarks without putting this on the record one more time. I know, Mr. Speaker, you have heard this many, many times. However, this particular paragraph articulates the principles of parliamentary law. I will just read it very quickly. The principles that lie at the basis of English parliamentary law have always been kept steadily in view by the Canadian Parliament. These are:

> To protect a minority and restrain the improvidence or tyranny of a majority; to secure the transaction of public business in an orderly manner—

There are two other items, but I cannot help but note that the cardinal, number one principle of parliamentary law, that I read when I first came to this place, "to protect a minority and restrain the improvidence or tyranny of a majority" is precisely the principle that is at stake here tonight. To be technically more precise, it is probably the issue that was at stake when the motion was first put and its propriety was debated here in the House.

I have to say respectfully that I am really in doubt as to whether or not the way the process was handled was really in the best interests of Parliament. I know the Speaker has made a ruling. I know that I and my colleagues are not in a position to challenge that ruling, but I really have a fear that something is out of order. What has happened here is that the government has proceeded in a way that I feel breaches that fundamental principle. It is one of three or four principles, all we have in this House to protect the minority—the rules and the principles. What is happening here tonight clearly breaches, tramples that first principle.

When Parliament set up shop here 123 years ago, it adopted a concept that had been in being for many years before that. I mentioned it before here in the House and others have. The process goes back to the year 1215 when the 25 bold barons went to the king and said: "I am sorry, you may not proceed in this manner any more without the approval of our group".

That group eventually became Parliament. Over time, the king developed his court and his councillors. The living modern vestige of those counsellors is today's Privy Council, the Privy Councillors, the king or queen's councillors, who sit in this House today.

I have believed for months now that the king's councillors who sit in this place have a very special role in this place. One of the things they do not do is tell Parliament what to do. They lead the government here but they don't act for the king here. They cannot do that because

the king cannot come in to Parliament. That has been a rule of Parliament for many years.

When the Privy Councillors do something like they have done here today, representing the king—we have a new king, by the way, and we know who the new king is—they, as representing the king, are telling Parliament how it will structure its work. From their perspective, from the king's perspective, from the Privy Council's perspective, Parliament is an obstacle.

• (1940)

It is at best a means to an end, but usually it is an obstacle. I do not blame the government for viewing Parliament as an obstacle. Its job is to propose legislation and get it through the House.

What is really happening, and I know it was discussed earlier, is that the bills the government is proposing to be revived are, as I speak now and as things were yesterday and last week, dead. They did not exist except in the history books. The government is saying is that it wishes to take those bills that are dead and bring them into this Parliament and revive them just as they were before they were dead.

In addition, we are discussing closure here tonight. Closure is not the issue. It adds insult to injury that in making this proposal the government wishes to do it by closure. As ugly as closure is, it is not the closure issue I am discussing here. It is the concept of reviving bills that are dead.

Maybe some of this is my fault, and I will explain this in a minute. Maybe it is the fault of some of the other members that this has occurred. I recall about six or eight months ago proposing for discussion that private members' bills be revived in a new session of Parliament. There was a lot of favourable response to that at the time and there were reasons I made that proposal, but I will not go into that now. At the time one of the objections was that it could not be done because in a new session the old bills are all dead. The government bills, the private members' bills, and the motions are dead. They cannot be revived. It is a sacred principle. It cannot be done.

I did not accept it as a principle that could not be looked at again. I still do not say that the government could not re-address that principle, could not look at it more closely. I think we should in Parliament. We have an obligation to rethink the processes here. We are in a period of reform constitutionally. There is no reason we cannot rethink processes here in Parliament.

Now it is eight months later and the same people who told me it could not be done, that private members' bills could not be carried over, have now come to this House, and with the concurrence of the Speaker, are saying they can and will revive dead bills. Somebody has it wrong somewhere. Maybe I got it wrong then and maybe I have it wrong now, but I do not think so. I think the government has it wrong now.

There are five bills. One of them, Bill C–73, was in the last session a miscellaneous privatization bill. I spoke in the House, as did my colleagues on both sides of the House, and that bill died. As we began this session there was a sense that maybe there was some interest, some good reason to revive a bill that had gone a great distance in the House, had basically gone through the system and at the present time was capable of obtaining unanimous consent in the House for reintroduction. That consent was had.

Bill C–73 happens to be listed among the bills in this motion. I know the Speaker has deleted it from this motion because Bill C–73 has already been disposed of. That was all done with unanimous agreement. A few days ago I thought it looked rather good for Parliament to be able to get something like that done in isolation. Was I surprised to show up here in Ottawa last night to see what the government had done with this motion.

What is wrong with what the government has done? I will try to articulate it again.

The bill is dead. The five bills are dead and do not exist. We have rules in this House that regulate how we do our business. The whole system of rules includes the business of first reading, second reading, third reading, referral to a committee where appropriate and other procedures. Those procedures have been in existence for time immemorial; certainly since the beginning of this Parliament.

Those rules are in place. I do not know whether they are sacred rules, but they are real rules that we have followed forever in this House.

In view of the principle I read earlier in Beauchesne's about the need to protect the minority—that is not just the minority here but all minorities—how can the government proceed as if it did not matter and it was just another item of business? What if the government was to propose tomorrow that 10 new bills be simply adopted

and be deemed to have been read three times and passed in this House?

If I am to take the Speaker's ruling today to mean that the government majority can do whatever it wants, then the government can do that too. Members opposite shake their heads. I say: why not? If the government can abandon the rules that dictate how we introduce and pass bills in this House and trample a fundamental principle of Parliament, if it can do that today, why can it not do it tomorrow? There is no rule. There is no principle that remains to protect us, the opposition, the minority. It does not exist. I cannot find it. What if the government did it? Let us wait and see.

I wish what was being proposed was a reform that had been discussed, debated which achieved a large consensus, maybe even unanimity. It is not a reform. It is retrograde and it is destructive and it comes from, not a lot of members in Parliament, but from cabinet, the Queen's Privy Councillors who sit in this Parliament.

This is a sad day and I know it will be revisited. I want my constituents to know that if there was anything I could do to stop this today, I would. That is why that principle supporting the minority is the number one item on the number one page in the number one chapter in our rules. However, there is nothing I can do. I can simply talk. I can debate. I can encourage members opposite to change their views.

In any event, I put that respectfully to the Chair and to my constituents. The rules have been breached and the rules that protect the minority have been breached, the rules in this House. To quote Sir Edmund Blake from 1873—I happened to read this last night in some casual reading I was doing and you have heard this before—he said: "The privileges of Parliament are the privileges of people and the rights of Parliament are the rights of the people".

It is not just our little group here on this side of the House of Commons that is affected by this. It is everybody on the street. There are some members of the public here in the House tonight.

I want to make a confession on behalf of a lot of members, including members opposite. In this year of a huge deficit, a huge national debt, the Canadian public expects all members of Parliament to embark on the very old process of budget estimates, reviewing the government's spending. This is a process that is integral to our oversight function in this House. I want the public to know that we will have a total of five days to review the billions of dollars of spending of this government.

• (1950)

That is a very cynical result of the prorogation that this government has just embarked on. I wish the members opposite well in their attempt to rewrite the rules of Parliament, to trample on the rights and privileges of the minority which we are. I wish them well. It is a sad day. I hope that, before the vote, some of them will change their minds.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to make some very brief submissions on the resolution before us.

I concur completely with my friend and colleague who just spoke. I concur completely with all my colleagues who have spoken, and I would go so far as to concur completely with the Independent Conservative member for Annapolis Valley—Hants from the province of Nova Scotia. He was his usual eloquent self, and he has a lot of experience in this House.

He was shocked. He was extremely shocked at the actions of this government, at what is taking place here. That drove him to stand up and give one of the finest speeches I have ever heard him deliver in the seven years that I have been here in the House.

My experience in this House does not match the experience of the member from Nova Scotia, but the point he was making is a point that has been repeated time and time again by members on this side of the House. The issue is very simple.

We are now in the Third Session of the Thirty-Fourth Parliament. What does all that mean? The Thirty-Fourth Parliament is the Parliament that was constituted as a result of a general election that took place two years ago when some people in this country made that terrible mistake and elected a Conservative government. They

are the same people who wish they had the opportunity to withdraw their vote and vote again.

I will not be overly partisan with regard to this particular matter. We are in the Thirty-Fourth Parliament. I was initially elected to the Thirty-Third Parliament in 1984, on September 4, 1984. Mr. Speaker, I know that you were probably elected in the First Parliament back in 1867.

In every Parliament there are a number of sessions. What is a session of Parliament? A session of Parliament begins with a throne speech. I have heard a few throne speeches over the last seven years, and I heard another one a few weeks ago when the government said: "This is a new beginning. We are going to do this. We are going to do that. This is part of our program".

It was met with a big, huge yawn from one end of the country to the other. People in Canada said: "So what? Who cares? The government is incompetent. The government has lost the moral right to govern. We want an opportunity to turf this government out". In effect, the throne speech meant absolutely nothing.

In order to begin a new session of Parliament, other than the session that begins with the election of a new Parliament, we have to prorogue—not to be confused with pirogies. Mr. Speaker, you might be familiar with pirogies. We can eat pirogies but we cannot eat a prorogation.

Prorogation took place on May 12 of this year. Prorogation simply means that the government has completed an agenda that it set forth in the throne speech. It is turning the page and embarking on a new agenda. When that happens, the old agenda dies. It is the end of the old session. The Second Session of the Thirty-Fourth Parliament died and we started a new session.

There were a number of bills still on the Order Paper, six or seven pieces of legislation. Those pieces of legislation are not important for the purposes of this argument, except to say that they were at various stages of the legislative process. All were introduced. Some were debated at second reading. Others had gone to committee. Some had come back for third reading. I believe one or two may have been sent over to the other place where the beloved senators sit.

As a result of prorogation those bills should have died.

Some hon. members: They did die.

Mr. Nunziata: They did die as a matter of fact. They died but they were not buried. They ought to have been buried according to 124 years of Canadian parliamentary history. How many years of parliamentary history?

An hon. member: Eight hundred.

Mr. Nunziata: Eight hundred years of parliamentary history. If you go to the father of Parliaments in Great Britain, or should I say the person of Parliaments in Great Britain, and you go back 600, 700 or 800 years, you will not find a precedent, not a single, solitary precedent, no justification, no rationale, no legal jurisdiction at all, for what government members are trying to do.

What are they trying to do? They are trying to say: "Well, we prorogued but we were only half kidding. We were joking. We were pretending. We really are not starting a new session of Parliament. We want to complete the old session, because we do not want these bills to die. We want to perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and revive these bills", not reintroduce them as they ought to do. They should reintroduce them at first reading, proceed to second reading, to a legislative committee, back to this House for third reading, report stage and off to the Senate.

No, they want to revive or resuscitate these pieces of legislation at the stage they were at when they were supposed to die.

You have made a ruling, Mr. Speaker. It is not often that I disagree with a ruling that you have made, but I am afraid you have made a terrible mistake by concurring in the wishes of the government and allowing this process to take place. In a few short minutes, the bells will start ringing and the House will be called upon to decide whether the government can in effect revive those dead bills.

We know that the government has a majority. We know that the government members will filter in from all over Parliament Hill in order to vote. They will effectively allow those bills to be revived.

What are the consequences of this particular ruling and this particular procedure that is taking place? As I have indicated, there is no precedent. There is no tradition. There is no convention. What this government is doing is in effect trampling on the rights of the minority. Those of us in opposition have a responsibility under parliamentary tradition. We are Her Majesty's Loyal and Official Opposition. It is our role to oppose, to hold this government accountable, to provide alternatives to the government of the day.

By allowing government members to do what they are doing, we are being denied our rights in the opposition. What are those rights? Those rights include debating certain pieces of legislation. We have no opportunity to debate six or seven or eight pieces of legislation, if this motion carries.

Members opposite wake up and say: "Well, they have already been debated". They have not been debated in the Third Session of the Thirty–Fourth Parliament. They may have been debated in a previous session, but they have not been debated fully and completely. The parliamentary process will not be followed with respect to these eight pieces of legislation.

• (2000)

In effect, we are being denied the right to debate and we are being denied the right to vote on certain pieces of legislation. What kind of precedent will be set as a result of this? Today they want these five bills. What is to stop those characters opposite tomorrow from saying: "Well, when Joe Clark was Prime Minister, he had a good idea. When the present minister of constitutional affairs introduced this bill, it had reached second reading back in 1979, we thought it was a good idea. Why do we not revive that bill?" It may have gone to third reading, it may have gone to the Senate, but it died when the government died.

Well, it can effectively say, and the precedent will be set: "We like that piece of legislation so by a vote in the House," as we are about to do in a few short minutes, "let us revive that piece of legislation at the stage it was at in 1979." That is the precedent that is being set. In fact, this government, as a result of the precedent you set, Mr. Speaker, and because of what the government is trying to do, will be able to revive, resuscitate any piece of legislation that died over the last 124 years of Canadian parliamentary history.

Now is that due process? Is that in keeping with the Canadian parliamentary tradition? I submit it is not. You yourself, Mr. Speaker, are playing host today, yesterday and tomorrow to a group of parliamentarians from Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. You invited them to visit our country so they could see how the parliamentary process works.

They are watching from the gallery and they are probably wondering what the heck is going on in the Canadian Parliament. This may have been possible under previous Communist regimes in the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia or Czechoslovakia, but not in Canada, not under Canadian parliamentary tradition. The power of the majority is being used in a summary and callous fashion to walk all over and destroy the rights of the minority.

Mr. Speaker, you were called upon to assist this government in trying to extricate itself from its own incompetence and mismanagement. It mismanaged the Second Session of the 34th Parliament. It was not able to adequately and appropriately govern. It made mistakes. If these bills were so important to this government, why did it prorogue the last session of this Parliament? The Conservatives should have completed their agenda and then come forward to the people of Canada with a new throne speech and a new vision for Canada.

We are now being asked to deal with the mismanagement of this government. I have seen a lot of mismanagement and incompetence over the last seven years from this Conservative government. I have seen, time and time again, the Conservative government trample on the rights of the opposition. I have seen closure motion after closure motion after closure motion. We objected on this side of the House and we objected. This is far worse than any closure motion that has ever been allowed in this House, in terms of the terrible and horrible precedent that this particular government motion will set. It ought not to have been allowed, but somehow the government was able to convince the Chair without citing a precedent. If we do not abide by the law of *stare decisis*, the law of precedent, then I do not know what is going on in terms of due process. You know as well as I do, Mr. Speaker, that in this place precedents play an extremely important role in the governing of the

workings of this House and indeed the Canadian judicial system.

The government, when called upon by the opposition to cite one single precedent in the last 124 years of Canadian parliamentary history, was not able to cite one single solitary precedent. Yet, I do not know how the government did it, but it convinced the Chair that this motion was in order. We will be voting on it in a few short minutes.

I ask in closing that government members come to their senses in the few years and the few short months that remain in terms of the life of this government if they are to leave this place with any bit of respect from the people of Canada. If they have any iota of dignity, then let them at least preserve it. They have destroyed the country and now they are trying to destroy Parliament and the workings of Parliament.

I call upon decent, hard working Conservative members, if there are any across the way, to vote against this government motion that will set such a dangerous precedent for years to come in this House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint–Léonard): Mr. Speaker, in concluding a debate significant to the very survival of this House, I would like to say that on May 23, it was not the Opposition that decided to prorogue the House and have a Speech from the Throne. It was the government's decision. The government knew perfectly well that by proroguing the House and having a Speech from the Throne, all bills before the House would die on the Order Paper, ending the current session. The government would then be able to make a fresh start with a new agenda.

After the Speech from the Throne, we saw there was practically nothing on the government's agenda. And now it comes back with a number of bills we would have had plenty of time to consider if the government had been really interested and serious about the business of this House. After all, before the House was prorogued, we adjourned for nearly a month, and if we consider the number of days the House has sat so far in 1991, it is quite ludicrous.

With a new session, Canadians were expecting some new initiatives, a new agenda from the government that would put the economy back on its feet and restore national unity and the confidence of Canadians. Nothing happened, Mr. Speaker. His Excellency the Governor General read a good speech to an attentive audience, but there have been no bills or initiatives to reflect what was in the speech, Mr. Speaker. The only thing we can see, Mr. Speaker, is that they want to reinstate certain bills which had already been introduced in the last session.

If the government was really serious about these bills, negotiations should have taken place before prorogation, as is usually the case. Many times before, my colleagues the government and NDP whips, the Speaker and myself, as Liberal whip, have had discussions to reach unanimous consent on several issues. But if the Speaker starts to innovate either with this motion, with the rules that were rammed down our throats or with regard to committees, of course we will have to go by the rules and insist that they be strictly adhered to from now on. But, as the government will realize, that is not going to make life easy for them because, from now on, there will be no more co–operation, at least from this side of the House, the Official Opposition.

I will close on this, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that the government will think twice before the vote because it will be doing away with the co–operation of the Official Opposition in this House.

• (2010)

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to decision made by the Speaker on Tuesday, May 28, 1991, the Chair will now put the questions separately on the five motions to reinstate certain bills introduced in the Second Session of the Thirty–fourth Parliament: First, on the motion to reinstate Bill C–26; second, on the motion to reinstate Bill C–58; third, on the motion to reinstate Bill C–78; fourth, on the motion to reinstate Bill C–82; and fifth, on the motion to reinstate Bill C–85.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Accordingly the first question is on the motion to reinstate Bill C–26.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Call in the members.

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

(Division No. 5)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Brightwell
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Yellowhead)
Clifford
Collins
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Danis
Della Noce
Domm
Edwards
Feltham
Fretz
Guilbault
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Holtmann
Horning
Hughes
Johnson
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Littlechild
MacDonald (Rosedale)
Mayer
McDermid
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Andre
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Browes
Cardiff
Chadwick
Charest
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil
Côté
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Desjardins
Duplessis
Epp
Fontaine
Friesen
Halliday
Hawkes
Hogue
Horner
Hudon
Jacques
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Larrivée
Lewis
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Venne
Weiner
Wilbee
Winegard
Van de Walle
Vien
White
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—110

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair
Berger
Black
Breaugh
Caccia
Catterall
Comuzzi
Crawford
Dingwall
Edmonston
Fisher
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvard
Hovdebo
Jordan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacWilliam
Manley
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
McGuire
Nault
Ouellet
Parent
Pickard
Rideout
Rompkey
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Whittaker
Althouse
Arseneault
Baker
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
Clancy
Copps
de Jong
Dionne
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Heap
Hunter
Keyes
Kindy
Laporte
Lee
MacLaren
Maheu
Marleau
McCurdy
Milliken
Nunziata
Pagtakhan
Peterson
Prud'homme
Rodriguez
Speller
Stupich
Tobin
Volpe
Wappel
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—80

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Assad — Bourgault

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I believe there is unanimous consent to apply the results of this vote to Bill C-58, Bill C-78, Bill C-82 and Bill C-85.

[*English*]

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I think there may have been a problem with translation. What we would like to do is apply the vote as just taken to the following motions in the same manner that this one was taken.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I believe that is what was said in the translation.

Mr. Harb: Mr. Speaker, I was unfortunately delayed. Had I have been here, I would have voted with my party.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The next vote is on the motion to restore Bill C-58.

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

(*Division No. 6*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Brightwell
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Yellowhead)
Clifford
Collins
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Danis
Della Noce
Domm
Edwards
Feltham
Fretz
Guilbault
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Holtmann
Horning
Hughes
Johnson
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Littlechild
MacDonald (Rosedale)
Mayer
McDermid
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Venne
Weiner
Wilbee
Winegard
Andre
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Browes
Cardiff
Chadwick
Charest
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil
Côté
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Desjardins
Duplessis
Epp
Fontaine
Friesen
Halliday
Hawkes
Hogue
Horner
Hudon
Jacques
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Larrivée
Lewis
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Vien
White
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—110

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair
Berger
Black
Breaugh
Caccia
Catterall
Comuzzi
Crawford
Dingwall
Edmonston
Fisher
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Harb
Heap
Hunter
Keyes
Kindy
Laporte
Lee
MacLaren
Maheu
Marleau
McCurdy
Milliken
Nunziata
Pagtakhan
Peterson
Prud'homme
Rodriguez
Speller
Stupich
Tobin
Volpe
Wappel
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—81
Althouse
Arseneault
Baker
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
Clancy
Copps
de Jong
Dionne
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Harvard
Hovdebo
Jordan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacWilliam
Manley
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
McGuire
Nault
Ouellet
Parent
Pickard
Rideout
Rompkey
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Whittaker

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Assad
Bourgault

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

The next vote is on the motion to restore Bill C-78.

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

(*Division No. 7*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Brightwell
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Yellowhead)
Clifford
Collins
Cooper
Andre
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Browes
Cardiff
Chadwick
Charest
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil

Corbett
Couture
Danis
Della Noce
Domm
Edwards
Feltham
Fretz
Guilbault
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Holtmann
Horning
Hughes
Johnson
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Littlechild
MacDonald (Rosedale)
Mayer
McDermid
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy–Arcelin
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Tremblay (Québec–Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Venne
Weiner
Wilbee
Winegard

Côté
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Desjardins
Duplessis
Epp
Fontaine
Friesen
Halliday
Hawkes
Hogue
Horner
Hudon
Jacques
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Larrivée
Lewis
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint–Julien
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Vien
White
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—110

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair
Berger
Black
Breaugh
Caccia
Catterall
Comuzzi
Crawford
Dingwall
Edmonston
Fisher
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Harb
Heap
Hunter
Keyes
Kindy
Laporte
Lee
MacLaren
Maheu
Marleau
McCurdy
Milliken
Nunziata
Pagtakhan

Althouse
Arseneault
Baker
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
Clancy
Copps
de Jong
Dionne
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Harvard
Hovdebo
Jordan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacWilliam
Manley
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
McGuire
Nault
Ouellet
Parent

Peterson
Prud'homme
Rodriguez
Speller
Stupich
Tobin
Volpe
Wappel
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—81

Pickard
Rideout
Rompkey
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Whittaker

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Assad

Bourgault

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

The next vote is on the motion to restore Bill C–82.

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

(Division No. 8)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Brightwell
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Yellowhead)
Clifford
Collins
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Danis
Della Noce
Domm
Edwards
Feltham
Fretz
Guilbault
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Holtmann
Horning
Hughes
Johnson
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Littlechild
MacDonald (Rosedale)
Mayer
McDermid
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy–Arcelin
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Tremblay (Québec–Est)

Andre
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Browes
Cardiff
Chadwick
Charest
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil
Côté
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Desjardins
Duplessis
Epp
Fontaine
Friesen
Halliday
Hawkes
Hogue
Horner
Hudon
Jacques
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Larrivée
Lewis
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint–Julien
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)

Turner (Halton—Peel)
Venne
Weiner
Wilbee
Winegard
Van de Walle
Vien
White
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—110

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair
Berger
Black
Breaugh
Caccia
Catterall
Comuzzi
Crawford
Dingwall
Edmonston
Fisher
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Harb
Heap
Hunter
Keyes
Kindy
Laporte
Lee
MacLaren
Maheu
Marleau
McCurdy
Milliken
Nunziata
Pagtakhan
Peterson
Prud'homme
Rodriguez
Speller
Stupich
Tobin
Volpe
Wappel
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—81
Althouse
Arseneault
Baker
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
Clancy
Copps
de Jong
Dionne
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Harvard
Hovdebo
Jordan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacWilliam
Manley
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
McGuire
Nault
Ouellet
Parent
Pickard
Rideout
Rompkey
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Whittaker

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Assad
Bourgault

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

The next vote is on the motion to restore Bill C-85.

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

(Division No. 9)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Brightwell
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Andre
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Browes
Cardiff
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Yellowhead)
Clifford
Collins
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Danis
Della Noce
Domm
Edwards
Feltham
Fretz
Guilbault
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Holtmann
Horning
Hughes
Johnson
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Littlechild
MacDonald (Rosedale)
Mayer
McDermid
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Venne
Weiner
Wilbee
Winegard
Chadwick
Charest
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil
Côté
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Desjardins
Duplessis
Epp
Fontaine
Friesen
Halliday
Hawkes
Hogue
Horner
Hudon
Jacques
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Larrivée
Lewis
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Têtreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Vien
White
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—110

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair
Berger
Black
Breaugh
Caccia
Catterall
Comuzzi
Crawford
Dingwall
Edmonston
Fisher
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Harb
Heap
Hunter
Keyes
Kindy
Laporte
Lee
MacLaren
Althouse
Arseneault
Baker
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
Clancy
Copps
de Jong
Dionne
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Harvard
Hovdebo
Jordan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacWilliam

Maheu	Manley	
Marleau	Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	
McCurdy	McGuire	
Milliken	Nault	
Nunziata	Ouellet	
Pagtakhan	Parent	
Peterson	Pickard	
Prud'homme	Rideout	
Rodriguez	Rompkey	
Speller	Stewart	
Stupich	Taylor	
Tobin	Vanclief	
Volpe	Walker	
Wappel	Whittaker	
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—81		

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Assad	Bourgault

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

It being 8.55 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 8.58 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, May 30, 1991

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

VISIT TO REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY AND CZECH AND SLOVAK FEDERAL REPUBLIC

TABLING OF REPORT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of the official visit to the Republic of Hungary and the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic.

* * *

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS MARKETING ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-16, an act to amend the Agricultural Products Marketing Act and to provide for other matters in relation thereto.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-17, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Customs Tariff in consequence thereof.

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

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT COMPENSATION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-212, an act respecting the establishment of a compensation fund for members of the House of Commons.

He said: Mr. Speaker, if I may say a couple of sentences about this bill. The purpose of the bill would be to set up a fund to help members pay the costs of any libel suits which they may incur in pursuit of their work.

• (1010)

Libel charges sometimes aimed at harassing the member in his work are occasionally brought against members as a result of statements they make in the House, to the press, in public and in private. The purpose of this fund would be to provide legal assistance so that the member is not stuck with a $20,000 or $30,000 bill for simply carrying out his functions. It would stop harassment by some heavily financed pressure groups and corporations which sometimes use legal suits as a way of stopping the member's actions on very important issues.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

CANADIAN FLAG

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present to the House a petition signed by numerous residents of Kingston and the Islands who call upon this House to pass an act to make unlawful the desecration or destruction of the flag of Canada.

I note this particular petition is a thick one with several hundred signatures.

[*Translation*]

CANADA POST

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to table several petitions from the people of Sainte-Blandine, a group of citizens who got together and set up a committee for the survival of the local post office.

These people had already met their federal member, the minister, but to no avail. She who did not even bother to acknowledge the 1,500 letters she received on the subject.

This petition was signed by the people of the parish of Sainte-Blandine, including Father Parent; members of the credit union; representatives of the Conseil régional de développement du Bas-Saint-Laurent; the MPP for Rimouski, Mr. Tremblay; representatives of Urgence rurale and the AFEAS du Bas-Saint-Laurent; representatives of the Ficelle group, who want women to have access to employment, and even by Mgr Ouellet of Rimouski.

[*English*]

GASOLINE ADDITIVES

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present nearly 2,000 names on petitions of people from across Ontario asking the government to legislate that all automotive fuels must contain at least 3.2 per cent oxygen. Ten per cent ethanol blended gasoline has a dual environmental advantage over regular gasoline because the high energy and oxygen content burns more efficiently and the need for toxic gasoline additive such as MMT is eliminated. It also removes 5.9 per cent more carbon dioxide from the emissions. It removes 25 per cent more carbon monoxide from the emissions, 8.5 per cent volatile organic compounds, nitrous oxide and urban ozone.

As we head into the summer months, we have to be aware of the high pollution levels in the various cities. Last Monday Toronto's was extremely high from automotive pollutions.

I ask the government to pay attention to what these citizens are asking for and take to immediate action.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and an honour to present a petition on behalf of a number of constituents from Kamloops, British Columbia, who are concerned about the government's decision to cut back by millions of dollars the support of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. With the information from Statistics Canada yesterday indicating an increase in the levels of violent crimes, this becomes even more of a problem. The petitioners point out a variety of concerns they have as a result of these funding cutbacks and are urging the government to consider restoring proper funding to the RCMP.

* * *

STARRED QUESTIONS

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call Starred Question No. 41.

[*Text*]

M.P.'S INDEX OF TAXPAYER SERVICES

*Question No. 41—**Ms. Phinney:**

With respect to the publication *M.P.'s Index of Taxpayer Services* (Revenue Canada, Taxation—February, 1991) (a) what was the cost to produce it (b) how many copies were distributed (c) to whom were they distributed?

Hon. Otto John Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): It has cost Revenue Canada, Taxation $5,250 to produce the M.P.'s Index of Taxpayer Services. To date, 900 copies of this publication have been distributed. Copies have been provided to the parliamentary and constituency offices of all Members of Parliament, and to senior managers and public affaires managers of Revenue Canada, Taxation.

[*English*]

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I ask that it be printed in *Hansard* as if read.

I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): So ordered.

* * *

WAYS AND MEANS

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Loiselle (for the Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)) moved that a Ways and Means motion to amend the Income Tax Act, the Canada Pension Plan, the Cultural Property Export and Import Act, the Income Tax Conventions Interpretation Act, the Tax Court of Canada Act, the Unemployment Insurance Act, the Canada-Newfoundland Atlantic Accord Implementation Act, the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and related acts,

laid upon the table Tuesday, May 28, 1991 be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Loiselle (for the Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)) moved that Bill C–18, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Canada Pension Plan, the Cultural Property Export and Import Act, the Income Tax Conventions Interpretation Act, the Tax Court of Canada Act, the Unemployment Insurance Act, the Canada–Newfoundland Atlantic Accord Implementation Act, the Canada–Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and related acts be read the first time and be printed.

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

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

EXPORT AND IMPORT PERMITS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade) moved that Bill C–6, an act respecting the exporting, importing, manufacturing, buying or selling of or other dealing with certain weapons be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, after much reflection and very careful examination, I introduced Bill C–6 in this House. The amendments proposed in that bill provide for the selective and severely restricted import, possession and export of automatic weapons for certain narrowly defined military and related industrial purposes.

Under present law, alone among Canada's few manufacturers of military material, our producers of automatic firearms and related equipment are effectively prevented from competing on a level playing field, even in that small part of the international market to which Canadian foreign policy would quite properly limit their access.

As things stand now, these firms can only manufacture such equipment for the Canadian military and police forces. They may not even produce for Canada's allies and closest defence partners, while foreign firms are at liberty to sell to Canada's Armed Forces. The restrictions put Canadian companies at an unnecessary disadvantage and threaten the viability of some. They could eventually preclude Canada from meeting its own future requirements for weapons.

Introducing carefully defined new flexibility to permit exports of automatic firearms to our NATO allies and close defence partners will demonstrate Canada's commitment to meeting its own requirements for basic defence products from Canadian sources. It will also enhance Canada's contribution to joint allied preparedness, most notably in its role in the North American defence industrial base.

• (1020)

As everyone in this House knows, Canada's role in UN peacekeeping is longstanding and widely respected. Imagine Canada's peacekeeping forces in country *x*. Did they do the job without the appropriate weapons? If our troops were there with other UN peacekeeping forces, be they Swedish, Australian or whatever, would it be wrong for those Swedes or Australians to be armed with Canadian firearms? I think not.

Bill C–6 will place very tight controls on exports of automatic firearms from Canada by establishing a new automatic firearms country control list under the Export and Import Permits Act. Such controls are in keeping with Canada's traditional strict policy on exports of military weapons. They are also fully consistent with Canada's program of action to bring greater transparency and consultations to the international trade in conventional weapons. Our objective is to encourage restraint when excessive build–ups of conventional weapons begin to develop, particularly in regions of instability and potential conflict.

This in a nutshell is what Bill C–6 is all about.

My colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, will comment further on arms control issues later in this debate.

For my part, let me now explain Bill C–6 in greater detail.

Canadian defence industries are at present allowed to export military goods, including sophisticated weapon systems and components, to Canada's allies and other countries under export controls administered through the Export and Import Permits Act. The discretionary authority of the Secretary of State for External Affairs to issue or deny permits for the export of automatic firearms is not fettered in any way. Permits can in theory be approved to export automatic firearms to any country. The problem is that this authority is of no consequence because under the 1977 amendments to the Criminal Code automatic firearms fall within the definition of prohibited weapons. Automatic firearms are deemed to be weapons that fire more than one round per squeeze of the trigger. The code specifies that such weapons may be possessed or imported only by or on behalf of the Canadian Armed Forces and members of Canadian police forces.

As a result Canadian defence firms could face criminal charges if they attempt to repair or manufacture automatic firearms for Canada's allies and close defence partners. In contrast, competitors from other countries may sell their automatic firearms to the Canadian forces.

This anomalous situation has created an uneven playing field for the Canadian defence industry and its workers. Changes are needed to help them.

In short, the requirements of the Canadian Armed Forces and Canadian police forces are simply not sufficient to enable Canadian firms manufacturing automatic firearms and military equipment, which includes such weapons, to remain economically viable. Due to our relatively small domestic market, Canadian defence industry must have access to selected legitimate foreign military markets. Like other Canadian producers and manufacturers, it needs to export to survive. Foreign sales lower per unit costs and make the manufacturers less dependent on domestic contracts and government funding. They also help ensure supplies in times of emergency.

The government recognizes the shortcomings of the unintended effects of the 1977 amendments to the Criminal Code. For some time it has sought to find a satisfactory means to provide the Canadian defence industry with the necessary increased flexibility. In considering the options, the primary consideration was to ensure that the discretionary export of automatic firearms would be subject to effective licensing and enforcement.

The nature of automatic firearms and their potential use make tight control on their import, possession and export an absolute requirement. We know only too well that automatic firearms can be readily bought and sold on the international market, frequently without any effective national or multilateral controls.

They are widely used by terrorists, criminals and those involved in the narcotics trade.

It was precisely because of these factors that the government decided not to introduce new flexibility with respect to exports of automatic firearms until it was satisfied that effective licensing and enforcement of exports of such goods was possible.

In particular, we wanted the controls to be as stringent as possible and at the same time to ensure that the discretionary authority to issue permits for automatic firearms was clearly constrained.

We also wanted to increase substantially the penalties for violations of export controls. Bill C-6, tabled in the House on May 23, meets these criteria. Under the Export and Import Permits Act, the authority of the Secretary of State for External Affairs to approve permits for exports of automatic firearms will be limited to those countries listed on a new Automatic Firearms Country Control List. The minister's authority to refuse inappropriate applications remains total and undiminished.

The list is to include only those countries with which Canada has an intergovernmental defence research development and production agreement.

The bill applies only to automatic firearms. It does not affect controls on other weapons prohibited under the Criminal Code. All other controls provided under the Export and Import Permits Act remain unchanged.

In keeping with the concerns shared by most Canadians for restraining the arms trade, the required defence production arrangements will be concluded only with Canada's NATO allies and close defence partners. Those countries will be made known through the publication of the automatic firearms country control list.

Applications to export automatic firearms to countries not on the list will be denied. Exports of automatic firearms will be permitted only to a government with which Canada concludes the necessary arrangements. Sales will be permitted only to governments and accept-

able designated consignees approved by the Canadian government. Sales to civilians will not be permitted.

Canada currently has defence production arrangements with 10 countries, of which Sweden is the only one not a member of NATO. An arrangement with Spain is under negotiation. Once the amendments are passed by Parliament, cabinet could include those countries on the automatic firearms country control list through a single Order in Council.

Proposals to include other countries on the list will be subject to an intense, case-by-case review to confirm that (a) the requirement for automatic firearms is legitimate and reasonable; (b) that defence co-operation with Canada will enhance regional co-operation and security; and (c) the country being considered for defence co-operation does not threaten regional or world security and does not maintain an excessive level of armaments.

Automatic firearms are military goods and are included in the Canadian export control list under item 2001. Each application to export automatic firearms to an approved country must therefore still be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and normal licensing requirements will still have to be met.

These include providing an end use statement and supporting documentation, and most notably an international import certificate from the country of final destination.

In addition, applications will be subject to the normal intense interdepartmental review and the guidelines adopted by the governments in 1986 will be applied, that is, exports of military goods will be closely controlled to countries which pose a threat to Canada or its allies, countries involved in or under imminent threat of hostilities, countries under United Nations Security Council sanctions or countries whose government has a persistent record of serious violations of the human rights of its citizens, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable risk that the goods might be used against the civilian population.

• (1030)

Exports of automatic firearms will be reported in the annual report on exports of military goods from Canada. All production facilities in Canada for automatic firearms have to meet existing rigorous DND and DSS security standards and are subject to regular, rigorous inspections.

Bill C-6 also increases penalties for offences of the Export and Import Permits Act as follows:

a) for summary convictions, fines are increased from $5,000 to $25,000, and imprisonment for up to 12 months or both.

b) for indictment, fines are increased from $25,000 to an amount that is in the discretion of the court, which in practice means that there is no ceiling, and imprisonment for up to 10 years instead of 5 years or both.

These increased penalties are intended to ensure that an adequate deterrence is provided for, taking into account the seriousness of the offences and the value of goods that might be involved. These penalties will apply to all offences under the act, not just those related to automatic firearms.

To address the issue of criminal liability, complementary amendments will be made to the Criminal Code to permit import and possession of automatic firearms for an industrial purpose in accordance with the Export and Import Permits Act.

The Criminal Code was never intended to regulate legitimate defence industry activities, which are more properly administered and controlled under the Export and Import Permits Act. The current provisions of the code create unnecessary confusion as to what can be exported and imported and which legislation and regulations the government applies to controlling exports and imports of military goods. Except as specifically provided for by Bill C-6, possession and importation of automatic weapons remain illegal and subject to criminal prosecution under the code.

The EIPA is being amended to introduce new, additional controls on the export and import of automatic firearms. Exports of automatic firearms will be permitted only to those countries listed on the automatic firearms country control list. Applications for permits to export

automatic firearms to countries not on the list will be denied. A country's inclusion on the new control list does not in itself constitute authority to export automatic firearms to that country. It merely establishes the necessary ground to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The controls will be applied in two stages:

1. A defence research, development and production agreement will have to exist between Canada and the country of final destination, and that country will have to be included on the automatic firearms country control list maintained under the Export and Import Permits Act. If an arrangement does not already exist, one would have to be negotiated and the proposal to add the country to the automatic firearms country control list would have to be approved by cabinet through an Order in Council.

2. Applications to export automatic firearms will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to the same strict guidelines and licensing procedures applied to all exports of military goods from Canada.

The effect of the changes will make Canadian controls on exports of automatic firearms among the most stringent in the world.

The changes to the Criminal Code complement those being made to the Export and Import Permits Act. Adoption of Bill C-6 will end the anomalous situation created by the 1977 amendments to the code. As a result, it will no longer be a criminal offence for Canadian firms to import or possess automatic firearms for the purposes of repairing or manufacturing automatic weapons for our NATO allies and close defence partners.

Adoption of Bill C-6 will also demonstrate Canada's commitment to meeting its own defence requirements by helping to ensure the survival of production facilities established in Canada as part of the North American defence industrial base.

Canadian defence requirements include the need to ensure that we have the capability to repair, overhaul and upgrade military equipment for the Canadian Armed Forces. With the exception of the 1950s and part of the 1960s, the post-war evolution of the Canadian defence industrial base has been characterized by a general decline and an increasing inability to meet the operational requirements of the Canadian Armed Forces. Despite successive efforts to re-establish domestic capabilities in such key defence industrial sectors as small arms and ammunition, the Canadian forces remain highly dependent on non-domestic sources of supply for critical end items and specialized equipment and components.

In the 1970s, the number of non-domestic sources relied upon by Canada to meet peacetime operational requirements increased dramatically. As a result, Canada became vulnerable to a broad range of supply disruptions, both in peacetime and in wartime. This reliance, combined with insufficient quantities of operational military equipment and war reserve stockpiles, seriously eroded Canada's capability to deal effectively with a protracted conflict. The importance of the domestic defence industrial base to the implementation of any defence industrial preparedness policy cannot be overstated.

The 1987 DEFENCE Industrial Preparedness Task Force identified the following strengths in the Canadian defence industry:

The ability to convert civilian production to defence production in several areas;

A developing capability to repair and overhaul major capital equipment;

A small arms and ammunition production capability;

An abundance of raw materials essential for wartime production;

Benefits, via joint production, from proximity to the United States.

On the other hand, the task force noted numerous serious weaknesses, including most notably:

A lack of skilled labour;

Dependency on non-domestic sources of critical items;

Long lead time for military production;

Insufficient defence related capital investment in new technology, facilities and machinery.

The task force concluded that the Canadian Defence Industrial Base was "fragmented, highly specialized, and not geared to meet the operational requirements of the Canadian forces".

The task force noted that Canada had purchased a diverse range of military equipment from an equally diverse range of non-North American suppliers, including Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Switzerland and Sweden. It recommended that Canada recognize that joint allied industrial preparations strengthen overall security, and that Canada work with its allies to enhance national and NATO preparedness. It recommended in particular that Canada "continue to pursue co-operative arrangements in the interests of rationalization, standardization and interoperability when they

clearly contribute to the readiness and sustainment of the Canadian forces".

Bill C-6 seeks to reinforce defence industrial co-operation with our allies and defence partners in key defence product areas, including small arms, automatic firearms and light armoured vehicles. The automatic firearms are manufactured for the Canadian forces by Diemaco of Kitchener and the light armoured vehicles by GM Diesel Division in London. Neither production facility can survive on the basis of Canadian requirements alone. Both will fail if new flexibility with respect to exports of automatic firearms to selected countries is not introduced. In this regard, Bill C-6 is of critical importance both for the specific long-term requirements of the Canadian Armed Forces and for the Canadian defence industrial base generally.

Diemaco was established by DND in 1976 as the centre of excellence for the provision of small arms to the Canadian Armed Forces, to ensure that Canada would not be totally dependent on foreign suppliers in times of emergency. Its facility is unique in Canada and is important to DND's long-term operational readiness.

• (1040)

The awarding of a contract in 1984 to produce the new family of weapons for the Canadian Armed Forces created 300 direct jobs at Diemaco's plant in Kitchener; 200 direct jobs at its 75 Canadian subcontractors who manufacture components; plus an equal number of indirect jobs. This contract is nearing completion and Diemaco must now be able to secure export contracts. The requirements of the Canadian Armed Forces alone cannot sustain Diemaco over the long term.

Of particular concern is the possibility of Canada losing Diemaco's $40 million computer-based manufacturing capability, which includes product design, engineering, metal finishing, plastic moulding, precision casting, forging and machining, and extrusion techniques. At a time when Canada must upgrade the competitiveness of its industry, it would be extremely unfortunate and regrettable to lose Diemaco's related worker skills and technical expertise.

Diemaco, supported by its numerous subcontractors, is currently competing for a contract to supply the Dutch armed forces with automatic rifles. The Dutch government has asked for assurances that Diemaco would be able to export the weapons if it won the contract. Owing to the current provisions of the Criminal Code, it may be illegal for Diemaco to manufacture automatic firearms for the Dutch armed forces. Failure to adopt the proposed changes to permit the proposed exports to the Netherlands will jeopardize Diemaco's future and could mean that the entire small arms manufacturing capability of the Canadian defence industrial base will be gone before long, possibly by as early as June, 1992.

The only solution is for Diemaco to win selected, legitimate foreign contracts and for the government to permit the company to export its modern, high quality products to our allies and defence partners. Success in winning the Dutch contract will mean an initial 7,680 person years of direct Canadian employment with the potential of almost doubling over the life of the project. Success will also ensure the ability to continue the development work necessary for new small arms for the Canadian Armed Forces into the next century.

Since receiving its first contract from DND in 1977, General Motors Diesel Division has become a world class producer. To produce the light armoured vehicle, General Motors Diesel Division employs 600 skilled workers at its plant in London, Ontario. In addition, GMDD draws on suppliers and subcontractors from across Canada including companies and workers in Richmond and Vancouver, B.C.; Edmonton; Winnipeg; Quebec City; Saint John and Moncton and New Brunswick; Mulgrave and Bridgewater in Nova Scotia; and St. John's, Newfoundland.

Last year it won a contract to export light armoured vehicles to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This capped a marketing campaign that spanned more than a decade. It was first approved by the Liberal government in 1981 and has since been supported by successive Canadian governments. However, the anomalous situation under the Criminal Code may limit GM's ability to those few, but

important, foreign markets to which Canadian foreign policy would permit access.

The government proposes to resolve this anomaly by adopting the amendments proposed under Bill C-6; negotiating a bilateral defence research, development and production agreement with Saudi Arabia; and including Saudi Arabia on the Automatic Firearms Country Control List.

The export of the LAVs has been reviewed and again approved—after all licensing requirements were met and after careful review and study. In doing so, particular attention was given to the requirement to control closely exports of military goods to countries "threatened by or engaged in hostilities". In the end, it was decided to approve GM's application.

A primary consideration was that the results of the Gulf War ensured that Saudi Arabia is not now, nor, in the immediate future will it be, an imminent threat of hostilities. Another was that the export of the LAVs by Canada to Saudi Arabia will not threaten Saudi Arabia's neighbours and will serve to enhance regional security.

Saudi Arabia has a legitimate right to self-defence. Its requirement for LAVs armed with automatic weapons is reasonable given its need to maintain a defensive military capability sufficient to continue to deter aggression. The LAVs are lightly armoured. Even when armed with automatic machine guns and cannons, they are designed for and have a particular military use, such as patrolling the oil fields, the oil pipelines and other strategic sites. Because of their light armour, the LAVs are not as effective in an offensive role for which heavily armoured and heavily armed vehicles such as main battle tanks are best suited.

Moreover, Saudi Arabia shares with Canada and with other members of the allied coalition, a commonality of interests in supporting the UN Security Council resolutions and in strengthening regional security arrangements. It is currently working closely with other states in the region, and with members of the coalition, to develop appropriate regional security arrangements for the post conflict period. These efforts are fully supported by Canada.

The requirement to control exports of military goods, including automatic firearms, is clear and obvious. The Export and Import Permits Act provides the government with the necessary means to do so. Enforcement of controls requires vigilance, intelligence, and close international co-operation. It also requires the support of exporters and clear licensing guidelines. The 1977 amendments to the Criminal Code place unnecessary restrictions on Canadian companies established to support Canada's defence requirements. Our NATO allies can export automatic firearms to Canadian forces, but Canadian firms cannot export to meet their requirements for the same goods.

Adoption of the proposed amendments to the Export and Import Permits Act and the Criminal Code are necessary and pertain only to automatic firearms. The amendments do not pertain to other military equipment, nor do they alter Canada's longstanding policy on stringently controlling exports of military goods.

The new, additional and strict controls on exports of automatic firearms were developed to meet a specific and limited requirement of the Canadian defence industry. Increased flexibility in certain areas is being created only with respect to a single category of military goods, namely automatic firearms. Other export controls remain in place. Adoption of the automatic firearms country control list and limiting exports of automatic weapons to our NATO allies and close defence partners, to those countries with which we have bilateral defence research, development and production agreements, will help ensure that Canadian manufacturers of automatic weapons and equipment with automatic firearms remain viable. They will also ensure that Canadian controls on such goods remain the most stringent in the world.

These exacting Canadian controls reflect the government's commitment to arms control. They are fully consistent with recent Canadian arms controls initiatives including the proposal to hold a world summit on the instruments of war and weapons of mass destruction. They are also consistent with the program of action on conventional weapons.

Canada's concern is the build-up by certain countries of levels of armaments in excess of legitimate self-defence requirements. Certainly no permit would ever be approved to export automatic weapons from Canada to a country which undertook such a massive build-up of arms. It simply would not happen. If a country with

which Canada had a defence production agreement began to develop its military arsenal to the point of threatening its neighbours and regional security we would simply stop issuing export permits and suspend all outstanding ones.

• (1050)

Such action is within the discretionary authority by the Secretary of State for External Affairs provided for by the Export and Import Permits Act. It has been exercised in the past in response to changing security considerations and would be used in the future without hesitation if necessary. For example, no Canadian military goods were approved for export to Iraq after the outbreak of the Iran–Iraq war, an indication that Canadian controls are applied and are effective.

Our intention is to control more effectively, not to prohibit, the sales of military equipment. Canada will be extremely careful in deciding which countries it should sell firearms to. We will also make known which military goods are exported and to which countries.

To conclude, the proposed amendments to the Export and Import Permits Act and the Criminal Code will create a framework for Canadian defence firms that will enable them to compete more effectively under very closely controlled conditions. Canada needs a strong defence industrial base to lower per-unit costs and ensure Canadian sources in times of emergency. With these amendments, Canadian firms will be better able to meet Canada's defence requirements and those of our NATO allies and defence partners.

Mr. Allmand: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering if the minister would accept a technical question for clarification which I consider to be very important. Would he mind accepting such a question?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are no questions or comments but we could do it by unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, in the minister's speech he said that only those countries with which Canada has an intergovernmental defence, research, development and production arrangement would be eligible for the automatic firearms country control list. I think he used the word "only". But in the text of the legislation in clause 2 on page 1 it says:

> The Governor in Council may establish a list of countries to be called an Automatic Firearms Country Control List including therein any country with which Canada has an intergovernmental defence, research, development and production arrangement—

The wording of the text of the bill suggests that while you would include all those countries it would not be limited to those countries.

I wonder if the minister would clarify that because there is quite a difference. If it is as the minister said in his speech that the list is restricted to those countries, then I think that the text of the bill should be amended and I would support that. It would provide more control. But the way the text is written it seems to be contrary to what the minister said in his speech because it says those countries must be included. It does not say it is restricted to those countries.

If you look at the French text it seems closer to what the minister said and I think this is extremely important. Also on a technical point, Mr. Speaker, I want to know if the minister has already prepared such a proposed list and, if so, would he be willing during the debate to make it available to the House so we know exactly which countries he proposes to put on the list.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I have a very quick question which the minister could perhaps answer at the same time as it flows from the same point. Are there any arrangements with Saudi Arabia? The minister has said that one of the purposes of this bill is to permit this particular deal with Saudi Arabia. Are there any arrangements with Saudi Arabia which the minister could tell us about, as we proceed with this debate, which fit within the definition set out in the act?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are two questions for the hon. minister. Under this section we will allow it this time, but let us not make it a precedent.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your comments with respect to the question from the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce.

I will have to check on the specifics and whether there is a reason the wording in the bill is that way. The countries will have to be on the country control list and it will be those countries with which we have a defence arrangement, as I described in my remarks.

In response to the member from Victoria, we have not completed an arrangement with Saudi Arabia. That would have to be completed before exports would be provided for.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, the most striking thing about Bill C-6, which the Minister for International Trade has just introduced, is that it seems both unnecessary and inopportune.

It appears unnecessary because for more than 13 years the export of conventional weapons has been satisfactorily regulated within the existing terms of the Export and Import Permits Act.

It is surely not beyond the ability of the government's legal counsel to identify ways in which such regulations could continue to be utilized without the cumbersome necessity of Parliament amending legislation which until now had been found satisfactory. In that sense, the bill is inopportune.

In an additional sense it is inopportune. By lumping together questions of the legitimate export of conventional weapons with amendments to the Criminal Code, the general impression is left that somehow such exports, unlike other exports, raise questions that must ultimately be encompassed within the Criminal Code rather than within trade legislation. This inopportune impression will only be reinforced by the fact that the government has also chosen this same day to introduce—or reintroduce—its long awaited gun legislation.

Such juxtapositions of separate policy questions can only be described as unfortunate. With Bill C-6, which essentially addresses an anomaly in the Criminal Code, much larger questions are being opened, questions which were never intended to be covered by the Criminal Code. I have already noted that the fact that exports of conventional weapons are spoken of in the context of the Criminal Code is an unfortunate juxtaposition.

As a result of introducing amendments intended merely to permit the continued sale of small arms to certain nations or the import and re-export of weapons incorporated in Canadian-built vehicles, a range of much more fundamental questions is inevitably raised.

In the past, Canada's policy has been to authorize the export of light weapons—never weapons of mass destruction—to countries designated by a minister upon the recommendation of officials. For example, the sale of Canadian-made automatic weapons or light armoured vehicles has been covered by such policies. Against such a background, Canada exported to NATO allies and other designated countries some of the military equipment necessary for their self-defence.

Aircraft, light weapons, radios and other *matériel* were exported, helping to sustain the equipment of Canadian forces, creating thousands of jobs among suppliers across Canada and, in a number of instances, enhancing Canada's high-tech capabilities, whether in the automotive, marine, communications or aeronautical industries.

• (1100)

Now, however, it seems that an anomaly has been identified in the Criminal Code. We are to understand that since 1978 fully automatic weapons have been classified in the Criminal Code as prohibited weapons and accordingly cannot be either imported or exported under defence contracts. Such a prohibition, it is now discovered, prevents the further export or even the import and re-export of such weapons.

How can this be? Since 1978, such weapons manufactured in Canada have been exported. Similar weapons, manufactured elsewhere for incorporation in Canadian-made vehicles, have been imported and re-exported.

Is the government now saying that any such exports during the past 13 years were in error? Is it saying that those officials and ministers who reviewed and authorized such shipments in the past were acting, unwittingly of course, in contravention of the Criminal Code? If the ministers were not then acting in contravention of the Criminal Code, why would they be doing so today by authorizing identical or similar shipments?

What has occurred that requires the government to introduce these amendments, opening a host of questions which do not belong here but in other debates? What is it that the government has suddenly discovered about the Criminal Code that requires this extraordinary procedure? Is this the way in which to initiate a review of the controls that Canada exercises over the export of arms? Is this the way to back into a debate or discussion of disarmament? Is this yet another instance of the government's lack of a clear policy direction? What

assurance can Canadians take from this incident that the government knows where it is going and what it wants to do in our trade policy, in our defence policy and in our foreign policy?

Nothing in this bill relates to the sale or possession of automatic weapons in Canada itself. That is a matter which rightly belongs to the gun control legislation introduced earlier today. That long-delayed legislation will, we hope, deal effectively with all questions pertaining to the sale or possession of automatic weapons in Canada.

By way of contrast, the bill now before us relates only to the export or import and re-export of automatic weapons in commercial contracts. However, in raising such a question the government inevitably creates confusion and invites debate on what constraints we Canadians choose to exercise over the export of conventional weapons and how effective our controls are over their export.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs raised some relevant questions in February. I quote from his speech: "The practical problems here are considerable. What weapons are defensive and what weapons are offensive? How much is enough? How can arsenals be controlled when political conflict persists and how can political conflict be brought to an end when arsenals continue to threaten? How can countries which have developed economies so dependent on the arms trade with the Middle East accept tighter controls which will cost jobs and profits? And what efforts can be mounted to bring all countries into a control effort so that restraint on the part of some does not simply lead to bonanzas for others?"

These and other complex questions raised indirectly by the bill now before us will continue to be debated by Canadians. They properly belong in the realm of foreign and defence policy. They should be raised in that context, not in the much narrower context of correcting an anomaly in the Criminal Code. For our part, we in the Official Opposition would welcome an early review of Canada's armament and disarmament policies, of Canada's policies with regard to the export of convention arms and, more broadly, of Canada's foreign and defence policies.

The proposed amendments to the Criminal Code and to the Export and Import Permits Act, particularly how the automatic firearms control list will function, are questions best considered in committee. It is for that reason that we in the Official Opposition believe that this bill should now proceed promptly to the committee stage so that the questions it inevitably raises can be dealt with effectively there, taking into account the commercial, the defence and the disarmament considerations that are all involved in the control of Canada's export of conventional weapons.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are no questions or comments. The hon. member for Victoria is next on the list. He will have 20 minutes, plus 10 minutes questions and comments.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party to address the issues put before the House. The government has introduced this bill to authorize cabinet to waive the provisions in the Criminal Code permitting the import and export of automatic weapons anywhere in the world. That should be understood by the House.

Today we debate second reading, that is approval in principle of this bill. I am fascinated by the statement of the official spokesman for the Liberal Party, that the Liberal Party wants this bill quickly moved to second reading where it can receive technical amendments. The issue before the House today is the principle of this bill. We in the New Democratic Party are firmly and unalterably opposed to this bill which will permit the export of automatic weapons anywhere in the world and runs completely counter to every effort to restrain arms sales: the bane of the existence of humanity in this century.

Just as the government begins an effort or said it was beginning an effort to try to restrain sales, what is one of the first pieces of legislation it brings before the House in this session? It is a bill to permit further export of weapons around the world by Canada.

It is an irony that this bill comes before the House on the same day in which the government has introduced a gun control bill for Canadians. Why is that what is good for Canadians is not good for people who live in Saudi Arabia and other parts of the world?

This bill drives a hole through the government's policies and constraints on arms sales around the world that directly led to the horror of the gulf war, that directly led to the massacre of millions of people in this century. A policy was proclaimed by the Prime Minister in February. Let us listen to the words, first of all, of the government in its official policy statement set out in September 1990. The Arms Control and Disarmament Division of External Affairs prepared a document outlining the Canadian position. That document says that it is Canada's objective:

> —to ensure that Canadian military exports do not contribute to the violation of human rights nor to the exacerbation of conflict, while ensuring that we meet our requirements for national security and obligations for collective defence.

Further:

> Canada believes that increased restraint by all states with respect to the transfer of arms would contribute to the promotion of peace and security, particularly, in the areas of actual or potential conflict.

The House of Commons defence committee said earlier this year, following the gulf war in a report released in April:

> Governments have a responsibility to exercise controls over military equipment, from its design to its sale or transfer and wherever possible, to its ultimate end use.

However, listen to the words of the Prime Minister, who said on March 13 the following:

> There is a general view, without getting into the question of a total interdiction for the moment, that clearly a lot of these weapons, to understate the case, fell into the hands that should never have had them in the first place. We could be much more active in that area if we wanted. We have all the technology in the world. We have all the resources we need.

This is the Prime Minister speaking. He continued:

> We could be big arms merchants. We have chosen not to be, although it is a very lucrative business. We have chosen not to be, because it is fundamentally inconsistent with our policy, to develop it, to peddle it, to finance it, and then to deplore its use.

• (1110)

That is a direct quote from the Prime Minister of Canada. What happened to his policy? Where did it disappear to?

The minister has carefully explained that behind this bill are two immediate potential sales of arms for Canadians and for Canadian companies or Canadian based companies. The first is the potential sale of automatic weapons to the Netherlands. The other is the sale of 1,117 light armoured vehicles by a General Motors plant in London to Saudi Arabia.

The significance of this bill is that it would permit those light armoured vehicles to be armed with automatic weapons. Without that waiver of the Criminal Code, this deal is not likely, at least in a complete way, to come to the plant in London.

In attempting to justify this deal, the minister says that these are not weapons of mass destruction. What I say to the minister is that in this century more people have been killed by automatic weapons than any other weapon invented by humanity, and most of those who were killed were civilians. How can the government say that this is not a weapon of mass destruction?

The weapons that are going to be mounted on these light armoured vehicles and sold to Saudi Arabia are almost certainly going to be used by that country in controlling its own people. What kind of country is this going to?

Let us listen to the report from Amnesty International on Saudi Arabia:

> At least 27 prisoners of conscience were imprisoned and other prisoners of conscience may have been among more than 70 detainees held without charge or trial. Some political detainees were held without trial in prolonged incommunicado detention. Torture was reported common and one death in custody may have been caused by torture or ill-treatment. Sentences of amputation and flogging continued to be imposed and carried out. At least 111 people were executed, 16 of them for political offences.
>
> Information about political prisoners was limited because of strict official censorship and restrictions on freedom of movement within the country and access from abroad.

Let us look at the United States Senate report and that of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1990'*. It states about Saudi Arabia:

> There were no significant developments in human rights in 1990; significant restrictions remain on the freedoms of speech and press, peaceful assembly and association, religion, the right of citizens to change their government, women's rights and worker rights. There were credible reports in 1990 of the mistreatment of prisoners and incommunicado detention.

We all learned unfortunately during the gulf war a little more of the kind of regime that there is in Saudi Arabia.

Listen to the words of the former trade minister, the current minister responsible for Atlantic development. He said in the House of Commons of March 7 of this year: "We are discussing automatic weapons, that is rifles and other small arms of that nature, machine guns and the like which are necessary for armies, police forces and civil authorities to have if they are to be in a position to keep order in their own countries".

Project Ploughshares has said of these weapons, according to a GM spokesperson: "Military leaders of small countries may like its capacity to 'quell' civil disturbances".

We have here a weapon which this government proposes to permit to be exported to Saudi Arabia. Let me make it clear as well, the bill does not just specify Saudi Arabia. The bill gives the cabinet a licence to add any country in the world to the list of countries to which these weapons may be sent.

I come back: If gun control is all right for Canadians, why is it not all right for other countries and other people? Are we not a common humanity? Are we not our neighbour's keepers? How can we in this House, in conscience, pass a bill which will permit the export of automatic weapons to other countries if we do not permit those weapons in this country except for our own national security?

No case can be made that the export of automatic weapons to Saudi Arabia or most of the rest of the world is in our military or common security. The only case made by the government for the export of these weapons is one of jobs here at home. No case can be made on the basis of conscience, no case can be made on the basis of our national security for this bill and for the provisions within it.

In March the government spoke for Canadians when it set out a policy that might at least begin to turn back the arms race which has caused such destruction in this century and when the government called for a world summit for the transparency in arms deals and for restraint at home in arms deals. We supported the government when it said those things. We supported the government in committee, in the House and in public.

What has happened to that initiative? Where has the government gone? Is it because we have had a change of minister? Is it because this government never was serious about trying to restrain arms sales?

My friends in the Liberal Party asked me during the course of this debate: "What about jobs?"

Mr. Fontana: CAW supports that bill.

Mr. Brewin: Let me speak on behalf of the CAW. My friend asks me to do that. The CAW have been long supporters of the New Democratic Party and we are proud of that support. I want to put on record the fact that the local in the area, Local 27, calls on this House to support the bill.

An hon. member: Pat Clancy too.

Mr. Brewin: I will get to Pat Clancy in a minute if the member will just restrain himself. CAW makes the case that the jobs are vital for its members and for that community. We respect and honour the position that it takes.

Let me quote directly from a letter from Pat Clancy, the area director for CAW Canada. It reads:

> The CAW has for years taken the position that Canada should not become a major international arms dealer. We have taken a position that workers in plants producing armaments should not just be thrown on the unemployment roles, but that their jobs would be protected by conversion methods, building products for peaceful use.
>
> The problem with the current situation at GM Diesel in London is that the workers have in fact been building these military vehicles for some years now for the U.S. military. No doubt, many of those ended up in places like Saudi Arabia. If these orders were to be cancelled, it would mean a lay off of approximately 700 workers because there are no plans to convert this facility to produce alternate products.
>
> As far as the NDP is concerned, we realize that the party represents a broader constituency and therefore should feel free to deal with this issue consistent with party policy. I am sure you realize however, as a union, we cannot take a position that would mean the immediate loss of 700 jobs.

Our caucus took those views carefully into consideration, but we feel that even though the immediate prospect may be the loss of jobs in Kitchener in respect of Diemaco and in London in the case of the Saudi Arabian deal, we have no choice but to oppose this bill with all the vigour that we can muster. We say, in the broader interest of the Canadian national interest and the broader questions of the world interest, that this is a bad bill and this is a bill which must not be accepted by this House.

This is the time to begin to turn around the whole inevitable race toward the escalation of arms sales. When we begin seeing what happens with this bill and we look back at the developments over the last number of years, we begin to see how the government will be back in a few years with yet another arms sale and another arms sale.

Here is how it works. The minister referred to the fact that Diemaco was started by DND in 1976.

• (1120)

It was supported initially as a producer of arms supplies for the Canadian forces. Most Canadians would support that initiative, but what all of us should have realized and must now realize is the down escalator that displaces our economy and our community.

Once a company finishes producing arms for the Canadian Armed Forces, which in the world scale of things is relatively small, it then is faced with a choice. It either stops the production altogether, or seeks new markets. To stop production means a loss of jobs. Obviously, everybody starts looking for new markets. The first and most automatic is the United States with which we have a defence production sharing agreement. We sell a certain amount of the weapons to the United States, but after a period of time the United States' market dries up. We then look to our "allies" in Europe and other places. We begin seeing what arms we can flog to them.

That is what has happened in the case of the light armoured vehicles. That is what has happened in the case of automatic weapons. We have run out of our own markets. We have run out of American markets. We have run out of European markets, so now we start turning to the Third World. We start with a country like Saudi Arabia with which our government has relatively friendly relations, notwithstanding its human rights record and its place right in the heart of one of the most turbulent and tense regions of the world.

What about next week? What about next year, when the Saudi Arabian deal runs out? Where are these companies going to start looking? They will be back with the same argument, but now they will be looking for less and less savory regimes, such as El Salvador or South Korea where they may need arms to turn on the students.

Where next? Iraq? The government will make a case, and the case will be exactly the same as the case brought by the minister before this House today. The case will be that notwithstanding the human rights record, notwithstanding the tensions in the regions, notwithstanding our policies about arms control and notwithstanding the human cost that will ultimately result from this, we have to do this because of jobs.

The time has come to say "stop." The time has come to begin looking at alternatives, for ways in which this country and our people can earn their living. We have a program, DIPP, Defence Industry Production Program. Those funds should begin being used now to divert military equipment and military production to civilian production.

The whole direction of government policy must shift and it must be done in consultation with the communities and the workers involved. We must begin a serious program of conversion so that we no longer find ourselves in the invidious position that this escalator has put us on.

Mr. Speaker, let me refer you to the article by John Lamb who is executive director of the Arms Control Centre. He writes about this very deal.

The record of the government over the long period of time has been eroding step by step by step. Since the 1930s, Canada had a very restrictive arms export policy, but in the 1970s, under a Liberal government, this policy began being reversed. First, it was decided that in future, commercial considerations would be taken into account in the evaluation of export permit applications. Then the onus on who should make the sale was reversed. In the 1980s sales were being approved which had previously been turned down. By 1986 we were selling to known human rights violators and now we are on the slippery slope.

Let me finish by referring the House to a number of very wise comments, the first by Surgeon M. Keeny, Jr. in the Arms Control Association article called Focus in which he concludes:

> The New World Order should not be inaugurated with a massive buildup of sophisticated conventional arms in this most dangerous, unstable, and unpredictable region.

He was referring to the Middle East.

> In such a world, the president's "level playing field" would soon become the "floor of the jungle."

Also let me refer to a very persuasive article in *Newsweek*, the edition of April 8, 1991, by Anthony Sampson, the author of a number of books on international players, including the arms bazaar. He says:

> It will not be easy to withstand national pressure to sell weapons for short-term economic advantage. But if we cannot face up to the danger and the opportunity this time, we may not have another chance.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the wisest words of all come from the prophet Micah, who said:

> He shall judge between many peoples,
> And rebuke strong nations afar off;
> They shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
> And their spears into pruning hooks;
> Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
> Neither shall they learn war any more.

This House has a chance to say "stop." I plead with the government to withdraw this bill. Failing that, I plead with the House to defeat it. I ask all Canadians who are watching this debate to let their members of Parliament know that they want this bill stopped.

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the member of the New Democratic Party. He makes a compelling argument that yes, it is incumbent upon all countries, including Canada, working in concert with the international community, obviously, to work towards peace and towards the eradication of weapons. But it has to be a collective and an international agreement.

What Canada does in isolation will not solve the arms control problems of the world. We are a very small player in this particular area. While we all agree that peace should be something we all work towards internationally, one has to be very realistic. I find it rather peculiar and hypocritical in a way—

Mr. Barrett: One has to be realistic.

Mr. Fontana: I find it rather peculiar that the New Democratic Party, which says it stands for workers and labour, would suggest it is going to add to the human misery of people and put them on the unemployment pile. Not only 700 people from London, Ontario, but close to 5,000 other people across this country, in New Brunswick, British Columbia, Quebec, all these other people are directly related to something which is legal at this point. In fact, the New Democratic Party's suggestion is that we ought to get rid of Pratt & Whitney, which develops engines that go on helicopters. We ought to get rid of the aircraft industry, Buffalo aircraft, for instance, which are sold to other countries. They may or may not be used for military purposes. The fact is that you are talking about 50,000 or 60,000 people. You are prepared to put them on the unemployment rolls. That is absolutely ridiculous.

Mr. Speaker, let me ask a question of the member of the New Democratic Party, who professes to be standing for the working people. The CAW in London and CAW across Canada supports this measure. I want to ask what he is gong to tell the workers in those plants, not only in London, but across this country, who depend on these jobs. You know, 10 or 15 years from now, who knows if the world can get its act together and talk about the kinds of things that he just talked about. If it can, that is fine. But what is he going to tell those men and women on the plant floor that need those jobs? We have 1.5 million unemployed in this country and our industries are going down the tubes.

• (1130)

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, the member voices the very dilemma that this House is called upon to resolve. I would be very interested at some point in hearing what the Liberal Party's position is going to be on this question. I hope we will hear sooner or later from the member on that.

But let us just pull the dilemma right up. First of all, the precise answer to the employees in that area, is that the government should immediately sit down with the company, the community, and the employees involved and begin developing alternate industries and alternate ways of earning of a living. The transition from a military economy to a civilian economy is one that has been long delayed and it is time we got on with it.

He says that maybe in 15 years the world will get its act together. It is not going to get its act together if the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party persist in nibbling away, step by step, at the restraints in arms control we have. If we do not get our own house in order, how can we ask the rest of the world to do that?

But let us also look at the economics of this. There are workers today, as the member has pointed out, who may face a job loss if this bill does not go through. But if this

bill goes through and next year they make the sale, what are they going to do then?

An hon. member: It is ten years of work.

Mr. Brewin: Ten years. All right. If some other company comes in next year, in ten years they are going to have the problem, then they will have to sell to somebody else and to somebody else. In terms of jobs and a sound economic base, it is very clear that the defence industrial base has some major flaws. We are dealing with a world military situation now, where the markets in Europe and in the United States, because of the end of the cold war, will be shrinking. So the industry is forced to move to other places. It is time that we had a thorough review of all of these issues and got our act together.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague, was it not the former President of the United States, a former leading general in World War II, President Eisenhower, who said, "beware of the military industrial complex," back in the 1950s, almost 40 years ago. This same nibbling away and rationalization has been given for massive arms build-ups. Is it not correct?

Rather than talking about 40 years ago, 40 days ago members of this government were saying publicly that Canada would not participate in building up arms in that particular region after the Iraqi war.

Mr. Fontana: Defensive weapons.

Mr. Barrett: Defensive weapons—Twiddle-de-dee, twiddle-de-dum, commonly known on the streets as BS. I will not go beyond the initials. But tell that to a child who has been shot and killed by an automatic weapon that it was only defensive.

Mr. Fontana: Cars are killing people too.

Mr. Barrett: Oh, cars. Now cars are causing wars. Okay. If that is the Liberal position, let it be the Liberal position. I am anxious to hear the Liberal position.

I want to ask my colleague a question. The Liberal Party is just as hypocritical as the Tories. Was this government not in the forefront of pious statements just 40 days ago saying: "We will lead the world in restricting arms sales"? Was it not the former minister of external affairs who went to the region alone, ahead of the United States Secretary of State and said: "Canada has a different position. We will not contribute to sales in this region"? Was it not those self same people? I have a short memory. Perhaps you could remind me.

Mr. Brewin: I am glad to assist the hon. member in getting on the record of the House statements made by the former minister of external affairs who said in January: "Unrestricted arms sales in the Middle East are no longer acceptable and constitute a threat to the security of all members of the United Nations".

This is one of the particularly invidious issues, the sale of arms into the Middle East region. When one country has additional weapons, then its neighbours feel obliged to get into the market and add to it. Saudi Arabia, in the last year in which statistics are available, was second only to Iraq in the world for the importation of arms. It spent 22.7 per cent of its Gross National Product on arms sales and arms purchases.

We think it is time this stopped.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Ferland (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, I am always astonished when I hear the position taken by NDP critics on Canada's defence. This morning, however, I am absolutely flabbergasted. I would like to remind the hon. member that in Canada 300,000 workers earn a living in the defence industry.

This morning the hon. member suggested that to keep Canada looking pure as the driven snow it should no longer produce the weapons it needs for its own security, but he knows perfectly well that both our industry and our purchasing power in this country are too small. What he is suggesting but does not have the courage to say outright is that in future, to keep up its virginal appearances for the NDP's sake, Canada should no longer manufacture its own weapons but purchase them abroad, in other words provide jobs for people in other countries so that we will at least have the means to ensure our own security.

I would like to know whether the hon. member will finally come out and say so in this House.

[*English*]

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, let me just respond to the member who asked that question by throwing back at him the words of his leader, the Prime Minister of Canada, who said on March 13: "We could be big arms merchants. We have chosen not to be although it is a very lucrative business. We have chosen not to be

because it is fundamentally inconsistent with our policy to develop it, to peddle it, to finance it, and then to deplore its use". That is why we are against this bill.

This bill says nothing about the production and sale of arms within Canada. It deals with the export of arms to any country in the world. The bill does not limit cabinet in any way as to the countries that it could be selling arms to. There is no practical limitation. All the cabinet has to do is enter into some kind of arrangement with any tinpot dictator, any violator of human rights, anyone who could turn against us the next day. That is what this bill authorizes and that is what this bill is about.

With respect to the defence industry within Canada, what we have said in this debate and what we will be saying again and again until the lesson gets through to the government is that there is a fundamental problem with engaging in defence production which we must resolve in this country. It is a difficult problem. If we want to make arms for our own forces then we have to think of the ultimate consequences. At the very least we should say we are not going to further weaken the restraints and constraints on arms sales abroad. We should be sitting down across this floor and across this country, having discussions between employers and employees, companies, and the defence industry, and working the answers to this fundamental dilemma.

Mr. John Reimer (Kitchener): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate today on Bill C–6, an act respecting the exporting, importing, manufacturing, buying or selling of, and dealing with certain weapons.

I would like to comment on the nature of this bill, what it is doing, some of the history behind the bill and the stringent controls that are built into it.

In effect this bill will allow Canadian manufacturers of automatic weapons to broaden their marketing efforts to compete for foreign defence contracts. Currently Canadian firms are restricted to selling to Canadian military and police forces only. Under this new act the export of automatic weapons will be subject to a new regime of Canadian government controls, already among the most stringent in the world. It is important to remember when we look at this topic that these are among the most stringent in the world and we are adding to them, not subtracting from them.

A new list called the Automatic Firearms Country Control List will be created. It will set out the names of those countries to which Canadian manufacturers can sell.

• (1140)

Only countries with which Canada has defence, research, development and production bilateral agreements will be eligible for inclusion on that list. Automatic firearms will not be sold to countries that are not included on that list. I want to emphasize that Bill C–6 will help companies such as Diemaco, which is in my riding of Kitchener, become more competitive.

As the Minister for International Trade stated: "I am delighted that the government has seen fit to make these changes at this time. Canadian companies that are only able to rely on domestic orders are in danger of losing their viability. Once the changes are adopted Canadian companies like Diemaco will be able to help our NATO allies and our close defence partners to meet their requirements for small arms".

I would also like to say that my colleague from the neighbouring riding of Cambridge was in the Netherlands last week with the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association. He, too, is pleased with this decision and said that: "The awarding of the international contracts would help keep defence companies viable, thereby allowing the Canadian forces to continue to purchase, repair, and maintain their equipment in Canada, rather than having to seek foreign suppliers".

It is important that under these amendments companies which violate the new regulations could face fines amounting to the total value of the illegal transaction, and officers of such companies could face jail sentences of up to 10 years.

Complementary changes to the Criminal Code have also been introduced. If we look back historically at what has taken place on this issue since January 1, 1978, fully automatic weapons have been classified in the Criminal Code as prohibited weapons. Importation or possession of these fully automatic firearms has, therefore, been illegal except in the case of the Canadian Forces or Canadian police.

The amendments to the Criminal Code will correct this situation. However, the prohibition on the general sale to civilians of automatic weapons in Canada will remain unchanged as was established back in 1978.

As chairman of the special committee on Bill C–80 on firearms, I can say that nothing we are doing in these amendments, either now or during the previous session, will in any way frustrate the new gun control bill that was also introduced and tabled in the House this morning. I have to make it very clear that they are two separate issues. This bill deals with the export of weapons, while the other bill on gun control concerns Canadian civilians. Canadian Armed Forces and police always had an exemption from the prohibition that applied to all civilians in Canada.

Mr. Brewin: What about the Saudi police, are they okay?

Mr. Reimer: The hon. member likes to speak from his seat. I did not interrupt him. I would wish that he would not interrupt me.

The new gun control bill tabled by the Minister of Justice this morning will deal with civilians in Canada. This bill will deal with exporting weapons that are not available to civilians in Canada. That is the important difference we have to keep in mind.

Also, Canada is the only NATO country which prohibits its exports of automatic firearms to its allies and defence partners. If the tables were reversed, our defence requirements would suffer and we would protest to our allies. It is ludicrous that Canadian firms can export rockets, missiles, bombs, F–18 aircraft, in fact any defence equipment, but they may not export automatic firearms to our NATO allies and close defence partners.

That is the only restriction and that is the one we are addressing today in this bill. This restriction which came about in the 1977–78 gun control amendments for civilian use, not Armed Forces use, never was intended to restrict companies such as Diemaco in their exports or their hopes to export to our NATO allies and defence partners.

I discussed this with the member for Notre–Dame–de–Grâce who is here this morning. I am glad he is here. I asked him if, when he was minister and introduced the bill back in 1976 for gun control in Canada, it was the intention in his bill—which later was taken by another minister to fruition two years later—and if it was ever the intention of the government through him as the minister at that time, to stop exports to our defence partners or NATO allies of fully automatic weapons. His answer was no, he did not think that in any way that was ever intended. It was an oversight.

That is fine. That is the history. That is where we have come from. Today we are correcting that oversight and that is all we are doing today.

This issue has been before me for six years, since 1984. When I was elected as the member for the federal riding of Kitchener this company came to me and said: "We've discussed this with the former administration and it has admitted to us that it was an oversight. Please take our representation to the government and see if we can make this change". This change was almost accomplished in 1987, but for a variety of reasons it was deferred. Now we are facing it again. I am glad that we have now finally bit the bullet and said: "Let's face the question and let's act on this issue".

I think it is necessary to put this action into the full range of foreign policy and international security considerations as well, not just within our own domestic question with respect to gun control.

All the production facilities in Canada must meet rigorous Department of National Defence and the Department of Supply and Services security standards and all are subject to regular inspection. All exports and imports of automatic weapons will continue to be tightly controlled and will be subject to the same stringent controls long applied to all exports of military goods.

Exports of all fully automatic weapons will be permitted only to those countries on the Automatic Firearm Country Control List, which will include only those countries with which Canada has concluded intergovernmental defence, research, development and, production arrangements.

In the international arena the government is seeking support for proposals to increase controls on the world arms trade, in particular exports which contribute to programs to develop weapons of mass destruction. We are also working at the United Nations to encourage greater transparency in arms transfers through the establishment of an international arms transfer register. In a unilateral effort to bring greater transparency to

arms transfers, Canada has begun publishing annual reports on exports of arms from Canada.

Should this bill go through and should Diemaco in my riding which makes all of the rifles for the Canadian Armed Forces be permitted and win the contract with, say, the Netherlands, then that would be put into this annual report. A full accounting of every gun we sell to the Netherlands would go in that report. It would be fully transparent for all to see.

At the same time we recognize that all countries have a legitimate right to self-defence. Canadian firms should have the opportunity to meet their requirements within the strict limits imposed by Canadian arms control policy and export control licensing requirements and procedures.

These controls will be applied in two stages. First, a defence research, development and production agreement will have to exist between Canada and the country of final destination, and that country will have to be included, as I indicated earlier, on the Automatic Firearm Country Control List maintained under the Export and Import Permits Act.

• (1150)

If an arrangement does not already exist, one would have to be negotiated. The proposal to add the country to the Automatic Firearms Country Control List would have to be approved by cabinet through an Order in Council.

The Canadian government will closely control proposals to establish arrangements with other countries. There are four criteria which I would like to go through:

1. Countries that pose a threat to Canada or its allies would not get on the list.

2. Countries involved in or under imminent threat of hostilities would not get on the list.

3. Countries under United Nations Security Council's sanction would not get on the list.

4. Countries whose governments have a persistent record of serious human rights violations, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable risk that the goods might be used against their civilian population, would not get on the list.

Those are four very clear criteria.

Exports of automatic weapons would be permitted only to a government with which Canada concludes the necessary arrangements, or to a consignee authorized by that government. They would never go to civilians. This is a government to government sale under these stringent controls.

Applications to export automatic weapons will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to the same licensing procedures applied to all exports of military goods from Canada. Military goods are defined as those listed under Group 2 of the export control list. Automatic weapons are listed under item 2001—small arms and machine guns. These procedures include providing an end use statement and supporting document, and most notably an import certificate from the country of final destination. Applications to export automatic weapons to countries which comply with the above criteria would be closely controlled. In particular, all such applications would be subject to an interdepartmental review and would have to be approved personally by the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

The creation of the new stringent export controls, in particular the creation of the Automatic Firearms Country Control List, completely satisfies my concerns and those of the government with respect to arms control.

Canada will continue to advocate increased international restraint and effective controls on the export of conventional weapons. At the same time Canada continues to recognize that all countries have the right to self-defence as guaranteed under article 51 of the United Nations Charter. This bill will give Canadian firms the opportunity to help Canada's close allies and defence partners meet their legitimate defence requirements.

The bill does not represent any relaxation of Canada's export control policy. All exports of these weapons will be tightly controlled using the same stringent guidelines long applied to all exports of Canadian military goods. I might further add that Canada currently has defence production arrangements with 10 countries, of which Sweden is the only one that is not a member of NATO, hardly a country that we would say is a country we would not want to have this type of opportunity to export to.

An arrangement with Spain is under consideration at the present time. Cabinet could only include those countries on the Automatic Firearms Country Control List through an Order in Council should they qualify under the stringent controls that I have already pointed out.

This bill is of vital concern to the Canadian defence industry in general and, at this time, to the plant in my riding called Diemaco in particular.

In 1976, Diemaco was established by DND policy as the centre of excellence for the provision of small arms to the Canadian Armed Forces so Canada would not be totally dependent on foreign suppliers in times of emergency. This facility is unique in Canada and is fundamental in allowing the Department of National Defence to maintain its operational readiness.

Diemaco was awarded a contract to produce a new family of small arms for the Canadian Armed Forces back in the mid-1970s, resulting in 300 jobs at Diemaco and 200 jobs at its Canadian subcontractors, plus an equal number of jobs with other associated firms.

The end of this production for the Canadian Armed Forces is, however, approaching and this important industrial preparedness capability provided by Diemaco and its approximately 75 subcontractors stands to be lost now to Canada.

It must be stressed that these are high quality, technology-oriented jobs. The investment by the Canadian government of some $40 million in technology and computer-based manufacturing capability had made and will continue to make a significant contribution to Canada's competitiveness. The capabilities supported include product design engineering, manufacturing engineering, metal finishing, plastic moulding, precision casting forging, and machining and extrusion techniques.

Over the past few years Diemaco has been competing for a contract to provide the Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands with a family of small arms valued at more than $120 million, potentially followed by a further $100 million worth of spare parts and other support. Securing this contract will mean an initial 7,680 person-years of Canadian employment, with the potential of almost doubling the employment over the life of the project. Success will also ensure the ability to continue the development work necessary for new weapons systems for the Canadian Armed Forces into the next century. The Dutch have now begun a new testing phase with DND, supplied with rifles from Diemaco. Without this legislation in place the credibility of this proposal will obviously suffer.

The United States Department of Defence will be looking to Diemaco and its subcontractors for components to maintain its inventory of rifles and machine guns. This could involve 20 Canadian companies and export sales of $5 million.

Let me wrap up. We are correcting an oversight in the gun control legislation of 1978 for civilians, not armed forces. That is number one.

Number two. What we are doing is keeping a Canadian centre of excellence which the people of Canada, through the Government of Canada, have asked a firm to provide. Go out and hire the people. Go out and do the research. Together we will build this centre so that you can make the weapons for our Canadian Armed Forces.

We have a limited need. If we want that expertise to exist in Canada—I think we do—and if we want those kind of people to develop that expertise into the future, then they have to be able to export, at least to our friends and our allies.

That is all we are asking in this legislation. We are talking about basic military equipment for law enforcement and simple defence needs. These are not weapons of mass destruction. These weapons, such as the fully automatic weapon made in Kitchener, or the light armoured vehicle from GM in London, are for law enforcement and simple military defence needs.

This will be regulated with the the stringent controls I have outlined. With those stringent controls, this is a responsible piece of legislation correcting an oversight of the past.

• (1200)

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, let us just examine those stringent controls a little more carefully. The member has waxed eloquent about stringent controls. The English language gets completely twisted on its head. It reminds one of George Orwell.

This bill sets out in section 2 the following new section 4.1.

> The Governor in Council may establish a list of countries, to be called an Automatic Firearms Country Control List, including therein—

And I emphasize the word "including," not restricted to, but including therein—

> —any country with which Canada has an intergovernmental defence, research, development and production arrangement and to which the Governor in Council deems it appropriate to permit the export of a prohibited weapon described in the paragraph (c) or (e) of the definition "prohibited weapon" in subsection 84(1) of the Criminal Code, or components or parts thereof, that is included in an Export Control List.

As the member knows the bill goes on to say that the minister may issue an export permit provided the country of destination is one of the countries listed on the Automatic Firearms Country Control List.

There is no constraint whatever on cabinet as to what countries can be countries of destination. Any country on the globe, any dictator, any violator of human rights, any country that is a market for these weapons of destruction can be on this Automatic Firearms Country Control List. Parliament is imposing, through this bill, no constraint whatever on the cabinet. The country that this year makes a case a year ago could not have made a case. It 10 years ago could not have made a case on the basis of human rights violations, on the basis of being in the middle of the Middle East, an area of intense tension. Those countries could not then have made a case, but today can.

Next year, 10 years from now, even less savory dictatorships will be able to make that list. This bill provides no stringent controls. Not a scintilla of control is imposed by this bill.

The member is simply completely wrong. Why does the member not just come out clearly and say that this bill now permits the complete, unrestricted export of these weapons of destruction, weapons which have killed more human beings in this century than any other weapon ever invented. How does the member answer that?

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, I do not understand why the member opposite is saying that. The member opposite is saying that there is an absence of any control whatsoever, if I understand him correctly.

That is not what I said. I went through four specific criteria.

Mr. Brewin: That is just a matter of policy.

Mr. Reimer: These four specific criteria are very clear. They are very clear.

Mr. Brewin: That policy can be changed overnight.

Mr. Reimer: Any country that poses a threat to Canada or to its allies cannot be on the list. That is number one.

Mr. Barrett: That is not in the legislation.

Mr. Reimer: The member keeps talking from his seat, Mr. Speaker. He will have his opportunity, I am sure.

Mr. Barrett: That is not in the legislation.

Mr. Reimer: Second, with respect to these criteria which must be met before any country can get on that list, they are there for the Government of Canada to follow. It is openly publishing them here right now. It is saying that these are the criteria we will be following before a country can be on that list. I think, therefore, they are criteria that are very significant. However, the member is not listening.

Mr. Brewin: I was listening very carefully. On a point of order, the member—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would hope that the hon. member for Kitchener has the floor. I would like him to reply to the questions and comments and get on with the debate because I have another great speaker coming up. The hon. member for Kitchener.

On a point of order, the hon. member for Victoria.

Mr. Brewin: Just as it is not fair for a member to suggest another member is not in the House, it is not fair for the member to suggest that another member was not listening when I was listening to him and listening very—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Kitchener will complete his remarks, please.

Mr. Reimer: Permit me to try again, Mr. Speaker, if I may. There are stringent controls and the criteria are very clear. Before any country can get on that list through an Order in Council, it must meet these four criteria: that country cannot pose a threat to Canada or its allies; it cannot be involved in or under imminent threat of hostilities; it cannot be under United Nations Security Council sanctions; and it cannot be a country which has a persistent record of serious violations of human rights. How much clearer do we have to be? The

criteria are there and you cannot get on the list if you violate any of those four.

I have to say that the criteria are there. They are clear, public and known. Every year—

Mr. Brewin: They are changeable.

Mr. Reimer: The opposition likes to say "and they are changeable". These criteria are the new regime of stringent controls, which are being introduced in this bill and—

Mr. Brewin: No, they are not in the bill.

Mr. Reimer: If I may continue without the interruptions of the hon. member, they are the criteria by which the Government of Canada would add or consider adding a country to that list.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I am shocked that I am the next speaker. It comes as a great surprise to me that the great Liberal opposition has disappeared today on this particular debate. We know that the government has abandoned its principles, but now we find that the opposition is sitting on the fence. Where does the Liberal Party stand on this issue? We know the hypocrisy of this government and I will deal with that chapter and verse in a moment. You must help me in my shock and disappointment, Sir, to find that the Official Opposition refuses to take its place in this debate.

Mr. Bélair: Stop talking about others and talk about yourself.

Mr. Barrett: Talk about others. This is politics, my friend, and the political matter is clear on this issue. The government has taken one position, the New Democratic Party has taken another position, and the Liberals are hiding again. I have to say that because it is political. I do not like being political in this place because on occasion it has been noted that people have been partisan in this Chamber but the government has set a new arena for being partisan. You have to go to Japan to do that. Far be it from me to be partisan here at home. I am not in Japan, but I have to take my place in this debate.

The member who just spoke misspoke accidentally, but he left himself with the impression that the criteria he was talking about were in the bill. Nothing could be more incorrect. The member who spoke did an eloquent job speaking about something that was not in the bill and that confuses me. I know it is not out of order, but it confuses me. So how can he say the policy was in the bill when it is not in the bill? I did not get a chance to ask him what section of the bill he was referring to, but that is the way it is.

I have decided that what I would do is speak through the government's own words. I find it preferable, rather than giving an unrestricted point of view of my own, that I show some respect and dignity to the government of the day. This is not a change of temper in my approach to politics. It is just that once in a while I read things that the government says, and once in a while I would like to believe it. I have been shocked again even though I am young and *ingénue* in this whole process. I am shocked that the government is also playing a game of politics, saying one thing in one location and something else in another location.

The example I am going to give is appropriate because it took place in western Canada, a region largely unknown to members of this House and albeit it is a superior region of this country, we are modest about that superiority. This is what the former minister of external affairs made in his very pious mode.

• (1210)

I love to see him in his pious mode, when the fount of all wisdom comes down and says: "This government is going to take its place internationally and present this point of view".

Here he is with his best pious views out on his home turf, none other than Calgary. The Right Hon. Joe Clark at a luncheon hosted by the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, a hotbed of radical politics. What did he say on page 3?

Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring this to your attention because you are listening more than anyone else. This is what his rationalization was about the current follow-through on the war we voted against in the Middle East. I quote page 3 with some pontification.

"Canada did not put the lives of its men and women at risk for the sake of a few cents a litre on oil. No, no, no". He goes on to say: "Nor was this war about democracy"—that is interesting. "Kuwait is not a democracy of the Canadian sort, although there were signs before August 2 that it was moving in that direction".

If I may permitted an aside. Kuwait just sent a guy to jail for 15 years for wearing a T-shirt. I can imagine what is going to happen if this government goes down further in the polls and some bad youth comes out with a terrible picture of the Prime Minister on a T-shirt. Is he going to get 15 years?

"Kuwait is not a democracy. It is possible that Canadians would not choose the Kuwaiti system". It is impossible, but that is his definition. That is not the point. "Peace is not the province of the privileged who are lucky enough to be in democracies, the universal right. Aggression is a universal wrong". Piety number one.

Piety number two is on page 4: "That is why we are in the gulf. Not for oil, not for democracy, not for others, but for the principle that Canadians have always defended, a principle Canadians need if this country requires its security and prosperity to prevail. We are there based on the universal principles of international law".

I am going to get to more claptrap, but at this point I am just reading little excerpts.

This is a government that says, as a justification for going to war against Kuwait, and this is Mr. Clark in Calgary—

Mr. Hockin: Why are we talking about war. This is a different bill.

Mr. Barrett: We are going to get to his quotes on arms control. Just do not get nervous. He has even said things about arms control that are attached to this. He spoke to the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Volpe: Are you going to table those, Dave?

Mr. Barrett: Table this? I will give you 1,000 copies. He goes on to say: "This government does not necessarily defend democracies". We saw that. This policy shifts day to day. When it says: "this is just defensive weapons," one begins to wonder about further hypocrisies.

This is the one that will grab your attention, Sir, and perhaps the attention of the Liberals. The former minister gave four reasons why we have to take the position we have.

Third, he said: "A durable peace will require addressing the full spectrum of problems that have plagued that region. That means dealing with other conflicts, including the Arab—Israeli conflict. That means addressing the symptoms of conflict, the proliferation of weapons and destruction and the arms trade, the constant chase for spheres of influence". How in the world is selling these arms to Saudi Arabia, a consistent violator of human rights—which my friend referred to as a policy matter—going to be consistent with the policies of that minister, the ones which say we have got to stop selling arms?

You cannot say one thing in Calgary and do something else when you are a government here in Ottawa, because someone will accuse the government of being hypocritical. If no one else does, for want of such an accusation, I will make it myself. The government is being hypocritical.

It says one thing in one part of the country. It says one thing in other speeches, but does something else by this bill here today. I am shocked, disappointed and, frankly, hurt. In my tender years I do not like to experience those emotions.

The government was fibbing. The minister in that speech could be accused of fibbing, and guess who did the accusation? No one other than Douglas Roche. I was not serving in this House when Douglas Roche was a member here, but he was a Conservative. He would never reach the low of being a Liberal; he was a Conservative. He sat in this House and he was appointed by this government as the ambassador for disarmament. He has an article in today's edition of *The Toronto Star* saying that the arms sale must be killed and gives all the reasons, as a former ambassador and a former Conservative, and this government is bringing in this bill.

Mr. Brewin: And supported by the Liberals.

Mr. Barrett: Is it supported by the Liberals?

Mr. Brewin: We don't know.

Mr. Barrett: We do not know what the Liberals do. This is the best in Liberal tradition. Maybe yes, maybe no; it is the old tango. The Liberals play the game any way they want. They can run out of here and say: "We are not for arms sales, but not necessarily for stopping the sale of arms". The Liberals invented Orwellian doublespeak. They are the experts at it. When they cannot even dance on the fence they do not dance at all. They do not even participate in the debate. Where are those great spokespersons from the Liberal Party?

Mr. Hockin: Now you're talking, Dave.

Mr. Barrett: That is true. When the government becomes a hypocrite it is right up front about being a hypocrite. You have got to admire its honesty. When the government is hypocritical it is open, honest hypocrisy which anybody can understand. The Tory's hypocrisy is there for everybody to see, but the Liberal's hypocrisy is being hidden and that is not fair in the political arena of this country. Hidden hypocrisy is worse than principled hypocrisy, even though the government practises principled hypocrisy.

Look at this quote on page 6 from the hon. former minister of external affairs. This is a lovely quote. This went over with senatorial tones by the former minister. This is what he said in Calgary, Alberta, where nobody in central Canada would report it. He said: "28 nations supplied both Iran and Iraq during the eight-year war. Between 1984 and 1988 the dollar value of major weapons exports to Iraq was higher than any other country in the developing or developed world. During the same period, middle eastern countries occupied five of the top six spots as destinations for arms. The Middle East, much of it underdeveloped, has spent a larger portion of its Gross National Product on arms than any other region in the world. There is a worrying, parallel phenomenon of the growth of new suppliers in the developing world, many of whom put few restrictions on their arms exports".

Hypocrisy, shocking, naked, unvarnished hypocrisy coming from this government denying what the minister himself said in Calgary. He said he would not do it and that it is a shame on developing countries that are doing it. Who the heck is now selling guns into that region? Oh, they are just automatic weapons. They are okay; they are safe. You only have to pull the trigger once, so when you kill somebody you spread it around. It diminishes your moral responsibility. If you have to pull the trigger every time then you are more morally responsible, but since they are automatic weapons it diminishes the morality. That is the kind of quixotic thinking that goes on over there in its sheer naked hypocrisy.

Mr. Hockin: Nonsense.

Mr. Barrett: It is nonsense. I am glad that the member agrees with me. I am glad that I have got one Tory who has come to his senses. If I only knew his name and the seat he represented, I would broadcast exactly who yelled out "nonsense" at the government's policy. I welcome his frank, open admission here on this day of our Lord, May 30, 1991. I will take your name and mail what you said to your constituents.

Mr. Hockin: Mr. Speaker, I resent that the hon. member does not know my name or my riding. It is London West. I do have to object to what he just said by way of hypocrisy. The government is very clear in this bill that we are not dealing in weapons of mass destruction. We have made that point very clear right from the beginning. That is why I am rising on the point of order.

Mr. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, now we have a new dimension of doublespeak. The Conservatives are trying to get into debate under points of order, something that I have wanted to do on occasion I confess. Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is true on occasion I have violated parliamentary rules the same way. That is why I am able to recognize it so quickly.

• (1220)

Nonsense is the operative word. The government says in a speech in Calgary that sending arms into that region is a violation of all common sense and then three months later it is in the business of peddling guns there.

Will we be confronted with the same kind of pious nonsense when the next outbreak of war takes place in the Middle East and the government rushes in to assist, declaring peace must be brought to the region and we find that it is our own arms and it is our own vehicles that have been part and parcel of the killing in the region? Is there a question of morality here? I think so. But the overwhelming morality is the hypocrisy of the statements, as I go on reading from the speech of the minister.

I want to go to page 8 of the same speech in Calgary by the minister. He says: "We will propose that the countries who are signatory to the conventional forces agreement in Europe undertake not to export arms affected by that agreement to countries outside Europe". Here is a clear-cut statement of Canada's position by that minister. The statement was made on March 8. Here we are on May 30 violating what the minister said would be Canada's position. If that is not hypocrisy I do not know what is.

The minister, speaking for the Canadian government, announced to all Canadians at a Chamber of Commerce meeting: "We will propose that countries who are signatory to the conventional forces agreement in Europe undertake not to export arms affected by the agreement to countries outside Europe". Is Saudi Arabia outside Europe? Unless the map has been dramatically changed, unless there has been another heretical view by the Papal Nuncio on Galileo's view of the world, Saudi Arabia is still not in Europe. It is a direct contradiction of what the minister promised the Canadian people and said the Canadian government was going to do.

I know this bill is being brought in on a day when the Prime Minister is not in the country. The Prime Minister would not stand for this hypocrisy. If the Prime Minister were here today he would defend the policy announced by his government. It is a rebellious group of government backbenchers and cabinet ministers who have grasped this opening and decided to revolt against the statements of the Prime Minister no matter how revolting those statements are and contradict the position of the government.

I ask the government before it is further embarrassed to withdraw this bill and consult with the author of the statement who promised that the Canadian government position would be no sale of arms outside of Europe. If they do not do this, someone will use stronger language and call the government liars. They might do that. They cannot do it by name but they can certainly call a party liars.

That is my fear. Some young witness on television or in the gallery here today might say: "My goodness gracious, the government is lying". I do not want that to happen. I suggest they either withdraw the bill or get the government to clarify the promise made by the minister that they would not sell outside of Europe.

I want to confess. Those admonitions I have been giving to myself and others about my being an *ingénue* are not true. I have seen hypocrisy before but I have never seen it as clear as this. I do not want to mislead the House, Mr. Speaker. I have come to the conclusion that this government is hypocritical, that this debate is a farce, when this government goes outside of this Chamber and makes promises elsewhere and comes in and does something else.

If you are going to sell arms, come up front, do not lie about it to the people of this country and to our European neighbours and say you are not going to do it. Do not tell them to do something you are not prepared to do. Do not go around lying in the world that somehow you are some kind of wonderful paragons of virtue when in fact you deny your own promises made just on March 8 of this year by the former secretary of state.

Do not lie to the Canadian people. Be up front and say that you are in the arms sale business. We understand your position, but the hypocrisy and lying from this government is what is completely unacceptable.

As for the Liberals, my last word to them is: "Stay on the fence". They might win an election that way. Never again will the Canadian people put up with the kind of claptrap with the Liberals denying any position at all and hoping to get votes for it.

Where the heck do you stand on this issue, you Liberals in the Official Opposition. We know where they stand. What are you hiding from? How will you vote on this? We are anxious to see.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): First, Mr. Speaker, let me congratulate the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, my neighbour in the Victoria area, on another very powerful speech.

The issues that this bill addresses are far broader than that of the sales of particular arms. They go right to the very fundamentals of where this country is going with respect to its international policy and its role, as it sees it, in the world.

We have the comments of the former Secretary of State for External Affairs as referred to—

Mr. Hockin: Question. Question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Brewin: I know I am a new member and I have a lot to learn but I understood this is questions and comments.

I am prefacing, eventually, a question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member does have an opportunity to have a short comment, and then put a question to the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, the underlying long-term basic policy issue that this bill puts front and centre is the issue of whether we are going to be a leader in restraining the sale of arms or we are going to continue to

participate in the business of selling arms around the world.

The most recent figures show that the average annual sales or export of arms by Canada reached $1.5 billion, earning Canada a place in the top 15 military suppliers in the 1980s, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

The real issue now is how we are going to begin to turn this around.

The member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca has been for his whole political career a defender of the position of workers in British Columbia and across Canada.

I would like to give him the opportunity to outline his thoughts on how workers in this situation should best be looked after and protected. Is it to pass a bill like this, or does the member have, as I know he does, alternatives in mind?

Mr. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, someone suggested that was a planted question.

Unfortunately, our planning was not good today and it is not a planted question.

I will address it in terms of a global view since the minister whom I quoted was taking a global view. Let us take, for example, one area of government policy, the export of oil and natural gas.

If this government were serious about building a sovereign, firm, industrial base in this country to provide meaningful jobs for Canadians, it would cut down on our export of raw materials, particularly oil and gas, and start building an industrial base on those energy products.

Why, for example, are we shipping our Canadian oil into the United States and subsidizing American truckers' jobs with cheap Canadian crude oil that is made from both light and heavy oil into industrial products, and for industrial use in transportation? Why are we doing that?

We could put a surtax on exported oil to force the Americans to bring the price of their transportation costs up to our level. Just as this government acquiesced to a surtax on forest industry goods from British Columbia, we should do the other.

• (1230)

What would we do with the money? We would expand the industrial base. Alberta could be the foundation of a major petrochemical industry. Certainly the export of LNG should be a consideration for western Canada. We should be building ships in this country after the United Nations' admonition that 40 per cent of all raw materials leaving any nation should go on that nation's ships, built by that nation's shipyards, and manned by that nation's crews. We don't have a merchant fleet left any more.

These are not things of startling revelation, but my colleague asked me to give a couple of examples of what we could be doing if we were a government of determination. Those are things that are simple and that would more than employ tens of thousands of people in this country. Part of the price of doing business with the Japanese in terms of the export of LNG, which I favour, would be to do it through ships built in Canada, manned by Canadian crews. Why not? There is a whole range of things.

Is the selling of arms the only thing that we have left to create jobs. Is that the lack of vision? I cannot believe it. We have highly skilled and highly paid professionals within the bureaucracy of this government who can come up with these ideas and many others.

I am not a Christian, but I noted with some interest that the member ended up his comments with a quote from one of the prophets, about beating your weapons into ploughshares. I puzzle about Christians sometimes. Do they really mean what they say? All those prayer breakfasts that the members of Parliament go to, is it a charade? This trade in arms is immoral. It is against what we say in daily prayer in this Chamber, and yet we are going to go ahead with it. That is hypocrisy, too. I wonder about it.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak in a quiet temperate way on this bill, because it does not deserve the kind of hyperbole that we have had to listen to for the last 25 minutes. The facts behind this bill are rather dull and mundane and bureaucratic. They have nothing to do with the great questions of principle that the hon. member wanted to bring forward, nothing to do with the

Old Testament or the New Testament, and nothing to do with the war in Iraq.

This bill has to do with export permits and restricting export permits for these kinds of weapons. It also concerns redressing an anomaly that existed in our industrial base for a very limited class of military equipment. Certainly it has nothing to do with weapons of mass destruction. The hon. member tried to, in his hyperbole, drag in images of mass destruction, the Old and New Testaments, Middle East conflict and so on. None of that is really relevant to this bill.

I will not repeat what the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and the Minister for International Trade has said earlier today. He has outlined the details of the bill.

I wanted to outline two things, first of all from the point of view of being a minister of state in the department of industry, and second as a member of Parliament from London, Ontario. Close examination of this bill will make it clear that it is totally consistent with all that the government has said concerning the proliferation of weapons and controlling the arms trade. The government is seeking support for proposals to increase controls on the world's arms trade, in particular exports which contribute to programs to develop weapons of mass destruction. This remains a policy and we have put in place to that effect.

We are also working actively in the UN to encourage greater transparencies in arms transfers. That is exactly what this bill does. It makes everything transparent. It is not hypocritical. In fact what we are doing is transparent, greater transparency in arms transports through measures such as establishing an international arms transfer register. In a unilateral effort to bring greater transparency to arms transfers, Canada has begun publishing annual reports on exports of arms from Canada. This is not hypocrisy; this is transparency.

We believe this is an important subject and must be handled properly and with clarity.

At the same time, we recognize that all countries have a legitimate right to self-defence. What the hon. member misses is that every country must have a limited stock of rifles, for example, to defend itself through its police forces as well as its military, and also for internal peace purposes. Even more important, you have to transport your troops. You put your troops in a truck; you can put them in an open truck or you can put them in a covered, light armoured vehicle which can have a turret for defence, but not a weapon of mass destruction. That is really what we are talking about.

They take those two very mundane parts of the storage of any police force or any military and they make them sound like weapons of mass destruction. They are not. It is a very pragmatic supply for one's own security.

It means that we are going to be making these things in Canada. Is that not a good idea? Do we have to buy everything? Does the hon. member want to buy all of these light armoured vehicles from other countries? Does he want to buy all rifles from other countries? We are going to be making these. We do not have a big enough market here in Canada to make them just for the Canadian market. If we are going to be world class and have a centre of excellence in this particular product, we have to export. That is what this bill is allowing to happen.

This bill is a bureaucrat's delight in the sense that there are a number of permits that have to be achieved before any kind of export can take place. Designations have to take place; agreements have to take place; there has to be a publishing of the regulations. This thing is so transparent it is the very opposite of hypocrisy. It is being honest and straightforward with the Canadian people.

The bill is one that does not deserve the kind of hyperbole and high temperature that the hon. member tried to bring forward.

What does it mean? In my home town the hon. member would expect me to stand up as a member of Parliament from London West. I notice the Liberal member from London East has also supported this, along with the secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Auto Workers and intercorporate council for General Motors. This means 10,000 person years of employment for not just the London area, but for subcontractors across Canada.

I want to give some sort of sense of what this would mean. If we decided to buy our light armoured vehicles, for example, from another country, close down that business, we would be saying goodbye to close to 1,000 workers in the London plant, to say nothing of the hundreds, perhaps thousands of subcontractors helping with this product. It is a benign transport vehicle with a

rifle on a turret. That is all it is. It is not a weapon of mass destruction.

These are integral to our own defence. They are integral to other countries' defences. Why do we not make them here? That is all this bill does. It allows it to be done and to give employment. It is very interesting.

You would expect a member from London to stand up and just talk about its impact for London, Ontario. Ultimately it is more important for reasons beyond that. I am also talking about jobs in Richmond, British Columbia; Vancouver; Edmonton, Alberta; Winnipeg, Manitoba; I am talking about high-tech skills being maintained in Quebec City. I am talking about industrial benefits and export earnings centred in Nova Scotia, in Mulgrave and Bridgewater.

The economic benefits of Bill C-6 extend all the way to St. John's, Newfoundland, directly, indirectly in the short term, in the long term and most importantly, in terms of jobs and dollars. The economic benefits for the country as a whole which flow from this are really quite astounding. The potential immediate contracts in the offing are close to $1 billion. For any country's military, an industrial source of contracts for $1 billion is an immense job creator, an immense centre of excellence, and that is what this bill will help do. It gives economic spin-offs, perhaps double or triple, direct employment perhaps approaching 10,000 person years, and future contracts, as yet unvalued, but similar in magnitude to what I have just mentioned.

• (1240)

Mr. Dickerson, the secretary-treasurer of the intercorporate council of General Motors, supports this bill very much. He would not support it if we were making weapons of mass destruction, but when we are making essentially a transportation vehicle, he does support it. He supports it because of the jobs for his union and the jobs for the subcontractors and their employees.

The heart of this bill is that we are restricting access through restricting the Export and Import Permits Act. We are creating jobs and we are dealing with a bureaucratic anomaly. The bill does not deserve a great deal of debate in this House.

What we should do is look at what it is. It is a pragmatic solution to a bureaucratic anomaly. That is all it is, but it also does help us to have a centre of excellence in two industrial categories which are very important for thousands of Canadians.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member who has just spoken could answer one question for me and maybe even a couple.

Would the secretary-treasurer of the CAW, who was quoted as saying that he supports this, not be equally supportive of any move that was going to create the same number of jobs or sustain the same kind of employment?

It is not this particular work that the secretary-treasurer is interested in. It is just that he would rather have employment than unemployment. That is the question, really.

The other one is this. The hon. member mentioned it is just automatic rifles and light armoured vehicles that we are producing. Canada needs those for the defence of its own country.

From what potential aggressors would we be defending ourselves with a lot more rifles and a lot more light armoured vehicles?

Mr. Hockin: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member's first question, you have to live in the real world.

There are no contracts for General Motors diesel division, outside of the locomotive division, in the offing. There are contracts for this transportation vehicle. That is what we are dealing with.

We cannot deal with potential jobs that may or may not arrive for some other product. There is no other product on the horizon. This one is there. It is a transportation vehicle which could be used by the UN. It could be used by any civil power that wanted to transport its police. It is a transportation vehicle.

It is equipped with a turret and an automatic weapon just to defend it. For example, if you were defending your own country in a state of siege, and you were under attack from hand grenades or whatever, you would have to have some sort of facility. You are not just going to be a sitting duck but you are going to deter that kind of attack.

I am not going to hypothesize what kind of civil disturbances in Canada might occur which would give rise to this or what kind of disturbances could occur elsewhere which might give rise to this.

All I am saying is that you cannot have a transportation vehicle with no means to deter people who want to throw a hand grenade at it or whatever. That is what this is for. It is not a tank which rushes into an offensive position.

It is a transportation vehicle which is very lightly armoured and has this automatic capacity simply as a defence against any kind of rush that might occur against it.

That is what we are talking about. We are not talking about weapons of mass destruction. We are not even talking about a tank.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, the member for London West says that this is just a transportation vehicle.

Let me see whether he would agree with the following description of the light armoured vehicle: "In its many variations, all of which are included in the Saudi Sale, it can be used as a troop carrier, a communications command centre, a towing vehicle, a mortar launcher or an anti-tank weapon. Virtually all vehicles carry machine guns. Some may carry rocket launchers or cannons."

According to a GM spokesperson: "Military leaders of smaller countries may like its capacity to quell civil disturbances."

Let me ask the minister if he agrees with his colleague, the former trade minister, who said about these weapons: "We are discussing automatic weapons, that is, rifles and other small arms of that nature, machine guns and the like, which are necessary for armies, police forces and civil authorities to have if they are to be in a position to keep order in their own countries."

This bill is not about the vehicles. This bill is about the automatic weapons that are to be placed on these vehicles. The sale of the vehicles themselves was approved before this bill saw the light of day. The change that the government is seeking is a change in the Criminal Code which presently prohibits the export and import of automatic weapons. It is changing the Criminal Code, in section 8 of the bill, to permit a waiver of the Criminal Code provisions in respect to export of otherwise prohibited weapons, namely automatic weapons, to any country the government chooses.

The purpose of the bill deals strictly with the weapons themselves, not with the vehicles. As noted, the former minister of trade says: "We are discussing weapons which civil authorities may need if they are to be in a position to keep order in their own countries". How does the government justify this on any moral or ethical basis whatever?

Mr. Hockin: Mr. Speaker, I must ask the hon. member a question. If we have a peacekeeping operation, let us say in Cyprus for example, there are transport troops. If there are terrorists surrounding this transportation vehicle, the troops need some means of deterring those terrorists. That is why it has this turret. It is not a weapon of mass destruction. It is like a policeman who is carrying a gun. The hon. member wants our peacekeeping forces, wants UN peacekeeping forces, to be in a vehicle with no means of deterrence whatsoever. That is all the light armour does. That is all the automatic weapon does.

He would like to ensure that any peacekeeping operation, any NATO operation is completely denuded of this capacity. This bill makes certain that there is a deterrent. As a matter of fact, without this bill we could not allow exports to a country that was going to engage in a peacekeeping activity, for example, in Cyprus, the Middle East or whatever. Without this bill we could not export to our NATO friends.

I know my hon. friend across the aisle does not care about NATO but Canadians support NATO. Three-quarters of Canadians support NATO very strongly. We cannot export this product to them either.

This product allows us to be a centre of excellence in this particular industry. This is a transportation vehicle that is very lightly armoured and can be used for peacekeeping, can be used for police purposes. In nine cases out of ten, if not every case, it will be used in a context which we will approve of, which is primarily peacekeeping in nature.

The hon. member's particular suggestion would mean that our peacekeeping forces, if they use this vehicle, would not have any means of deterrence whatsoever. It would make them a sitting duck and highly vulnerable. Therefore, this bill is responsible. It is transparent and, frankly, it is just a bureaucratic change to remove an anomaly that was in the Criminal Code.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, the minister might well make any observations with respect to this particular vehicle. As I understand this

new bill, the Canadian government would be permitted to distribute in this instance this particular vehicle with a gun on its turret—whether it would be for peacekeeping or for its potential use in a war zone situation—to any country. The government has not put any restrictions in this bill as I understand it.

Could the minister please enlighten me as to how the government would control which countries would be allowed to get access to these vehicles from Canada? Is there going to be any kind of control? Is there going to be any list of criteria? Will the human rights criteria which we have supported so ardently and feel so strongly about be a fundamental criterion?

• (1250)

If it were, where would you put Saudi Arabia in that regard? I do not think Amnesty International has given Saudi Arabia a very fine grade or mark. I could understand our distributing or giving access to the Netherlands, as a NATO partner, or to be a participant in the forces that would be the new forces in Europe. However, I certainly do not see how we can have no restrictions, no accountability and no yardstick of measure in the distribution of any kind of war games and war toys.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the controls come in two stages and I will be very careful in outlining them here.

If these amendments are adopted today, it is quite right, as the hon. member asked, to say: "Well what controls will apply to the export and import of automatic weapons?" It is a reasonable question and it is a responsible question.

The controls will be applied in two stages. First of all, a defence, research, development and production agreement will have to exist between Canada and the country of final destination. That country will have to be included on the Automatic Firearms Country Control List maintained under the Export and Import Permits Act. If an arrangement does not already exist, let us say a country wants to be a customer and we do not have an arrangement, one would have to be negotiated and the proposal to add the country to the Automatic Firearms Country Control List would have to be approved by cabinet through an Order in Council. The Canadian government will closely control proposals to establish arrangements with countries.

Let us say we are uncomfortable with a country that applies. These are some examples of where we will closely control any proposals to establish arrangements: first, countries which pose a threat to us or our allies; second, countries involved in or under imminent threat of hostilities; third, countries under United Nations Security Council sanctions; fourth, countries whose governments have a persistent record of serious violations of the human rights of their citizens, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable risk that the goods might be used against the civilian population.

Export of automatic weapons would be permitted only to a government with which Canada concludes the necessary arrangement or to a consignee authorized by the government.

Applications to export automatic weapons will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to the same licensing procedures applied to all exports of military goods from Canada.

As we all know, these include an end use statement, supporting documentation and so on. This, frankly, is a bureaucrat's delight. There are a great many transparencies in the act. It will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

I think that will deal with the hon. member's very responsible question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated.

It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock.

The House took recess at 12.53 p.m.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

HONG KONG VETERANS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, just before he left on his far east trip, the Prime Minister received a letter from our Hong Kong Veterans Association reminding him that Japan had never apologized for its treatment of them.

On Tuesday, we saw how effectively that message was carried across the Pacific when Japanese Prime Minister Kaifu apologized for what he described as the "unbearable suffering" his country brought to the Canadian servicemen. The apology, according to at least Southam News, went far beyond anything expected.

We realize that nothing can properly make up for what our Hong Kong veterans went through in the war. However, it is some consolation to know that their ordeal was a big reason why Canada became one of the first countries in the world to pay prisoner of war compensation.

In fact, our country has paid out over $50 million in POW compensation to former prisoners of the Japanese or their dependants. No amount of money can fully compensate our Hong Kong veterans for what they endured, nor can words, but yesterday's apology in Tokyo shows that their bravery in action and courage in captivity is acknowledged.

On behalf of the veterans in my riding, I want to say how pleased we are with this result.

* * *

NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, 1991 marks the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Disabled and the end of the Decade of the Disabled.

In 1985 Canada showed its support for disabled persons by issuing a declaration on the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. Since then, however, Canada's record of leadership and action on disability issues has been poor.

The rights of disabled persons have still not been officially acknowledged by a United Nations convention. Such international recognition would go a long way to ensuring the rights of all persons with disabilities.

The theme of National Access Awareness Week is "Access is a Right". This government must take the initiative and make that come true at both a national and international level.

I call on this government to show real leadership and true commitment to disabled Canadians and to disabled persons throughout the world, and ask that it seek to establish a United Nations convention that will recognize and support the rights of all disabled persons.

* * *

U.S. IMMIGRATION

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I wish to make the House aware of recent actions by U.S. government officials which amount to nothing more than paranoid harassment.

Six members of the Moravian Church in Nicaragua travelled to Winnipeg last week as part of an exchange program with the United Church. Two of the six, a 60–year old fisherman and a 25–year old secretary, did not have their U.S. entry visas before the group left Managua.

When the group arrived in Miami they had to stay overnight to wait for their connecting flight to Winnipeg. U.S. Immigration officials quickly separated the two from the group, forbade them to communicate with the others, and held them under armed guard. In fact, the two were escorted by armed guard all the way until their flight left the ground after a stop in Minneapolis.

The actions of the U.S. Immigration officials were way out of line. These people all had valid travel documents, Canadian visas, return air tickets and a letter from the Moravian Church naming the six as members of an inter–church exchange program.

It is bad enough that they had to go all the way to Costa Rica and pay $40 to get their Canadian visas to go on this trip. This harassment from the U.S. officials just made matters worse, and I call on the U.S. ambassador with the hope that our Nicaraguan friends will not be subjected to the same treatment on the way home.

[*Translation*]

GUN CONTROL

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Mr. Speaker, regarding the gun control bill, as you know I would have preferred legislation with stricter controls on firearms. I would have preferred to see military, paramilitary and modified semi-automatic weapons taken out of circulation altogether.

However, I must consider the pros and cons, which means whether to keep the present legislation which is defective in the extreme, or accept new legislation as a compromise solution that may not be perfect but will at least restrict access to firearms.

Finally, since I am being asked to look favourably on this bill and accept a compromise, I hope my pro-gun colleagues will do the same.

* * *

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, a few years ago I said that Edison could not have invented the electric light bulb if he depended on this government's science and technology policy. That is still true today. Do we need further proof that the government cannot be taken seriously when it promises to ensure the prosperity of Canadians? Once again, we have it in the form of the government's reply to a recent report by the Standing Committee of the House on Industry, Science and Technology, Regional and Northern Development.

The government rejected all the recommendations made by the committee. It does not seem to understand the challenge that globalization represents for our economy. It does not seem to understand that the jobs of Canadians, economic prosperity and maintaining our social programs all depend on increased investment in science and technology.

The Minister of Industry, Science and Technology has now promised Canadians a new debate on prosperity. We do not need a debate. We need action. Unfortunately, this government's actions are a clear contradiction of what we were promised.

* * *

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, last week the government released a further example of its commitment to deficit reduction because of a crisis in its popularity.

The 1990 annual report of the Public Service of Canada showed that for the second consecutive year the size of the public service actually increased, for an increase of 6,335 since 1988. As well, for the fourth consecutive year the highest paid levels of the public service, the management category, increased.

Last fall the Auditor General had pointed to a certain lack of urgency in the government's efforts to control spending. Despite all its talk about restraint, we see a government which sees urgency the result of crisis, not commitment. It should be of little wonder that this government's budgets do not balance when its words and deeds do not.

If Canadians want sincere commitment to fiscal restraint, they need to send Reformers to Parliament.

* * *

RURAL CRIME WATCH

Mr. Walter Van De Walle (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, breaking and entering, theft, vandalism and trespassing are steadily increasing in rural Alberta. Rural Crime Watch, a co-operative effort by rural people and the RCMP, is confronting this situation.

Rural Crime Watch is an organization of rural people working together to reduce crime and protect property. They are creating public awareness and promoting crime prevention.

Three basic elements of the Rural Crime Watch are: property identification, house and building security, and range patrol. Rural crime is costing us millions of dollars each year. These costs are reflected in loss of property, increased insurance premiums and repair of equipment. Rural Crime Watch is helping to reduce these costs.

On behalf of the citizens of St. Albert riding, I wish to recognize the efforts of all those involved in Rural Crime Watch, working with the RCMP to make rural Alberta a safer place to live.

GUN CONTROL

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, this morning the Minister of Justice announced the long awaited gun control bill.

The minister laboured and brought forth a maybe. While the intentions may be honourable, we are worried on this side of the House about the follow-through. Much of the heart of the matter will be left to subordinate legislation, that is regulation.

I call on the minister today to present with the greatest of speed her proposed regulations so that all sides of the House may study them and so that she may show to us that her much vaunted statements about public security and public safety are backed up in the appropriate manner.

We also call upon the minister to reduce the life of the firearms acquisition certificate from five years to two years, to impose its acquisition for each firearm acquired, and to extend its use to the purpose of ammunition.

We on this side of the House look forward to discussion on this vital issue. We look forward to the passage of a bill which shows Canada taking its place as the country on earth with the sanest gun laws.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, every member in this House shares the view that measures have to be taken to strengthen the Canadian economy and has his or her own theory as to the best manner by which to accomplish this.

Let us throw this one out for discussion: a tax reduction, and more specifically a tax cut, in the level of Canadian income tax.

• (1410)

The United States tried this in the 1960s with great success and in fact spurred the strongest period of sustained economic growth in the history of that country.

In 1981, when the same strategy was again implemented, there was an economic resurgence that lasted eight years.

A 10 per cent cut in the Canadian income tax rate would go a long way in boosting investment and economic strength in this country.

Let us open it up for discussion. Would it work? Should we try it? Let us debate it.

* * *

FEDERAL SUPERANNUATES

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, federal superannuates across the country have been waiting for over five years for this government to make desperately needed reforms to their pensions. The government has promised but has not delivered.

There is presently close to $70 billion sitting in federal pension funds and increasing at a rate of about $3 billion a year. At the same time surviving spouses' benefits are largely inadequate, and it has been years since the death benefit payment has been raised.

Is it any wonder that federal superannuates want an independent pension management board with the power to manage the pension fund.

They also want the government to remove all forms of discrimination based on such factors as age and marital status. This is necessary to bring the legislation in line with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Pension Benefits Standards Act, and the House of Commons committee on equality rights.

Federal superannuates like other pensioners in this country have contributed much to the development and growth of this nation. Pensioners everywhere deserve to receive pensions that will allow them to live with dignity and respect. The federal government should be leading the way. Let us give pensioners the proper recognition they so rightly deserve.

* * *

ALLERGY AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy—Royal): Mr. Speaker, the month of May marks allergy awareness month and I wish to take the opportunity to salute the Allergy Information Association, the largest voluntary agency in this field. For over 25 years it has alerted Canadians to the hidden dangers of living with allergies by promoting awareness, by lobbying for accurate textile labelling, and by provid-

ing authoritative advice to their fellow Canadians who may suffer from allergies.

Allergies to natural and man-made substances cause reactions that vary from person to person. Some find allergies to be minor irritations, others are handicapped, and in some instances allergic reactions are tragically fatal.

We need to increase our awareness and understanding of allergies and their causes. As is so often the case, education is the key. By knowing the ingredients in everyday products we use and by being aware of the pollutants in our environment we can learn to live safely with our allergies.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, the performance of the President of the Treasury Board in the last 36 hours would be laughable if he were not playing tragically with the lives of half a million Canadians.

In a spectacular reversal of the February 26 budget announcement, the minister told Public Service union leaders yesterday that there will be no wage increase this year, not even for those who are earning $16,000 a year. No wonder the deficit and debt are so high if the government's idea of managing is to change its mind on a whim and leave others to deal with the fall-out.

This is the same minister who just a month ago said that with 12,000 reductions every year in the Public Service, there is no reason there could not be a 3 per cent increase.

Where were they for the last month? Did they not know what their budget situation is? Employees' livelihood and service to Canadians are in the crossfire while the minister blithely sits back and turns up the heat on the battlefield. Perhaps he should join his leader in Japan who seems to have an equally perverse sense of what he should do and say to benefit the country.

[*Translation*]

ABITIBI'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, Opposition members have some catching up to do on the news from Quebec.

On April 21, 1991, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announced that the minister and member for Roberval, the hon. Benoît Bouchard, would be Minister of National Health and Welfare and also the minister responsible for regional economic development in Quebec.

Since 1984, together with Benoît Bouchard, I have fought for the economy of the region, in co-operation with local communities. Since 1984, federal Liberal members, members of the New Democratic Party and, today, Bloc Québécois members have avoided any involvement in decisions on issues such as: CANMET; tax benefits for isolated areas; airports servicing Val-d'Or, Amos and *Lebel-sur-Quévillon*; the shelter in Barraute; the Article 25 and *Défi étudiant* projects; the establishment of community development projects in Senneterre, Barraute, Lebel-sur-Quévillon, Amos, Matagami, Joutel, Val-d'Or, Malartic and Cadillac, and many other important issues in the riding.

Mr. Speaker, the minister and member for Roberval, Benoît Bouchard, has worked hard to ensure that Abitibi gets its share of federal money, and he will continue to do so in Quebec.

* * *

[*English*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future says that while a great many Canadians see bilingualism as a worthy personal goal, they reject the present official languages policy and favour a more flexible and practical approach such as delegating language jurisdiction to the provinces or having French as the official language in Quebec and English as the official language everywhere else.

Professor Jean Laponce of the University of British Columbia suggests that we can address these concerns by

adopting the Swiss solution, where money, goods and people move freely across the country but language rights do not. They are attached to places and not to people.

Since the minister responsible for constitutional affairs says that the government has decided to give this House the opportunity to demonstrate its capacity to serve the interests of the country in the most open and innovative way, is it not time we tackled this head on?

* * *

[*Translation*]

DISABLED PERSONS

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, during National Access Awareness Week, all Canadians are urged to work together to make our country equally accessible for all its citizens and to think about ways to integrate persons with visible and invisible disabilities.

National Access Awareness Week focuses on improving access to transportation, housing, employment, education and recreation. As was mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, this government will propose a five-year strategy for ensuring equal access to employment, training, housing and transportation, and for promoting community integration and public sensitivity. Canadians from all walks of life must work together to remove the barriers faced by disabled persons.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

On May 15 the secretary of state said with regard to the Al-Mashat affair: "A report was made. It is as complete as it can be and it tells people what they need to know. The report speaks for itself".

Today a second report was made public.

Some hon. members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: There seem to be some interjections during the preamble of the hon. member's question. I would hope, unless they are very properly addressed, they would remain for some other time, until we make very clear whether there is any need for any interjections. The hon. member.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your comments.

On May 15 a report was made public by the secretary of state which, as I quoted, indicated that all the facts, all the details, were full, complete and accurate.

Another report was made public today which totally contradicts report number one. Forty of the forty-seven paragraphs in the second report contradict or give new information.

Is the Secretary of State for External Affairs adopting the words that were used in another context by a U.S. President, that this first report is now inoperative? Is she still prepared to stand fully behind report number one as she said she would, even though report number two contradicts it?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, this morning I and two other ministers set aside two and a half hours to go through the very documents that the hon. member is alluding to.

I have since indicated that I am prepared to go through this again this afternoon, even though I am supposed to be in this Chamber this afternoon making a speech.

I am not going to be here making a speech. I am going to be before the committee, and I would hope the hon. member would come then and deliver his question at that time.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I do not consider this a game. I consider it very serious business of the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, my second question is directed to the same minister. On May 14, the Secretary of State for External Affairs stated in her report on the Al-Mashat affair, thereby contradicting every principle of ministerial responsibility, that Mr. Chrétien, Associate Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, was the only public servant to blame for the way this case was

handled. Today's report proves Mr. Chrétien innocent. I want to ask the minister: Does she still blame Mr. Chrétien?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is not a matter of blaming anyone. We are only talking about a report. I will answer all questions before the committtee this afternoon, in English and in French.

• (1420)

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I just simply point out that the minister is quoted as saying: "I don't think one should underestimate the impact this could have on their reputations". In other words, we now have another contradiction of a report.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to put this question. In report number two that was made public this morning, there is a very glaring discrepancy between statements that were made in this House in Question Period by the Prime Minister and by other ministers that they had no knowledge of any of these events until April 30. Yet in report number two, and I would like to quote, it states: "Copies of this note were sent to the legislative assistant and the deputy press officer at the Prime Minister's Office, the legislative assistant of the Deputy Prime Minister's office, the legislative assistant at the office of the Government of the Senate, the parliamentary secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs," and another long list of the offices of over eight ministers, plus their parliamentary secretaries, plus an armload of officials, all knew about it April 8, even though the first report said it was April 30.

I want to ask the minister, does she still stand by the first report and say that everything in it was the unvarnished truth when her own second report totally contradicts all those statements made in the House?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Some hon. members: Shame, shame.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, let the record show that the minister is refusing to answer questions.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will put his question.

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, we now have two versions of what happened in the Al-Mashat case. We have version A that was released by the government on May 13 and we have version B that was released today.

I have a very specific question. In version A it states at page one and I quote: "Mr. Al-Mashat was not considered a valuable source of intelligence and that there was no evidence that his life was in any imminent danger". Version B, at page 7, it says and I quote: "He could provide useful information. In addition his life was considered to be in almost certain danger if he returned to Iraq".

My question to the minister is: Which version is the truth, version A or version B?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, both of these documents are before committee and this morning we were quite prepared to answer all of those questions. We are quite prepared to answer them this afternoon before committee and will be happy to do so at the appropriate time.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, version A says at page one that "the defectors committee had decided on March 1 that Mr. Al-Mashat did not qualify as a defector". Version B that was tabled today says that "on March 1 the defectors committee made no final decision concerning his defector status".

Again, I ask the minister, who is consistently refusing to answer questions and it is becoming—

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment. I have allowed the question and the minister can answer it if she wishes. I want to point out to all hon. members and to the public, there is no particular rule, and in fact there is no rule, that says that a minister has to answer questions. If the minister does not answer the question, hon. members can take the reason for that as expressed. In the meantime, I will ask the hon. member to put his question.

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, we are entitled to draw whatever conclusions we might.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the hon. member to put his question.

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, the first version says that the defectors committee had made a final decision on March 1. The second version says that the defectors committee did not decide or had not made a final decision on March 1.

Again I ask the minister, what version is the truth: version A or version B?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am quite prepared to answer all questions on this issue. I think it is unfortunate that hon. members are trying to pre-empt their own committee.

I do not have the documents with me because I came with them to the committee this morning and I will have them with me at the committee this afternoon. I will answer all questions related to these documents at that time, as will my two colleagues.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the same minister.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Where were you this morning, Svend?

Mr. Robinson: The minister responsible for constitutional affairs says where were you. I was in the committee prepared to ask questions of ministers who, instead, were hiding behind civil servants.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members know that this is not the committee this afternoon.

An hon. member: This is the mother of all committees.

An hon. member: And where is the father?

Mr. Speaker: I know the hon. member would want to put a very careful question.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, in this House ministers cannot hide behind public servants.

I want to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask if the members on the other side will allow members on this side to put serious questions of concern of Canadians.

I want to ask the minister this question. In view of the new report, the revised standard version of the government's response to the Al-Mashat affair, will the minister explain to Canadians, through this House, why it was that after she learned on April 16 that Al-Mashat had been allowed into Canada, why it was that according to the new report she did not take any steps whatsoever to order a full and thorough inquiry into what went wrong here? How can she explain her negligence as a minister in this important question?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will have an answer to his question on the basis of the documents, even though what he has put before the House is not certainly the facts as I would perceive them. He will have that answer this afternoon in committee.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister could then clarify, if she says she is going to be bringing answers to committee. Is the minister also prepared to table in the committee this afternoon all the documents that were requested by the committee on Tuesday, including the complete immigration file of Al-Mashat from Vienna? Will she come clean with Canadians on this file?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it was the people on this side of the House who came forward with a view that the committee should look at this. That was our initiative.

We are quite happy to have the committee look at everything that is appropriate to go before a committee as we have in the past.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I think Canadians would say that what is appropriate is the truth and that is what we are looking for on this question.

• (1430)

Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is to the same minister.

I would like to ask why the minister, after learning on April 16 that Al-Mashat had been allowed into Canada, despite the earlier decision of both this minister and the former Secretary of State for External Affairs to deny admission to a previous Iraqi diplomat, did not tell the then Secretary of State for External Affairs, did not tell her successor as Minister of Immigration. Why did this minister tell no one about this flagrant breach of immigration law in this country? Why did she clam up and cover up this issue?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member seeks all this information, I assume that the hon. member really does want the information, although it does come as a surprise that in seeking this information he walked out of committee.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

On May 15, 1991 at page 99 of *Hansard* she stated, and I quote:

> A report was made. It is as complete as it can be and it tells people what they need to know.

Today she released a chronology of events which is 26 pages long. That is contrasted with the five pages of the first report. There are many additions and, more important, contradictions.

In version B on page 11, we are told that on March 8, immigration officials drafted a memorandum about the case for her attention. There is absolutely no mention whatsoever about that memorandum in version A. Why did the minister tell this House that version A was "as complete as it can be" when that was simply not accurate?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am going to have all of these documents in front of me before the committee. I will be very happy to answer all these questions, as I was this morning when, let the record show, this member walked out too.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, if this memorandum of March 8 had been brought to the minister's attention in early March, this whole sorry Al-Mashat case could have been nipped in the bud.

Why was its existence suppressed until today? Why the cover-up?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. minister has taken the position, I think, that the matter is going to be considered later on this afternoon. There may well be a lot more questions on the Al-Mashat affair and I think they had better be carefully directed in such a way that they are clear and that they are appropriate to be answered.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

The minister has indicated to members of this House and to the national media that he did not become aware of the particular subject matter of Al-Mashat until on or about May 7, 1991, and this has been reported both in the English and French press.

The new report today states, and I quote:

> On Tuesday, April 30, the Clerk of the Privy Council sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister, informing him of Mr. Al-Mashat's arrival in Canada. This memorandum, based on proposed replies in House cards prepared for the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Minister of Employment and Immigration, indicated that the ministers had been briefed to that effect and would respond.

My question to the minister is this: Would the minister indicate to the House why the contradiction?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, my answer will be the same as that given by my colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs. At 3.30 p.m, the committee that was asked to consider this matter will be delighted to answer their questions in the presence of both ministers.

[*English*]

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister.

Will the minister not admit that the statement of March 14, 1991, is seriously flawed, and that the statement released today, made public here in Ottawa, confirms beyond a reasonable doubt that the minister was seized of the knowledge on or before April 30, 1991.

I ask the minister, will he not now avail himself of the opportunity and explain the obvious contradictions of facts.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): My answer is no to the first two questions. As to the third, it will be answered at 3.30.

[*Translation*]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice. We are glad to see the minister tabling a new bill today for the control of firearms. Last time her own Tory colleagues prevented the bill from being passed. Is the minister prepared to keep her promise to the people of Montreal that the bill would be passed by June 21?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I recently heard the hon. member saying at a press conference that he intends to hold up my bill to examine various details and regulations that are not essential to the passage of the bill. I am therefore not in a position to make that kind of promise because it is up to the House either to accept or reject my bill. However, I hope my bill will be passed as soon as possible.

[*English*]

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): That was the Liberal Party she heard about. We said something different. We asked that the project go ahead.

The minister mentioned the regulations. Canadians are suspicious about this bill, because at the same time they are bringing in a bill to regulate guns today, her bill. The House is debating a bill to sell arms to the Middle East. Talk about hypocrisy.

Will the minister acknowledge that the guts of this new bill, her bill, will be decided later by regulation, including the magazine size, the definition of the military assault weapon, what is safe storage, all those definitions?

Will she acknowledge that she has put a provision in this bill to allow members of Parliament to block those regulations in Parliament. Has she not, in fact, made a deal with the Tory backbench: "Support me now and block my bill later"?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's imputations are offensive but, alas, not surprising. Because this is a contentious subject, when I brought forward my suggestions for change I tried to be as forthcoming as possible and bring forward not only my proposed legislative changes, but the use I intended to make of the regulatory power. Some of that regulatory power is conferred upon the Governor in Council by the legislation and some of it exists already.

With respect to the definition of military and para military firearms, I already have the power to make the determinations. What I lack is the technical advice. I have, therefore, constituted a national advisory council on firearms with a broad mandate, including the mandate to give me a list of criteria that will enable me to impose those regulations.

I am advised by my staff who monitor those meetings that that, in fact, may be the first project they finish. I hope, perhaps, to have that list of criteria in the month of June. But whether or not the hon. member supports my legislation and whether or not it goes through, I intend to act on those regulations. I do not need this legislation for it.

With respect to the limitation on magazine sizes, I have indicated how I propose to use the regulations. I do need the legislation to have that power. If the legislation is delayed, then for those who wish to see those limitations it is a matter of cutting off their noses to spite their faces.

I make no apologies whatsoever for allowing this House to review those regulations. I have every confidence that the majority of members of Parliament will support sensible regulations. I find it astonishing that the hon. member would now impugn a provision which empowers members of this House to review the acts of the Governor in Council.

* * *

• (1440)

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. In commenting on version A of the government's interpretation of the Al-Mashat affair, the Prime Minister said on May 15, 1991, on page 94 of *Hansard* with respect to the role of Mr. Paul Tellier, the Clerk of the Privy Council, that Mr. Tellier had said in speaking of

Mr. Al-Mashat, "do not admit him". Those were the Prime Minister's words in the House of Commons in commenting on version A of the Al-Mashat affair.

In version B, made public today by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, it is clear that nowhere was such a direct order given by Mr. Paul Tellier.

Why did the Prime Minister in the government's first version of the Al-Mashat affair suggest to the House of Commons and through the House to the people of Canada that a direct order was given by the senior bureaucrat in the land to stop Al-Mashat from coming into Canada when clearly no such direct order was given?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is using quotations of version A and version B.

This matter was brought before the appropriate standing committee so all of the information could be brought forward and all the facts ascertained. I am surprised that the hon. member now, after we have agreed to bring it before the committee so all the facts and relevant facts could be brought forward in an appropriate fashion, still insists on raising the matter on the floor of the House of Commons. I have no objection to that but surely it is a matter that should be properly questioned at the committee where all the witnesses they require and/or demand will be available to respond.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, the only surprise today is the massive contradiction between version A and version B and the total inability of the government to explain the contradictions between those two versions.

The Prime Minister claimed he was not informed until April 30 of the Al-Mashat affair. The former Secretary of State for External Affairs said he was not informed until May 7. Why then does version B released today say that on April 8 a briefing note was sent to "the legislative assistant and the deputy press officer at the Prime Minister's office, the legislative assistant at the Deputy Prime Minister's office, the legislative assistant at the office of the Leader of the Government in the Senate, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the legislative assistant for the Minister of International Trade", the legislative assistant to every bloody minister in the cabinet? How can they claim they did not know? Even the chauffeur knew about the Al-Mashat affair.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is so interested in obtaining the facts he may attend the committee this afternoon and stay and listen to the information that will be imparted at that time.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. The fact is that the laundered version of events that was first presented—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

An hon. member: Order.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member no doubt has a question which will assist the House, but I would ask that she put it in terms that do not make it difficult for the Speaker or unnecessarily difficult for the hon. member.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, it is also true that the first version wrongfully blamed the nephew of Jean Chrétien. The fact is—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Ms. Copps: The fact is that today's version makes it quite clear that the responsibility for the whole affair lies directly in the office of the former minister for external affairs, the Right Hon. Joe Clark.

I believe, Mr. Speaker—

An hon. member: That's enough.

An hon. member: Order.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the hon. member to put a question and not put conclusions. We can argue about that later.

Ms. Copps: —that the hon. minister should take the advice that he gave on the RCMP affair in 1978 and accept ministerial responsibility and offer his resignation?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I believe the rules of this House preclude me from answering questions relating to my former responsibilities. For that reason, I went today to a meeting of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade to make myself available to questioning by members of the House of Commons. For reasons that can only be related to the

fact that the committee hearings were not televised and it is possible for histrionics and deliberate falsehoods to be televised in this House—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): —that the hon. member and her colleagues are pursuing the course of raising this matter.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the same minister.

As you know, version No. 1, which was a whitewash, blamed Jean Chrétien's nephew for what happened—

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I asked the hon. member to not make accusations at this point in the House. If what I asked the hon. member to refrain from doing is repeated in the other official language of our country, it is just as much a matter of concern to the Speaker as it was the first time.

The hon. member can put a question and can perhaps draw whatever conclusions hon. members wish to draw afterwards, but let us put the question first and see then what the answer is.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, I believe the former Prime Minister is an honourable man. I know that 12 years ago he tabled in the House a proposal relating to ministerial responsibility. Considering today's events, when we realize that all the other people in his office had the information, is he prepared to accept his responsibility as a minister and resign?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say two things, the first one in English.

[*English*]

I should not have used the phrase "deliberate falsehood". That is inconsistent with the rules of the House and I apologize for that and withdraw that phrase.

[*Translation*]

Second, as far as ministerial responsibility is concerned, the government's position was made clear today before the parliamentary committee. However, for some reason, Liberal and NDP members left the room and did not avail themselves of the opportunity provided under our Standing Orders to ask questions in a committee that had been appointed because the Opposition and the government had sought a way to get at the truth of the matter, the truth, without partisan accusations. That is what we are looking for here.

* * *

• (1450)

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, my question affects some 250,000 government employees and their families. My question today is directed to the President of Treasury Board. Would the hon. minister confirm that during some four months of negotiations with the alliance representing 150,000 government employees, the only offer that his negotiators were prepared or willing to discuss was the government's wage offer of 0 per cent increase in the first year, 3 per cent in the second, and 3 per cent in the third year of the contract.

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I am in a position to confirm that the guidelines set out in the budget were those on which our negotiator based discussions with the unions.

That being said, we also told them of the fiscal situation which commanded us to to take these measures. We are quite prepared to look at other aspects of the collective agreement, which is a very thick document dealing with a lot of other issues, but first we have to make sure that we agree with each other on the particular basis of the 0–3–3.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, would the minister confirm that yesterday he told negotiators for all of the government servants that if they did not agree to this formula, 0–3–3, he would bring in legislation imposing the settlement on all of the

workers, and if so, does he believe the government has been bargaining in good faith? Is this really free collective bargaining?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): At a time, Mr. Speaker, when hundreds of thousands of Canadians are without work, at a time when there are great threats to our fiscal position, we decided in the last budget to take measures. The unions were not particularly targeted, but we indicated to them that we would ask them to make a contribution as they have over the last six years by accepting very reasonable settlements. It was made very clear in the House that if these settlements are not reached through agreement, through negotiation, we would eventually have recourse to legislation.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Walter Van De Walle (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. As members will know, the contracts for RCMP policing in two territories and all provinces except Ontario and Quebec expired March 31, and negotiations with the federal government have broken down. I join with the municipal authorities across the country in calling for an early resolution.

This matter is of critical importance to my constituents in the St. Albert constituency and, for that matter, for all Canadians.

Can the minister advise the members of this House and the public whether he has made any progress in bringing the provinces back to the table to negotiate a settlement?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise the House that the federal government has offered to renew the present contracts with the provinces, the municipalities, and the territories for a further term of one year on the same terms and conditions as the last year of the present 10–year contract.

The provinces, for their part, have offered by telephone, and I expect to get it confirmed, that they are prepared to come back to the table to negotiate in good faith the issues of cost base, cost ratios, and accountability.

I think there is a new sense of urgency and a good feeling about the negotiations and I would hope that we can wrap them up as soon as possible.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. On Tuesday morning my colleague, the member for Winnipeg South Centre, submitted a letter to the minister requesting 18 specific documents related to the Al–Mashat case. We requested these documents in advance of this morning. These documents are still not in our hands. I would like to ask the minister why this is so and what has the government got to hide and why is the government inhibiting the work of members to have a full inquiry into the Al–Mashat case as promised by the minister?

Mr. Speaker: The Chair has been listening very carefully to questions, and I hope has been treating the questions and the issue properly. That is clearly a question for committee. The hon. member may want to put another question. It cannot be a question that should be put to the committee.

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, it was my understanding that this party requested these memos from the minister. It beggars the imagination to understand why they have not been provided to us. I am not saying to the committee. It was not within the context of the committee that these were requested in the first place.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mrs. Stewart: We cannot understand why they have not been produced to date. I asked the minister why they were not produced, and if she will guarantee to us that they will be produced immediately so that when the committee does resume hearings, we will be able to make proper inquiries.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the documents referred to are similar to documents that have been requested by the committee.

As I am only too happy to do, we will produce the documents. They are in the process of being gathered up to bring to committee. Let the record show that this hon. member walked out this morning too.

[*Translation*]

POSTAL SUBSIDIES

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Northerners appreciated the Conservative government maintaining at $15 million the subsidy for air stage service to deliver food and other goods sent by mail to isolated communities in northern Canada and Quebec. Can the minister tell us today that priority will be given to perishable foodstuffs and a directive to that effect will be issued to users of this northern service, together with a fair postal rate for residents of northern Canada?

Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations and Minister of State (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and share his concern that the postal subsidy really go for nutritious food so that inhabitants of remote areas can have access to such food for better health. Therefore in the coming weeks, we will define what is meant by "perishable food" in cooperation with the Department of National Health and Welfare, the Post Office, and the main distributors concerned.

* * *

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

On May 14, he and the Secretary of State for External Affairs made a statement on the Al-Mashat case about which they released a report to Canadians. In that statement, the minister said: "There have been no hidden motives, no espionage capers, and no conspiracies by any individual or governmental agency either Canadian or foreign."

If this is all so straightforward, why are there two versions of the report, version A released on May 14 and version B released today? Will he answer that question?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that I find it strange that members of Parliament opposite are yapping their mouths all over Canada about the importance of this issue but they refused this morning to listen to the minister of external affairs and myself explain and answer all these questions. Theatrics will not help Canadians understand what really happened which is what this government wants.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, if this minister and his government really wanted Canadians to understand what happened in the Al-Mashat case, they would not refuse to answer questions in the high court of Parliament before 29 million Canadians.

I ask the minister again if he stands by what he had to say May 14 and the statement released at that time? Why are there two versions of that statement, version A, released May 14 and version B, released today? Why can't he answer that before this Parliament and make clear what is going on to the people of this country?

• (1500)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I stand by what I said on May 14. The only thing I can add is that this morning in committee the only thing missing was the kazoos.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is the regular question put to the government House leader concerning the business of the House.

I wonder if the government House leader would indicate what the business will be for the remainder of the day, for Friday, Monday, Tuesday, and the remaining part of next week. Could he give us some detail?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary was seeking the floor on a point of order, but I would ask him to defer to the hon. House leader.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we will continue debate on Bill C-6. Friday will be an allotted day for supply. Monday, we will continue second reading of Bill C-5, the Aeronautics Act

and, if time permits, and if not completed earlier, we will resume second reading debate on Bill C–6.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–5 passed second reading and I do not think we want to go back and redo it.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I think there has been some confusion between the Aeronautics Act and the airport devolution bill which was the one that we just put on the Order Paper. The numbers are wrong. I think the bill we are referring to is the airport devolution. I do not know its new number. It should be C–7 or C–8. I am not sure.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to take the time of the House, but to be clear, we will be on C–6 this afternoon. Friday will be an allotted day. Monday is airport devolution and Tuesday has yet to be decided.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ALLOCATION OF TIME DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to express my concern again that this side was denied any opportunity to ask more than two questions. I realize—

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment. I would invite the hon. member to come and see the Speaker in the Speaker's chambers if the hon. member wishes. Nobody was denied anything.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: There are 45 minutes and I did the best I could today given the questions and the answers. Two members from the government side were heard. I would like to be able to do more. I would like to have more time. But it is not appropriate to say to the Speaker that somebody was denied their right to ask a question. That is not so.

EXTENSION OF QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, rather than listening to the daily new Conservative whine in the country, once again may I suggest that in order to facilitate hon. colleagues across in terms of Question Period, let us agree now to extend Question Period for an extra half hour every day. It will allow more people an opportunity to participate.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, earlier in the last session, in response to a point of order from the hon. House leader of the Liberal Party, there was a concern about the length of questions and the length of answers. There has been concern about the number of questions.

In Parliament, all members are supposed to be equal. There are 100–plus backbenchers here who do not get an equal opportunity to ask questions. There is obviously a need for change and reform. Beauchesne's is full of descriptions as to what Question Period should be. No one would recognize Beauchesne's description and what happens in this House.

I think it is highly appropriate that we do discuss this matter. Perhaps we should follow the example of the mother of Parliaments in Britain where they manage to get in 45 questions in a 45 minute Question Period as opposed to the average of 26 we get. There is strict adherence to all of the rules. About an average of 30 seconds per question and 30 seconds for answers is the way they do it. Perhaps we might experiment with that and see if we would not be serving this House and the public who is watching a little better than we do.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I have one brief question for the hon. member opposite. He makes reference to the quality and tone of Question Period here today and previous ones.

I would like to ask the hon. member: Who made you Speaker of this House? I would like to know that.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I want to seek the opinion of the Chair. I want to refer to three brief citations in Beauchesne's fifth edition: 358(1)(a), which were guidelines that were established by a previous committee, I think in 1964. It is still part of Beauchesne's and theoretically still part of our rules. It says:

(1) Such questions should:

(a) be asked only in respect of matters of sufficient urgency and importance as to require an immediate answer.

I then want to go to Citation 359(5), which says, again referring to questions:

The matter ought to be of some urgency. There must be some present value in seeking the information during the Question Period.

Citation 360 says:

A question may not:

(3) seek information about proceedings in a committee which has not yet made its report to the House.

My point is this: we had a number of questions today that were raised on an issue which this House and the people who watch this House know is presently a matter before a committee. It is a decision of this House to have that undertaken.

I then put before you two questions, Mr. Speaker. The first one is the question of urgency. How can there be an urgency for these questions to be asked in the House of Commons during Question Period when there was a committee meeting this morning on the very same subject which, as you know from having listened to questions, members walked out of?

Second, there is scheduled a second committee on the same subject for this afternoon.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you consider the question of urgency.

Further, citation 360(3) refers to the proceedings of a committee. In fact, all of us are suffering from some confusion. We have been under the impression that if there was a hearing in a committee of the House of Commons, then there would be no need to repeat that hearing on the floor of the House of Commons, either in Question Period or at another time.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you examine those three citations in light of the questions I have put to you, because I think it is something that we as members of this House need to understand clearly. Quite frankly, if I can express a personal opinion, I am quite concerned that we are going to have a committee hearing on a subject and then have the same hearing here on the floor of the House of Commons.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member makes three references to Beauchesne's in terms of the report of a committee and some urgency and immediacy.

Surely to God the hon. member opposite is not trying to have members of Parliament believe the contention that two documents on a very major, important subject matter are not of some urgency to the Canadian people. I think most reasonable individuals would come to the conclusion we have, that it is of great urgency to the Canadian people to know all the facts.

The second point is that the hon. member, not I, referred specifically to certain proceedings of the committee. The hon. member should know that members of this party have made requests of the Chair, of the appropriate ministers involved, to provide all the information in advance. In fact, 18 different documents have been sought. However, they have not been forthcoming.

Third, there was an agreed-upon schedule in terms of who would appear first and who would appear second. Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you today that if you were to read the minutes of that committee, you would find a breach of the undertaking which the chairman of that committee gave to all members of the committee. Furthermore, certain witnesses arrived today who were not scheduled to arrive in accordance with the rules that the chairman had agreed to, which had been put forward by us. That is the second point.

• (1510)

The third point is that we did not make any reference to any committees here today in Question Period. We made reference to two public documents which are there for Canadians to read and to examine.

Finally, when has Parliament been denied the opportunity to ask questions on any particular subject matter? This is the Supreme Court in terms of democracy and Parliament, not a committee and not the back rooms of the Conservative Party.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I think these interventions are useful to clarify what is happening. All of us as members of Parliament have long lists of files of people having difficulty on immigration issues. I know that ministers who are active in these areas in the House will know that this is an ongoing major concern

of, I suspect, every single member of the House of Commons.

Today there was confusion in terms of two documents—virtually nothing to do with what is going on in the committee—regarding a certain individual who appears to have jumped the queue. We are seeking answers from the minister. The minister refuses to respond. As a matter of fact, on a number of occasions she did not even stand up in her place.

Mr. Speaker, I know you will say the minister does not have to do that. We appreciate that, but ministers, to give them credit, always attempt to reply in some form or another.

Today a critical issue right across the country, from one coast to the other, is this immigration issue. That is why we felt that the minister should have taken the opportunity to clarify on behalf of the government what the position was. She chose not to and made a mockery out of Question Period. That is why there is an element of frustration today.

Mr. Speaker: There may well be an element of frustration, but as the hon. member clearly pointed out and as I pointed out earlier, hon. ministers do not necessarily have to answer any questions. Also, if this does anything to alleviate the element of frustration, I think on at least one occasion the minister said that this was going to be in front of the committee this afternoon and that there would be another opportunity to ask questions.

As I have said before, if the House wants to change dramatically the way we have been handling Question Period, discussions are always appropriate and the Speaker of course will always try to assist in those discussions.

The hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester. Is it on a different point of order?

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): It is something the same, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect. I have tried to determine the rules of Question Period and have gone through the Standing Orders and through Beauchesne's. Perhaps you could tell me or give me direction on where the rules for Question Period are. What rules can I go by?

Mr. Speaker: I would be very pleased to discuss all of the rules, old and less than old, that we try to apply to carry on Question Period. I know what the hon. member would want is the very best possible way.

I invite the hon. member to come and have a discussion with me about it.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I just want to assist Your Honour. The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader read Your Honour certain citations from Beauchesne's concerning Question Period. I have one very brief citation that I think might be of assistance, and that is citation 417 of the sixth edition which states:

> Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate.

That is the citation. I think it would be very helpful, Your Honour, if the parliamentary secretary could instil that message into ministers opposite.

While I am on my feet, I wonder if the parliamentary secretary, or perhaps one of the ministers, could answer why it is that the standing committee on external affairs, which is dealing with this very important matter, which the ministers opposite say is so important and so crucial, and which they are so anxious to have explained before the committee, is not being televised so the people of Canada can see what is going on and the cover-up that is being perpetrated here.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to both comments of my hon. friend. First, I appreciate very much the citation that he referred to. I think it is important that ministers on this side be held to brief answers.

All of us, including the hon. member who has expressed his frustrations with Question Period earlier today, would be happy to see that happen. The quid pro quo would be that the questions on the other side also be briefer.

I would like to see a target of 30 seconds per question and answer.

Second, the hon. member wants to know why a committee is not televised. He knows exactly why the committee is not televised because he is a member of the House management committee which is going to be dealing with the issue and developing the guidelines

which will be established for the committees of the House of Commons.

For him to imply, directly or indirectly, that somehow this government is responsible for that, he should be ashamed of himself.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, I am also a member of this committee ably chaired by the hon. member for Peace River, Mr. Cooper. Perhaps with the new Standing Orders we could also start to call each other by name and not by the name of our riding.

That said, I know that the House has many times adopted motions by unanimous consent. I am speaking to Mr. Milliken and Mr. Gauthier, two great parliamentary experts. If the House agreed unanimously right away, what I think is becoming an extraordinary committee could perhaps be televised at 3.30. I am not a member of it, but I observe it very closely.

[*English*]

I am observing very, very, very closely because I have a very close interest in this committee.

First, instead of having quarrels, maybe we should have unanimous consent to have just this committee televised. It has been done before. The chairman is right. We are now discussing this issue, but that does not preclude us from doing it by unanimous consent, and you know what I think of unanimous consent. If I was in another state of mind I would speak in much more rude terms about what I think of it. A couple of times I was very unhappy about members of Parliament calling for unanimous consent, time and time and time again until those who objected were absent from the House. That is another debate.

My hon. friend and colleague said why not televise the debate? I would say to my colleague that if we start quarrelling now at the management committee there will be no work done, so I will try to distribute equally, not blame, but favour. Why do you not ask for unanimous consent to televise this very important meeting this afternoon? Why are we still debating among ourselves? On this point my friend from Kingston and the Islands is absolutely right, why are we debating how to do it?

I will be on the record. I object to televising the committee if there are no rules. I said in private and I will repeat it in public: I do not want members of Parliament to work with a camera under their noses. If you put it under mine, you will see what can come out on television if you look at my nose.

I would say that Mr. Speaker may wish to ask for consent to televise the debate this afternoon in an orderly fashion. I watch TV. I will not watch the members. I watch Canadian television. I want to have an orderly House. I do not want a circus. I am sure I would lack elegance if I used what I have in mind. I want an orderly, well-run House and committees. Television, yes with certain rules. The committee seems to interest so many members, why do you not ask for consent, Mr. Speaker? Why do my colleagues not ask for consent to televise the debate this afternoon? We may get it. I am anxious to see who will say no, but that does not preclude us from making very severe rules as to how we would televise the debate of committees.

As a matter of fact, my colleague, Mr. Gauthier asks: "Is there unanimous consent of the House to televise the debate this afternoon in an unorderly fashion, since we do not yet have orderly rules to televise the debate"?

• (1520)

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): After that short intervention, Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, we seem to be at a crucial moment. My hon. friend, in his usual thoughtful way, has presented us with a way out of this slight dilemma.

There is a concern that Canadians ought to hear the statement by the ministers and officials. There was a feeling that the House of Commons was not the appropriate place but that a committee was. It seems that we have a suggestion that makes eminent sense to me, that we have, among ourselves, as colleagues who want the Canadian public to know the level of debate and the way these issues are handled, an opportunity to watch the proceedings on television.

I can only speak on behalf of the New Democratic Party but I want to indicate that we are anxious to televise this very critical committee meeting at this point.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Just a couple of words, Mr. Speaker.

The suggestion that the opposition not be permitted, under the rules, to talk about what is in progress or under discussion at standing committees is a rather strange point of order for the government to raise since quite obviously the original rule in the original House of Commons in Britain was certainly to protect the responsibilities and the duties of the opposition and the accountability of the government to the people.

Certainly Question Period should be a tool, perhaps the only efficient tool we have left, to call the government accountable to the people of Canada through the House of Commons. It certainly does not help matters for the government House leader to stand here and say: "Well, now, I love the British system of Question Period". As we all know a minister must be given notice of every question asked of him a day in advance. Not only that, but he need not even show up in the Chamber except for one day a week. Perhaps that is what the government is attempting to do with this point of order.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I want to rise and make two points. First of all, I want to thank the hon. member for Saint-Denis for raising this issue because it confirms my thought that the reason the members walked out of the committee this morning, that they had this charade here in the House of Commons, was because of the lack of television in the committee.

Secondly, I want to say this—

Mr. Prud'homme: Point of order.

Mr. Speaker: I am going to hear the hon. parliamentary secretary for a few more words and I will then hear the hon. member for Saint-Denis.

Mr. Cooper: Second, Mr. Speaker, I want to say this—

Mr. Prud'homme: Point of order, point of order. If not, I will make a point of personal privilege.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is a veteran of this place. I will defer to his point.

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Speaker, no one but the chairman of the committee of management knows how much I respect chairmanship, and in your case Speakership. However, if the hon. member for Peace River thinks he can impute motives to me, I have not—and I repeat not—since I left him this morning at the management committee spoken to any one of the people—maybe they prefer not to talk to me either, I don't know. I have not spoken to any one of them. He may walk out if he wants—yes, he does.

You are not going to impute motives to what I am trying to propose to the House as a solution. We must find a way that is harmonious and acceptable. Every member can walk out. I would not give a damn.

I know one thing. Nobody is going to impute motives when I am on my feet explaining what I am trying to do. I was trying to help you out, Mr. Speaker.

May I say first that it seems the Al-Mashat affair is falling on a hell of a lot of nerves. We have not seen the end of it yet so I think we should be all cool.

I will keep cool, but you will provoke members by imputing motives. I have been here too long, so I know not to do any dealing or wheeling, I just follow debates. That is the British parliamentary tradition.

Mr. Speaker, you are there to allow tough debate to take place between members. That means I respect the member who just walked out, Mr. Cooper. I was listening to what he was saying. I was listening to what my colleagues were saying. I was listening to what Mr. Milliken was saying and then I thought that I should help, to participate, by saying: "Let's delay a little bit. If there is unanimous consent, we can do it this afternoon".

Unanimous consent played against me in the past. I swallowed my pride and I accepted it, so you cannot have it both ways.

[*Translation*]

So, Mr. Speaker, if some people want a big debate, please believe me when I say I am in excellent condition to give it to them, but that is not my intention unless people try to attribute motives that are completely foreign to me—and I see one member of the committee looking at me and smiling. He did not go out—I refer to Mr. Langlois. Well, we work together on the committee. We want to get along well. We want to change the mood of Parliament, but if some people want to get into petty politicking, Mr. Speaker, I am quite prepared to accommodate them. However, I would not like myself as Marcel Prud'homme, MP, if I started to be a second-rate petty politician. There are too many petty politicians. We have more important things that should concern us, like the survival of our country, and how Mr. Paproski, Mr. MacDonald, my friend Corbett, and I should talk without getting into petty politics. We are trying to find a way and when we try to help make the House run more

smoothly, we are put down by petty politicians. Well, I will not accept that—it is as simple as that.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Saint-Denis made a proposal to the House to allow broadcasting the committee proceedings this afternoon. Does the House agree to this proposal?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is no unanimous agreement.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

EXPORT AND IMPORT PERMITS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of motion of Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre) that Bill C-6, an act respecting the exporting, importing, manufacturing, buying or selling of or other dealing with certain weapons be read the second time and referred to Legislative Committee E.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please.

I just want to explain to the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce that his turn came up. I was trying to get him on just before one o'clock. Unfortunately he was not in the Chamber and there was nobody else. I had to recognize the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have not had a speaker in two rounds, whereas the NDP—

Mr. Heap: You do not even want to speak.

Mr. Allmand: I want to speak. I am here and I am ready to speak. It is my turn, I think.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan has the floor for debate.

Mr. Stupich: Mr. Speaker, the election which saw me return to this place took place just two years, six months and two days ago. On the whole it has been an interesting experience, a learning experience. I try to serve my constituents as well as I can. As far as the work in this place is concerned, there have been the up days and the down days. This is an up day in the sense that I can say what I want to say about this bill over a period of 20 minutes and get it on the record for the sake of the record. But it is also a down day when I consider what we are doing, passing legislation that will enable us to take a greater part in the international distribution of arms than in the past, to be better, if you like, merchants of death. We want to do a better job so we are going to pass legislation that will make it easier to do so.

• (1530)

It is a shame. One should almost be ashamed to be a Canadian with this kind of legislation being considered. I am one of the products of the depression. Most of the members in this House, will not have much memory of that. I can remember how bad things were during the depression in a small community on Vancouver Island, a small coal mining town. I can remember what that depression did to my father, a very hard-working labourer who worked at farming, at coal mining. He was anxious to get ahead, anxious to raise his children the best way that he could. He was very optimistic about being in Canada and being a Canadian, although he had been on the continent since 1897. He was very ambitious and very optimistic about the future until the depression hit.

All of a sudden, though they were still the same people, there were still the same resources, there were still the same needs to be met, there was no work, no opportunity for gainful employment, to do the things he wanted to do, to look after his family the way he wanted to. That went on for years.

We started one now, we are into it, but nothing like the depression of the 1930s. It went on for years and it was not until Hitler started rearming Germany and did such a good job of it and put the continent of Europe to work, and the effect dribbled out over the rest of the world and reached South Wellington. Finally the miners in South Wellington were able to go back to work because Hitler

was rearming Germany. We were getting ready to fight a war or at least to supply arms and munitions, soldiers and sailors, et cetera, to help somebody else fight it. We were not sure at that time.

Because we were getting ready for a supreme war effort, all of a sudden there was all the money needed to reopen the coal mines and to reopen the rest of the economic activity that had been going on in that area previously and since. It took an approaching war to put people back to work.

One of the arguments being advanced for the legislation before us today, Bill C-6, is that if we do not open up and extend our markets for war weapons there is going to be increasing unemployment in Canada.

Have we learned nothing between 1933 and 1971? Thirty-eight years and even today we say we have to be preparing for war or for somebody to fight a war if we are going to keep people working. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you share some of my shame that a Canadian is not able to come up with a better answer for creating employment which will enable us to distribute the goods that we can produce and the goods that we import. To say that we have to have this kind of legislation, we have to open up markets of the world to what we are producing here because it is the only way we can maintain some minimum employment.

There have been several speakers ahead of me. Some have said 300 people are going to lose their jobs if we do not approve this legislation. Others said the total effect of all of this could be as much as 300,000. Whether it is 300,000 or 300 or 3, we should not have to be producing war weapons to find employment to enable those workers to feed their families.

In 1991 we are still talking the same language we were in 1933. Surely Canadians deserve better than that from our government. That is why I feel, as one of the members in this Chamber, that I am failing not only my constituents but people all over Canada when we are not able to show the government that there is another way we can produce for peace. We do not have to produce weapons of destruction. We do not need to come up with more modern ways of killing people to put a relatively small handful of our working force back to work.

The Minister of Small Businesses and Tourism spoke earlier, and I apologize to him. I did not name him properly when I referred to him earlier. He said: "Well, it is really very limited. It is just automatic weapons, automatic rifles, if you like, and armoured vehicles. That is not very much".

I heard earlier from someone that the legislation we are changing now is legislation that has been on the books for 14 years. For 14 years it has been good enough. We have been able to export enough arms to suit somebody or other, but they have not raised this as a real issue. For 14 years we got by with it. Now, all of a sudden, it is important that we do raise it. We raise it because we are not able to sell enough of these automatic rifles and these light armoured vehicles.

We know this bill is going to pass. There are too many Tories in the House. They will pass it and Canada will be looking for more opportunities to sell more weapons. The bill will pass. Once they have this, how many years will it be before they want to extend it a little further? How much of a step is it really, from automatic rifles to field guns, to atomic weapons eventually, perhaps? How much of a step from light armoured vehicles to heavy armoured vehicles, to tanks, to gun ships? Where is the end?

Once we take this first step and we find out that it has worked, it has put a few people back to work, is there not going to be pressure from the employers concerned to expand our markets even further? Of course, the reason this is developing, we all know, is that a good deal of the world is gradually coming to its senses and is spending less of its efforts on manufacturing and obtaining war weapons, which means the market is more limited. So to get into that more restricted market, we have to relax some of the rules that have governed our country with respect to selling, manufacturing and distributing war weapons. We are doing it because the market is more restricted.

The rest of the world is beginning to come to its senses and I hope it will continue to do so at a greater rate. But when that happens, this may be the first step, automatic rifles and light armoured vehicles. What will be the second? If the Tories remain in office, and we certainly hope they do not, how long will it be before they come to us saying: "Well, we did the rifles and the light armoured vehicles and we want to go one step further now".

As my colleague from the Liberal Party suggested, the same companies will be there and the same workers, because by then they will probably be unemployed again. So there is need.

There are rules. We have been reassured by government spokesmen and certainly the Minister of Small Businesses and Tourism told us about the rules. That makes me feel much more comfortable. I know there are rules against the import of heroin, for example. It is nice to have those rules. It would be better if they worked. There are rules against all kinds of things. We regularly pass legislation and we have rules with them and they will work to a point.

However, how long are the rules on the export of weapons of war going to work? We are going to say: "You can only sell them to certain nations and those nations must not sell them to anyone else". Have we done a very good job of watching that in the past? To the best of my knowledge, we did not sell any weapons of war to the country headed by a person who, inside and outside this House, was called the Butcher of Baghdad. Our hands were not that dirty. We did not sell any weapons directly to him. We all know that we sold components that were included in weapons that were sent to him. For 20 years we were content to go on doing business, indirectly, with that person and then all of a sudden we called it quits. We decided we would put on an embargo and stop those weapons from getting to him for a relatively short period. Now we want to open up and sell them to his neighbour.

If we are really thinking seriously about stopping murder on a mass scale, which is what war is, of all the places in the world to send more weapons, surely the last should be what I call the Arabian peninsula. That is probably not the right word for it now—that group of nations in that part of the world, the powder keg, the tinder box of the whole world, the worst place I would think to send anything.

• (1540)

We should be expending our efforts on trying to cut back on everyone's shipments to that area rather than looking for nations within that group of nations that we feel we can trust today and maybe tomorrow, but we are not so sure about the day after.

Our hands will be dirty. Our hands are dirty now; we know that we are selling some of these arms internationally and we are proposing to look for more opportunities to sell them on a wider basis. Is that really good enough? Are we really that desperate? Can we not find useful employment here in Canada for these people who are unemployed?

There has been a great deal of talk in this House about the budget brought down by the province of Ontario. I notice that some $4.5 billion is being spent on the construction of schools, hospitals, highways. Those are useful things.

If anyone is killed there, it will be because of accidents on roads perhaps or because of accidents during construction. However those are useful endeavours.

Those kinds of things can be done all over the world. There are nations that are hungry. There are nations that are starving. We know that. We know there are all kinds of facilities that could be built there if we want to do something positive, as well as here in Canada. There is lots that can be done.

I believe it was the former head of the World Health Organization, Dr. Hugh Keenleyside, who first said that four-fifths of the world's population goes to bed hungry sometimes, but one-fifth of the world's population goes to bed hungry every day of their lives.

There is much that can be done in Canada alone and also beyond Canada in the rest of the world. We do not have to be making weapons of war to put our people to work. If we manage our economy properly, if we do our jobs properly as members of Parliament, we would not be looking for ways to sell more arms and munitions; we would be looking for ways to serve humanity, both Canadians and those outside Canada.

Those are the kinds of things that we should be working at in my opinion.

Those who spoke before me had their own points of view, and I appreciate that. I am sure each one of them was sincere, and I expect those who follow will hold sincerely the views that they espouse on the floor of this House just as I do. I am not saying anything that I have not said on other occasions, not in this House perhaps but in other places. I believe fervently that it is the route to go. I believe there is a better way for human beings to go, and we are not really demonstrating that when we pass legislation such as the legislation before us today.

We can come up with plans. We can come up with plans for Canada. We can come up with plans for Canada to work to help other nations that are trying to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps, but we are not doing it. We are giving no real thought to that, as far as I am concerned.

All we are really concerned about is the size of the deficit, which in the main acts as a way of redistributing income. The way it really works is that it takes more income from the lower and middle classes by way of interest and shifts it to those with money to invest, the higher income people. The deficit is a way of redistributing income. As long as the money is borrowed internally, there is not that much real problem in handling it. As I say, it is shifting the income in the wrong direction, but it is still handled as long as we are doing it internally.

In that regard I can go back to the advice of a former minister of finance in the province of British Columbia, a Tory as well, Herbert Anscombe, who said in the late forties, I believe, that if a government has to borrow—and it should not borrow—it should make sure that it does its borrowing within its own boundaries. In his case he was talking about B.C. In Canada we should be borrowing within Canada. We should not be borrowing outside.

We have done it before. I talked earlier about the war effort that put the people in South Wellington back into the coal mines, back working. Canada could not borrow during that war. Canadians put out a real effort to fight the Second World War. We never borrowed a nickel from abroad. There was nobody who would lend it to us then. They were all investing their own money in their own weapons manufacturing and whatever. We had a million people who were not working when our population was about, I suppose, 30 per cent or 40 per cent of what it is today, a million people in uniform contributing nothing positive, burning it up, using it up; we were producing a lot of stuff that was being sunk in the North Atlantic. However, people were working. They had jobs. There was enough for them to eat. There were clothes for them to wear. They could buy things that they could not buy before the war started, before Hitler put them all to work.

I used to listen to this very prominent spokesman for the CCF. He was not the party leader. He was a medical doctor, Dr. Lyle Telford. He talked about how ridiculous we are in our society when there is no limit to the amount of effort that a community can be organized into producing if we are preparing for or fighting a war. But when it comes to feeding our own hungry people who do not have clothes to wear, proper accommodations and all those things, or when it comes to helping other nations of the world, we do not have the money to do it. We have the money only when we are preparing for or fighting a war.

There is a better answer. This legislation is in the old style. It is what we were preparing to do in the early 1930s and started to do later on in the 1930s. It put the coal miners to work. They were thankful. They appreciated Hitler, they really did. I am not kidding; I am not joking. They were in pretty bad shape. They recognized that it was what he was doing, as bad as it was, that put them back to work and enabled them to put food on their tables and clothing on their children and themselves.

What a way to run a country. What a failure. What a shame that in Canada today, some 58 years later, we are still only able to come up with solutions that result in murdering more people.

I am ashamed that we are going to pass this legislation, and I recognize we are. I wonder just how long it will be before we are arguing the next step down the road. There is a better route.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the bill before us, Bill C–6, is to amend the gun control provisions of the Criminal Code and the Export and Import Permits Act to permit the export of automatic firearms to the armed forces of other countries. That is the purpose of the bill, to permit the export of automatic firearms to the armed forces of other countries.

We are opposed to this bill as written because it is wide open. It permits the sale of these firearms to any country whatsoever. The minister, in his speech this morning, said that only those countries with which the government has an intergovernmental defence, research, development and production arrangement would be on the list of those who might be sold these weapons. But that is not how the legislation reads. The legislation reads differently than the speech of the hon. minister.

Article 2, subsection 4.1 on page 1 of the bill states:

> The Governor in Council may establish a list of countries, to be called an Automatic Firearms Country Control List, including therein any country with which Canada has an intergovernmental defence, research, development and production arrangement—

The exact words of the bill say that those countries must be included on the list, but it does not say that the list is restricted to those countries. Where in fact the legislation differs from the speech of the minister is that while the list must contain those countries with which Canada has arrangements for defence, research, development and production of weapons, it is not restricted to those countries.

If the government was to amend the legislation to restrict the list to those countries, it would at least be an improvement. It would not be totally satisfactory, but it would certainly be an improvement.

As I pointed out, I do not know if this is simply a mistake in the drafting of the legislation, but it is certainly not acceptable as it is. As I said, it is wide open. I refer to the French version of the same section. It seems to be stricter and more limiting than the English section. In any case, it is too wide open and is unacceptable in its present form.

Under the present Canadian law no business can sell arms to another country without a permit from the Canadian government under the Export and Import Permits Act.

• (1550)

However, in the legislation there are no guidelines or limitations to which countries we can sell these weapons. It is left totally to the discretion of the government.

I must say that over the years, both Liberal and Conservative governments have spelled out policy guidelines which they have used in deciding to which countries armaments might be sold.

If you look at the most recent report on this subject, which is called the Export of Military Goods from Canada, 1990, the first annual report on this subject, the former Secretary of State for External Affairs sets out the guidelines in that report.

These guidelines are as follows. It stated that Canada would closely control the export of military goods and technology to (a) countries which pose a threat to Canada and its allies. That is pretty evident; (b) countries involved in or under imminent threat of hostilities; (c) countries under United Nations Security Council sanctions such as South Africa; (d) countries whose governments have a persistent record of serious violations of the human rights of their citizens unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable risk that these goods might be used against the civilian population.

Those are the guidelines set out by the present Conservative government for the sale of arms.

Those guidelines have never been submitted to Parliament for approval and they have never been legislated. They have not been legislated, nor have they been put in terms of a motion and debated in this House so that they could be approved.

We submit that this bill must be tightened to reflect at least the policy guidelines set out by the government in the paper that I just referred to.

We could, in this party, accept the sale of certain weapons to countries with which we have collective security agreements for defensive purposes and for peacekeeping. We certainly cannot accept the sale of these weapons to areas of conflict or imminent conflict or to areas where there are serious human rights violations.

In the Iraq–Kuwait War, 95 per cent of the arms used by Iraq were sold to it by the five permanent members of the Security Council. Ninety–five per cent of the arms used by Iraq came from those five countries which then later were at war with the same Iraq. It was a very sad situation which was decried by almost all the political leaders of the world, including our own Prime Minister, our own Secretary of State for External Affairs and many others.

It is an extremely ridiculous situation when we sell a country arms and it in turn uses those arms against us. That shows us the ludicrousness of the arms trade.

In addition, during the Iran–Iraq War, the first gulf war which took place just a few years ago, 28 countries sold weapons to both sides. Twenty–eight countries made money from the death and destruction rained on both sides in that war, a war which went on for nine years. Over 1 million people were killed.

Here we had mostly north western countries selling arms to an area of conflict to keep that conflict going with human beings being destroyed on all sides. This is an example of obscenity in the most extreme way.

The bill provides a list which would limit the number of countries to which these arms could be sold. We say that the legislation should limit the kinds of countries that can go on that list. The government seems to agree in principle to that. The minister said that in a speech.

As I said earlier, the words of the section do not reflect what he said. It appears that one of the potential buyers of arms as a result of this bill is Saudi Arabia. We do not have any arrangement with Saudi Arabia for intergovernmental defence, research, development or production and so I would be interested—I still do not have an answer—as to how the government would intend to proceed with that particular sale.

I must point out that Saudi Arabia, a middle eastern country, is in a region where we have had 26 wars since 1945. The Middle East is the region with the most wars, more than any other region in the world, since the end of the Second World War. Technically, Saudi Arabia is still at war with Israel. No peace agreement has been reached between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Egypt is the only Arab country in the region that has a peace agreement with Israel.

In addition, Saudi Arabia has a serious human rights problem. In the reports of Amnesty International, there are several examples of very extreme human rights violations. Saudi Arabia has no written constitution or criminal code. People are imprisoned very often without any charge, hearing, or right of defence.

One has to wonder, in view of the legislation and the expressed intentions of the government, how Saudi Arabia might be on such a list. It is possible, and we all work for and hope, that these countries will become more democratic and develop legal and democratic procedures to protect human rights and, consequently, I will not say that there could not be a day when Saudi Arabia and other countries in that region might be acceptable as countries to which we might sell arms for defensive purposes, peacekeeping purposes and so on. That does not appear to be the case right now.

I would also like to know, and I think members of this House would like to know, which countries are on this list right now. The government must have some idea of what countries would be on this Automatic Firearms Country Control List. I think it would be helpful in the debate, or at least in committee, to know who would be on the list in accordance with its own guidelines.

If this bill goes to committee, and I presume with the majority the government has it will go to committee, we will be proposing an amendment that the list must be submitted to the standing committee on external affairs for approval before any permits are issued, and if there are any additions to the list that the proposals for addition must also be sent to the committee for approval. In this way Parliament will have some sort of control over this list of countries which would be potential buyers of weapons under this legislation.

It is hard to understand why the government is bringing in this legislation at this time. During the Iraq-Kuwait war the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs made very extreme statements opposing the arms trade. On February 8, 1991, the Prime Minister said, and I quote from a speech he made in Ottawa: "One of the main lessons to be learned from this war is the danger to us all of the proliferation of both conventional and non-conventional weapons". He went on to say: "The major arms exporting firms and nations have contributed to the current crisis. The great majority of weapons in Iraq's arsenal came from suppliers in the countries of the five permanent members of the Security Council. This problem must be brought under control and the time to act is now". That was the Prime Minister speaking.

He went on to say: "When the war is over, the world community must co-operate to prevent the proliferation of these weapons and to roll back that proliferation which has already occurred". Finally, he said: "Next week I will propose to the UN Secretary General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, that the United Nations convene a global summit on the instruments of war and weapons of mass destruction". That is what the Prime Minister said.

• (1600)

On February 20, the Secretary of State for External Affairs said, and I quote from his speech in London, England: "I believe it is imperative that the world declare that there be no Middle East arms bazaar. Ninety-five per cent of the weapons in the hands of Saddam Hussein came from the five permanent members of the Security Council". He repeated the statement of the Prime Minister that he would request a world summit on the control of arms.

Just yesterday, President Bush of the United States announced an ambitious plan to curb unnecessary and destabilizing weapons in the Middle East, including a freeze on a nuclear weapons program and an eventual ban on all missiles throughout the region. Even the President of the United States sees the need for curtailing the sale of weapons into the Middle East.

We, as a party, are proposing that certain restrictions be written into this legislation so that weapons of this kind could not be sold to any country whatsoever, especially to countries in areas of conflict and countries with serious human rights abuses. When the time comes, we will be extending that principle in a legislative way to all weapons that would be sold by this country. We now sell weapons to allies, countries with which we have collective security arrangements for defensive purposes and for peacekeeping. We, as a party, would like to see this put in a policy statement or in legislation for the House.

A country that we can look to in this sort of thing is Sweden, because Sweden is one of the largest arms producers in the world. It has very large arms producers in the names of Bufor Saab, and so on. I have here a copy of Sweden's policy on arms exports in the English language, 1989 version.

It is expressing Swedish policy. It says: "The general view has been that for reasons of security, Sweden should permit a certain volume of arms exports, but that we should at the same time be restrictive in our choice of recipient countries so as not to risk compromising Sweden's policy of non alignment by becoming involved in other country's military conflicts". It goes on. The Swedes have put into legislation certain guidelines which prevent them from selling to certain countries and allow them to sell to certain other countries, more or less along the same lines of the policies I have already referred to.

If you have a policy controlling the arms trade, that must go in hand with another policy dealing with disarmament. Some countries, especially Third World countries, get their arms from more developed countries, but the developed countries manufacture the arms for themselves. We must not only stop the trade of arms to Third World countries and countries which do not have their own industries, but we must also make sure that those countries which produce arms disarm themselves in an effective way so that there is balance in the world.

An arms trade policy must go hand in hand with a disarmament policy and also go hand in hand with a policy of conversion. By conversion I mean a policy whereby we assist industries which have been in the arms business to convert to more peaceful types of production.

In conclusion, let me say that we cannot support this bill in its present form. We will vote against it. If it is passed by the majority in this House and sent to committee, we will propose amendments to put limits on the list of countries that can buy weapons from Canada and to oblige that list and any addition to the list to be sent to a committee of this House for examination and approval.

That is our policy with respect to this bill.

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): I am very glad that the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce has taken part in the debate because I always want to hear what he says. On most matters, I find myself very much in agreement with him. I also find that he is a person who speaks his mind without fear.

However, I have one question for him on the basis of what he said. I understand that he and his colleagues in the Liberal caucus will oppose this bill in its present form. Further, if it is carried on second reading and referred to committee, it will seek an amendment in the committee to limit the countries to which the cabinet would be able to approve the sale of these weapons, and require these countries to meet criteria somewhat in line with criteria that were used by this government and the previous Liberal government, although they were never brought to Parliament to be approved.

In fact, I would add that when members of Parliament inquired of this government or the Liberal government which countries were on that list, they were always told

that it was confidential information. We could never find out which countries were on it.

I expect that the member for Victoria, our critic, will be very interested in the hon. member's motion in committee. I would guess, although I cannot prejudge it for him, that there is a strong likelihood he would support that amendment.

I am not clear—perhaps I did not listen carefully enough, although I did listen—as to whether the member would support the bill, if so amended.

I want to ask the member, since he is a person of legal standing, what he thinks about what has often been referred to as the Nuremberg trials, and the resulting principles.

I remember as a student hearing about them at that time. The allied powers put on trial officials of the Nazi government and officers of the Nazi armed forces, including guards and commanders at concentration camps, death camps and so on, for things they had done, which in civilian life would certainly have been considered crimes, such as murder or kidnapping and deportation.

They were called crimes against humanity. The defence that many, if not all of those officers used, civilian or military, was: "I was acting under orders. The decision was not mine. I was obligated as an officer of the forces or as an official of the government to carry out those orders. I am not responsible for anything that was wrong in what I did".

The decision as I understand it, the basic principle used at the Nuremberg trials, was that every person is responsible for what he does. If my government orders me to do something that I consider fundamentally morally wrong, then I must not do it.

In the light of that, I would like to ask the hon. member whether he supports the sale of these arms, even to a list of countries created with the restrictions that he has in mind.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, as I stated we have a funny feeling that this bill will pass despite our opposition. If this bill passes and is sent to committee, we will be proposing amendments which would more or less—I cannot spell out the exact amendments now—restrict the sale of such weapons to countries with which we have collective security arrangements for defensive purposes and for peacekeeping.

We would forbid the sale to countries that are in a state of conflict internally or internationally, or where there is a strong possibility that they could be involved in such conflicts.

We would also propose another amendment whereby the government would be obliged to submit the list of countries to a parliamentary committee. Any new countries to be added to the list would be submitted to a parliamentary committee for the scrutiny and approval of that committee.

• (1610)

There are two kinds of amendments.

If the government was to accept those amendments—by the way those amendments would bring our law pretty much in line with what the Swedes have and what we have declared to be policy—I would agree to the legislation, because it would mean that we would be restricted to selling these kinds of weapons to countries with which we have collective security arrangements for collective defence, not for offensive purposes but collective defence, and for peacekeeping.

I am very strongly in favour of disarmament. I mentioned that. I said a policy on the arms trade must go hand in hand with a disarmament policy. I hope the day will come when we can reduce our arms on all sides and armies will not be necessary. We will probably still need peacekeeping forces.

To be honest with the hon. member, if the government was to accept the sorts of amendments we have in mind—and we have not drafted them in their final form—then I would agree to the bill. For several years I was a member of a cabinet which sold certain arms to friendly countries for defensive purposes, I did not object to that. I did not resign from cabinet. However, I do object that weapons of these kinds are sold to countries that are in a state of conflict or about to be in conflict, or that use the weapons to deny the human rights of their own citizens or crush their own citizens.

It is that sort of thing I think is intolerable and I could not accept.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak briefly. In that light I certainly would like the minister to have the

opportunity to speak so I will just make my comment. Perhaps you would like the hon. minister to do so and then perhaps our colleague could answer.

Following my exchange with the minister, I was concerned regarding the kinds of equipment we are talking about now. The minister assures me that our little trucks will not cause problems and could not be used in some kind of confrontational situation. What I really wanted to know was what would happen if it was a different weapon.

Second, my colleague, whom I certainly respect and whose speech I found fascinating and certainly educational, talked about the transparency of the Swedish model. Will that put a stop to third party sales? I mean, if the Swedes decided to sell to someone, what stops them from selling those weapons to another country that we would not have been able to sell to in the first place?

I hope the minister can ask his question.

Mr. Hockin: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to add a point of information in response to some of the points the hon. member was making.

We have agreements with the following countries: the U.K., Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Italy, Sweden and the United States.

I wanted to clarify that this is in the bill, because the suggested amendment by the hon. member asked to do this. An Order in Council would be required to add these countries to the Automatic Firearms Country Control List. Also, if we wanted to add countries to this list for other purposes, there would be the same kind of transparency.

I think a lot of what the hon. member has been suggesting is accomplished in the bill.

Also, in terms of the nature of the light armoured vehicles, they are wheeled vehicles and therefore cannot be used on the desert and are just used for defensive purposes. They cannot be used in an offensive way in the Middle East. That is by way of response to a question she asked earlier.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister to look once again at the wording of the legislation. As a lawyer, I find that the wording of the legislation in section 2, proposed subsection 4.1, does not restrict the list to countries with which they have arrangements. It says: "including those countries." It does not say "restricted to".

The French version is much more limiting. I raised this question this morning with the minister for foreign trade and he did not have an answer for me. It appears wide open at the present time.

I do not think that the bill deals properly with this. I know that there is a list. By the way, I suggested that we also have an amendment which would oblige the government, if it intended to put by Order in Council any country on the list, to put the proposal before the standing committee on external affairs for examination before the permit was issued. This would allow Parliament to have a say on who is on the list and who is not on the list.

In answer to the hon. member for Mount Royal, yes, in Swedish law when companies sell to other countries they have provisions in their contracts, it seems—I do not pretend to be an expert. I read Sweden's policy in this booklet where it points out that Sweden has now sued certain countries, taken certain countries to court, for transferring weapons to a third country. We can have sanctions if we want. For example, if a country broke a contract and transferred those arms to a third country, we would put them on a black list. We might sue them as the Swedes are doing but we might also say: "That is the end of it for you, fellow. No more sales to you".

There are different ways of dealing with this, but we can control to a much greater extent the end use of arms sales than we do now, and countries are attempting to do that.

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle): Mr. Speaker, I too wish to rise today in opposition to government Bill C-6. For those folks watching the proceedings in the House of Commons, as a word of explanation to those Canadians, what the government is attempting to do with the legislation it has introduced and wants to pass through the House of Commons is change the rules and regulations so that it would be in a position to export automatic weapons and certain personnel type carriers, basically to Saudi Arabia.

We in our party oppose this for a variety of reasons. First of all, I think as Canadians we were able to take some pride in Canada's historic role in being more of a peacekeeper than a major merchant of death. Canada has no great history in terms of conquest and imperial-

ism. We have never seen ourselves as a major military power. We have never supported a major arms industry.

Canada has a global reputation that has won us respect in all corners of the world. We have played active roles in peacekeeping. We have consciously turned down the opportunity to become a nuclear power in the past. This has been with the agreement of all parties, whether the Conservative Party under John Diefenbaker or the party of Louis St. Laurent or Mike Pearson or Trudeau.

As Canadians we have always valued our role of being peacekeepers, of trying to have a voice of sanity in the United Nations and in other international bodies.

Of course, what Bill C–6 does is begin to turn Canada away from that tradition. The irony of it is this government knows no shame. Just a few months ago we had some very brave words by the Prime Minister and by the then Secretary of State for External Affairs, exalting the need of restricting the arms race, particularly the selling of arms in the Middle East, the most volatile spot on the face of this earth.

The Prime Minister said and I quote: "There is a general view, without getting into the question of a total interdiction for the moment, that clearly a lot of these weapons, to understate the case, fell into hands that should never have had them in the first place.

• (1620)

"We could be much more active in that area if we wanted. We have all the technology in the world; we have all the resources we need. We could be big arms merchants. We have chosen not to be, although it is a very lucrative business.

"We have chosen not to be because it is fundamentally inconsistent with our policy to develop it, to pedal it, to finance it, and then to deplore its use."

That was the Prime Minister on March 13. As well, the Secretary of State at that time stated that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the arms trade, the constant chase for spheres of influence, is something he regretted and he thought that was one of the major problems of the Middle East.

We had all these great comments by our Prime Minister and our Secretary of State. Canada was going to take a major new initiative. What is the initiative? The initiative is Bill C–6. The reality is that this government wants some of the limitations on exports of weapons removed so that it can sell and make the deal with the Saudis.

Does this government know no shame? Does this government not recognize that Canadians are not fools? It can say one thing in February or March and then totally contradict itself two months later.

Again, I have always felt that the Orwellian period started in 1984 and the actions of this government continue to reinforce that Orwellian notion of saying one thing and doing something else.

I fear the government has started down the path toward selling more and more arms. The reason, of course, is entirely economical. This government, and I must say past Liberal governments as well, have to a certain extent supported the arms industry through DIPP. Some $300 million is used from public funds to promote the defence industries.

One would tend to think that this is a sunset type industry, that with the end of the cold war the major reason for the arms race has now disappeared, or surely at least a fair-minded person would say it has substantially disappeared.

I am sure that if I could go through the quotes of the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State I would find something in their statements supporting my contention that with the end of the cold war, the arms race surely has to come to an end.

Now we are left with all these industries that used to produce arms. We have cutbacks to our own defence budgets in this country and in order for these industries to be viable, they have to start exporting more. As a result we ease the restrictions to allow our defence industry to start exporting to other countries. That is the only reason. It is economic.

Instead of the government beginning to realize that the arms race is at an end, that we have to address the problem of converting the arms industry to peaceful use,

instead of extending its energy and its efforts in job retraining and the whole area of conversion, this government is trying to prop up those industries by loosening the restrictions so they can export more to countries like Saudi Arabia.

How irresponsible. How irresponsible on an international, global sense, and how irresponsible on a local economic sense. How stupid as well. Let us not continue to try to support the industries whose time has come, thank God. Let us rather be joyful that the need for the arms industry has decreased. Let us ease the transformation of the arms industry into peaceful industries. Let that be the goal and the objective of the government, rather than Bill C-6 which just gives them a greater lease on life.

Bill C-6 also damages our international credibility, as with so many other steps that this government has taken. I am sure even poor John Diefenbaker would just shake in his grave over it. We have been continually losing our creditability in the following areas: the sense of fairness and neutrality of not being an arms dealer; a country willing to work in international efforts like the United Nations Peacekeeping Organization; and a country that other countries in dispute can come to as a fair-minded mediator. Certainly Bill C-6 heightens that.

The Canadian government can no longer speak with the same type of credibility in urging international arms control. We will be laughed out of international fora when we stand up to make proposals after we pass Bill C-6.

As well, because of the economic reason of maintaining our defence industries, we are proposing to loosen the restrictions a little bit. What happens if there are further defence cutbacks in other countries as well as Canada? It is not going to be enough to maintain those industries. Will not the temptation to ease further restrictions be there? Of course it will be there, and we start down the slippery slope where we could conceivably end up being a full scale arms merchant selling to the highest bidder for whatever we can get away with.

Of course the government says it has its criteria in terms of existing legislation as to the countries to which it will deny the export of military goods and technology. Included in these four items are countries involved in or under imminent threat of hostilities. We are going to be selling these to Saudi Arabia. In the period of 1977 to 1986, 37 per cent of the global arms trade occurred in the Middle East. Fourteen wars have been fought since 1967 with more than three million dead and we are going to sell them more arms.

Does that not contravene section (b) where Canada generally denies the export of military goods and technology to countries involved in or under imminent threat of hostilities? I then look at section (d): "Countries whose governments have a persistent record of serious violations of the human rights of their citizens".

Surely nobody is going to stand up and claim that Saudi Arabia has a sparkling record in terms of human rights. One could very well foresee the possibility of these personnel carriers being used against the people of Saudi Arabia themselves should they ever begin to rise up and demand a more democratic system. We will see Canadian troop carriers with automatic weapons mounted on them facing the people of Saudi Arabia.

It makes no sense even under our existing guidelines.

The other point I want to make is that it is very hard to control the final use and destination. Yes, we are going to attempt to restrict the sale and export of these weapons, but can we really determine who the end users will be? Of course we cannot.

I also want to address the larger question that I commented on at the beginning of my remarks. I think there were many of us who saw some light at the end of the tunnel when it became obvious that the arms race and the cold war were going to end, that the trillions of dollars that had been spent on useless arms production could finally come to an end.

• (1630)

I have always maintained that the major reason for the deficits that we have in the world today, be it the Third World, France, England, the United States or Canada, is due to the arms race. The trillions of dollars of capital that the arms race has taken out of the world economy has made capital more scarce and forced up interest rates at the expense of health, education, food, social programs, pensions and so forth. Human beings throughout the world have paid a horrific price because of the arms race. The farmers going broke in my constituency because of the high interest rates in part are victims of the arms race. It is the arms race that has caused these

massive deficits. It is the arms race that has caused the scarcity of capital and high interest rates.

When we saw the possibility of an end to the arms race and the cold war, there were many of us who had high hopes for the so-called peace dividend. Finally nations could start redirecting their resources, not just their capital, but their scientists, their technology and their manufacturing capacities toward peaceful and human needs rather than the death industry and the production of goods and services meant to kill people.

We have been disappointed because I am afraid that the peace dividend is still very illusory. It is certainly not there. Perhaps we should not have been so naive. We should have realized that the arms merchants have done very well in the past in their industry and they were not going to give up that easily. They are still very active today. Certainly for them the war with Iraq was a tremendous blessing. They are hoping to regenerate an arms race, maybe a little different. Maybe they can convince the Russians and the Chinese that with the sophistication of the American weaponry, they had better start spending some more. If they start spending more, perhaps other countries will spend more. Perhaps we can pick up the arms race again and then the merchants of death will be quite happy and the whole peace dividend will start, like a mirage, to disappear.

What a tragedy that would be. What a sin that would be to all humanity. Surely we hope for the end of the arms race and that these massive human and physical natural resources can be focused on the meeting of human needs on a global scale, from the homeless in Canada and the people who stand in line at the food banks all the way around the globe to the starvation and the human suffering that occurs in many lands.

As human beings we have the resources. Never in the history of the human race have we been able as human beings to develop the capacity to meet the needs of every man, woman and child on the face of this planet. It has been the arms race that has allowed us to continue and that has forced us to live in a world of scarcity when really we should be living in a world of plenty.

In conclusion, I would like to put on the record the famous quote from former President Dwight D. Eisenhower:

> Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final scene a theft from those who hunger, and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its labourers, the genius of its scientists, the house of its children—.This is not a way of life—.Under the cloud of war, it is humanity hanging on a cross of iron.

I implore this government to back off and to recognize what it is doing with Canada's reputation, what evil it is inflicting in the world. Back off. Rethink this and for heaven's sake, do not proceed with this legislation.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I have just a brief question that I would like to put to the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. I first of all want to compliment him on his excellent speech and comments that he made on Bill C-6, which the House is debating today.

I am particularly interested in the comments that the member made on the whole question of conversion. Looking at some of the information we have, Canada sold around $1.5 billion worth of arms annually in the 1980s, and I would like to hear the member speak a bit further on some of the methods or steps or ways that we might use for conversion as the way to help those workers and industries which currently produce arms to produce goods for the peaceful sector, if you like.

I would like to hear the member comment a little further on that. I think that is an important aspect of what we must try to do in Canada and in the other countries of the world if we are going to try and break the arms race.

Mr. de Jong: I thank my colleague very much for the question. Unfortunately, I do not have all of my statistics with me today, but groups like some of the peace institutes have put out columns which show $1 spent on child care, $1 spent on education, $1 spent on housing, $1 spent on hospitalization and so forth. In other words, $1 spent in the peace and the social sectors creates so many more jobs than does a dollar spent in the production of arms.

Some claim that the production of arms is really the great job generator. That is not true. Partly because of the high sophistication of armaments today it is not very often job creative. To speak of the defence industry as the creator of a great number of jobs is not quite accurate.

If you spend the same amount of money on things like education or housing and health, you can create three or four times the number of jobs than with the money spent on defence.

The second point in the conversion which I think is important, and again I do not have the accurate figures with me, is that the defence industry takes a horrendous number of our intellectual resources, our scientists.

I remember once on a delegation in Washington listening to one of the vice-presidents of Hughes Aircraft saying that what is used in the defence industry is generally 10 years ahead of what is used in the domestic industry.

There are many scientific discoveries that need to be innovated and brought into daily use, opening up tremendous new possibilities in terms of manufacturing, which now are just captured by the defence industry. We have spent so much of our intellectual resources in the defence industry that if you turned them loose in the domestic industry, many of our problems such as pollution, energy, biomedical problems and so forth would be solved. Using the scientific knowledge that the defence industry has for domestic purposes could also create many more jobs.

The government can work with industry and should be working with industry in terms of converting.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Plourde (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I have a comment I would like to make in response to the remarks about food banks and soup kitchens made by the NDP members who spoke earlier.

I can inform the hon. member that recently, Diemaco bid on a contract to supply the Netherlands Ministry of Defence with a series of small arms, a contract worth over $120 million that might be followed by another contract worth $100 million, to supply spare parts and other maintenance items.

If the company gets the contract, this will represent 7,680 person-years of employment in Canada, a figure that might almost double for the duration of the contract. It seems this would also mean that it would be possible to continue designing new weapons systems for the Canadian Armed Forces until the year 2000.

There is also the General Motors Diesel Division, also located in Ontario. It seems Saudi Arabia has decided to purchase a number of light armoured vehicles, a purchase that may be followed by other orders which might create between 1,500 and 2,000 new jobs in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, according to my NDP colleague's logic, if we want to avoid soup kitchens, we have to create jobs. In the same vein, if these plants in Ontario cannot survive, they will have to close, and the United States will get those jobs, and what is now being done in Canada will be done in the United States.

My point is, there is not the slightest hint of realism in the hon. member's speech and in all the NDP speeches I have heard today. In concluding, Mr. Speaker, I would be interested to know the position of Bob White, who represents the United Auto Workers in Canada, and I would also like to know the position of union workers at General Motors and Diemaco, who support this bill, Mr. Speaker.

• (1640)

[*English*]

Mr. de Jong: Mr. Speaker, I understand the need for jobs and I understand the desperation of people, especially given the recession that has been made by this government, that to them there is an immediate job of $25 an hour as opposed to something that might happen somewhere later down the road in terms of conversion.

Their immediate needs and concerns are going to be with that job, but that is the creation and the situation you have created and that is the choice that you are giving to people. I say that is a bogus choice.

Why not use that logic and take it one step further? Why do you not legalize the growing of marijuana and the processing of heroine? You would create many jobs right across this country. Where do you stop? Where do you draw the line?

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pronovost): Order please.

It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—Canada Post; the hon. member for Labrador—National Defence; the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel—Employment; the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands—Cross-border shop-

ping; and the hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona—Edmonton International Airport.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Trinity—Spadina.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, before I begin the debate I would like to ask if you could point out to me that there is a member of the cabinet in attendance here as the Standing Orders require.

I saw a couple before, but I do not see any member of the cabinet now. One member has returned.

The hon. minister has indicated that he wants to hear what I have to say and I am very glad of that. As he may suspect, I will be opposing this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to allow the export from Canada of automatic weapons and light-armoured vehicles armed with automatic weapons. The export of automatic weapons is now prohibited by the Criminal Code.

The bill provides in section 8 for an exemption to the code in cases approved by cabinet.

Section 8 in effect would permit the export or import of automatic weapons or components if approved by cabinet notwithstanding the other prohibitions in the code, so long as they were sent to countries which were on an approved list for the export of automatic weapons or components, and it authorizes the minister to create that list and to issue the export permits.

That is what it is about. Some of my colleagues have gone into some of the reasons for objecting to this bill, often quoting statements of this government which are in contradiction to the purpose of this bill in connection with the arms trade.

I want to go just a little bit deeper into the matter to discuss basic reasons for opposing this bill. Basically I would say that in our time, the arms trade is immoral. It is immoral because it is trade in the means of coercion; that is to say, a means of controlling people by violence or threat of violence. Means of coercion are sold by the owners of coercive power to other owners of coercive power for the sole purpose of coercing people by violence or threat of violence.

This government and its predecessor, the Liberal government, in spite of having some alleged guidelines which were not made public, sold arms to the dictator of Indonesia, the dictator of Chile, and the dictator of Philippines, all of whom used arms against their own people.

If the Liberal amendment suggested were to be adopted in this bill, I would look at it with great interest to see which of the countries that either the Liberal government or the present Conservative government sold arms to would be excluded.

What we have here is a situation that was lampooned by Mark Twain in his novel *Tom Sawyer Abroad*. Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn and their friends are travelling around the world in a balloon. They pass across the Sahara Desert and they look down and see bodies lying in the desert. They bring the balloon down and investigate. It looks like a caravan that had been covered over in a sand storm and smothered. People had been killed. Another wind had blown the sand off and the bodies lay where they had fallen with their clothes, their weapons, their money and their jewels.

Tom Sawyer, the leader of the group, gives a judgment: "It's our duty to take that money and those jewels, because if we don't, someone might come along and steal them". Mark Twain was writing at the time when the United States was taking some of the colonies from the Spanish empire, such as Cuba, the Philippines, Puerto Rico and so on.

That is the basic argument used now for the arms trade. Nobody seriously believes that we need it to defend Canada from an attacker. The argument is: if we do not sell it, somebody else will, and therefore it is our duty to sell it.

I am saying that this is immoral at the present time, because I did not always think so. I have had an individual struggle of conscience on this for a great many years. I came from a conventional family. My brother served in the navy. My uncle served in World War I and was gassed in a gas attack in France, and later served in Palestine. It was more or less taken for granted that when there is a war, able bodied young men join up.

Before I was of age, I debated that with myself, with pastors, and with anybody else, starting with my parents. I was finally persuaded that I could see at that time no other alternative to surrendering to violence and so I joined the army. I volunteered and took the parachute training at Camp Shilo. When I was ready to go overseas the war in Europe ended. Then I volunteered for the Pacific and that ended soon.

• (1650)

I had made the moral decision that I was ready to go overseas and take the chance of killing people or being killed on the ground that it was necessary to do that for peace, good order, democracy, and basically for the survival of the civilians who were behind the front lines.

I began to rethink that when I heard about the bomb our ally dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, killing about 60,000 people, nearly all civilians. The Japanese war was already ending. They had begun to sue for peace. It seems likely that the use of the bomb was not so much to save American lives as to send a signal, a threat, to the Soviet Union that America had the monopoly on nuclear weapons.

As nuclear weapons multiplied and became the property of other countries, including the Soviet Union, I remember a sermon preached by the Rev. George Macleod, then of Iona, Scotland, who argued that if some other country is using nuclear weapons against us we do not accomplish any good by joining in the nuclear exchange. It will only ensure annihilation of all concerned. Nobody is to be protected in a nuclear war.

I was persuaded and became what he called a nuclear pacifist. I still thought that other weapons, hand weapons, small weapons, guns like rifles and so on, were fair to use. My young brother disagreed with me and said: "You are inconsistent. If you accept pistols and knives, you accept nuclear weapons". And I said: "No, we draw the line".

This year I have decided my young brother was right. I cannot tell him so now. It happens that he died in the fall. But if he was here I would tell him: "Larry, you were right and I was wrong in 1956 on that point". I see the outcome of it now. At that time, I thought that people defending their land against invaders or against dictatorships with guerrilla warfare, using what is called small arms weapons, were fighting a just war.

I now think that it is impossible to draw that line in our time. Perhaps it was possible in ages past. Perhaps it was possible before 1945. I am not sure. But I do not think it is possible now to draw that line.

Somebody has mentioned at least three million people killed in wars since World War II. They were killed mostly in the south between southern countries fighting each other, but with weapons sold to them by the north.

As the Prime Minister has said, the weapons industry and weapons trade is lucrative. Arms bring some of the highest profits of any of the manufacturing industries. In fact, for example, a group like Litton Systems gave up manufacturing civilian goods entirely in order to concentrate exclusively on manufacturing war goods. It produces fewer jobs, as was also pointed out, than producing the means of life, but with more money, more profit on the dollar. It also produces more dictatorship. It shores up dictators or it causes originally democratic countries to become more dictatorial because of the secrecy and the power and the repression associated with war or with the preparation for war.

In the last two or three years I have become very interested in what I heard called the civil society. I heard about it occurring in eastern Europe, in Poland, in Czechoslovakia, in Hungary, in East Germany, principally in those countries of northern eastern Europe, but also in the Baltics. Then I heard about it in the Soviet Union when I visited there nearly two years ago. I found there was a great spread of what were called "informal organizations," that is to say, they were not registered with the government. This was considered by people who talked with me to be an important advance. They said there had not been any real growth of civil society there either under the Czars or under the Bolsheviks.

In other words, they thought of the civil society as voluntary groups that sort of mediate, provide a cushion, between the state and the individuals. They considered that the growth of civil society in the Soviet Union was very hopeful. But the more clear example of that has been in Poland and Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Hungary where a tremendous change was made in the

relatively short while, though after long, long years of waiting, and with relatively little violence.

The Polish government was not overthrown by armed resistance, nor was the Czech government, nor was the East German government, nor was the Hungarian government. It was a civilian movement.

I visited Chile 18 months ago to observe the election there. That was not the most important vote in Chile recently. The most important vote was the year before in the plebiscite that defeated the only candidate standing then for the presidency, General Pinochet. That opened the way for a genuinely pluralistic election and that was the one I observed 18 months ago.

When I talked with people before and after voting day, I learned that again it had not been brought about by a military overthrow of General Pinochet, who has a huge armed force for a country of only 13 million or 14 million people, far, far larger in proportion than we have in Canada, for example. He was not defeated by military power. The change was brought about by organized civilian resistance.

Something like that is also happening in El Salvador where, in between the government and the guerrillas, the FMLN, there is a growing civilian movement. In January when I visited there, I talked with peasants who have gone back to the land. I talked with peasants who have gone back to their farming, even in a conflictive zone. Some of them get killed, but they are going back in greater and greater numbers. They are coming back from other countries, from Nicaragua, from Costa Rica, from Honduras, to re-settle their lands, to do what they and their ancestors always did, grow food and raise families. They are unarmed. They take no part in the fighting on either side. That movement is growing, and I believe it is an important force in the possibility of ending the civil war there.

People were astonished a year ago in the election in Nicaragua. First of all, many were surprised—I was, but so was Ronald Reagan—that the Sandinistas lost the election to the coalition ranged against them.

But the second surprise was that the Sandinistas not only had arranged for that clean election, supervised by the United Nations, but accepted the result of it and did not attempt to block it, as has happened in El Salvador and in so many other Latin American countries. In fact, the Sandinistas are in charge of reducing and dismantling their army.

Mr. Speaker, what I am trying to say is that there is now this movement for peace and it stands sharply against the stated view of the United States 43 years ago. This is the plan worked out by George Kennan in 1948 when he was head of the State Department Policy Planning Staff. He wrote, and I quote:

> We have about 50 per cent of the world's wealth, but only 6.3 per cent of its population. In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task—is to devise a pattern of relationships which permit us to maintain this parity without positive detriment to our national security.
>
> To do so, we will have to dispense with all sentimentality—We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford the luxury of altruism and world benefaction—We should cease to talk about vague and—for the Far East—unreal objectives such as human rights, raising standards of living and democratization. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are hampered by idealistic slogans, the better.

• (1700)

My point is, the days of using power symbolized by the gun are passing. That kind of power to kill, and only power to kill, is out of date. The life of the world depends on the people who use the power to make life, like those peasants in El Salvador who have gone back into the war zones to grow food and raise families.

This bill, which we oppose, now belongs to the past and should be dropped by this government. I hope the government will consider that. There are better ways to earn a living than by preparing for killing.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to respond to my hon. colleague who has been philosophical this afternoon. He did not embark on a tirade at all. He quietly shared with us his philosophy and how he arrived at his philosophy and why he is taking this position on this particular bill.

I do not so much want to debate him because, philosophically, he has the right to put forward his life thinking and his life experience on this subject and I do not want to criticize that at all. What I found in his presentation was an almost 19th century Robert Owen. He captured the magic of the Robert Owen 19th century socialist idea of maybe being able to have a civil society

that somehow interposed between the state and individuals and sources of power in a community. Let us just look at this ideal universe towards which he would like to see the world move. Does he foresee a situation whereby there would not be a need for any police, any military however minor, and does he foresee, even in a Robert Owen world 100 years later at the end of the 20th century, no need for firearms? If so, could he explain how that world would work?

I share his Utopian view in many ways. It would be great if we did not need these firearms, but since the beginning of time we have had to have police forces with firearms. We have also had to have some defensive enclaves of a military nature in order to protect a country, including Central American countries. I just want to get a genuine sense of it. Does he see a world that has no firearms or transportation vehicles, for example, which would look after the local military, however small?

Mr. Heap: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. minister for his question because it is very direct and relevant to what I was saying.

My simple answer is that I cannot draw the picture of the kind of world the minister is talking about when he suggests that is where I am heading. I might be heading there in my mind, but I have not arrived there. As I have acknowledged, my own view on the question of police forces, small arms, small wars and so on has been changing in the last 30 or 40 years. Some people might think I am a slow learner, but I have arrived at the view that it is practically impossible to keep a small war small.

I would say the Sandinistas in their little isolated patch of hills in Central America thought that. They could drive out a bloody dictator, Samoza and then be able to control their own country. The United States told them "no". The United States had purposes for Samoza, rather than some successor, and would not permit that.

The United States was prepared, and the United States is prepared now. General Colin Powell has threatened to use direct military power to resolve the negotiations between the Government of El Salvador and its army—or the army and its government because it is the army that controls the government—and the FMLN if things don't go as General Powell and President Bush think they should.

It is becoming more clear that even a just cause, fought defensively with limited weapons, no longer is allowed to operate in isolation.

What I am saying is that the world is moving. I am not saying that it is possible for Canada immediately to disarm totally, let alone persuade other countries immediately to disarm totally. I am saying that those of us who can should make a start, and a start is not to increase our arms exports. That is moving backward in history rather than forward.

The arms export is not for the defence of Canada, and I don't believe it is for the defence of Saudi Arabia. It is for the enrichment of the people who manufacture those arms. That is the reason for doing it. Otherwise they would put their money into something more useful: building civilian vehicles or building ships, or building other things that we need to produce life instead of to produce death.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, at the present time, the Criminal Code states that anyone who is not a member of the Canadian forces or of a police force and who imports or has in his or her possession certain weapons such as automatic rifles or firearms is guilty of an offence. It is therefore illegal to manufacture such weapons in Canada or to import them for the purpose of including them in Canadian export goods.

Canada's defence needs require Canada to have, among other things, the capacity to repair, overhaul, and improve the Canadian forces' equipment. Our forces need sufficient equipment to fulfil the tasks assigned to them, be it UN peacekeeping missions or actual combat. However, our defence budget is rather small. So, our defence industry must have access to the international defence market in order to survive. Because of foreign sales, it is less dependent on Canadian contracts and government financial support.

The legislation, when passed, will allow Canada to import, as well as manufacture and export, these weapons to countries with which Canada has signed bilateral defence production agreements.

This bill will not weaken the Canadian exports control policy. The export of these kinds of weapons will be strictly controlled using the same stringent guidelines

that have applied for the longest time to Canadian military equipment exports in Canada.

A country control list will also be established. The export of firearms such as those produced by Diemaco will be permitted only to the countries on this new list. As with any regulation made under the Export and Import Permits Act, it would take an Order in Council to add countries to the list. Only countries with which we have an intergovernmental defence, research, development and production arrangement would qualify.

We will adhere strictly to intergovernmental arrangements, and exports will be closely controlled to countries which pose a threat to Canada or its allies, countries involved in hostilities or under imminent threat of hostilities, countries under UN Security Council sanctions, and countries whose governments have persistent records, of human rights violations.

The same guidelines will apply military exports. These criteria have been very useful in maintaining strict controls on exports. At the same time, they are sufficiently broad to require new policy development.

• (1710)

Mr. Speaker, Canada will continue to promote the tightening of international constraints and effective controls where exports of conventional weapons are concerned. We will ask for a meeting of the world's major arms exporters to encourage them to make an official commitment to greater restraint when exporting conventional weapons, especially to regions where the build-up of such weapons appears to be taking on alarming proportions.

However, Canada continues to recognize the right of every country to defend itself as guaranteed under Article 51 of the UN Charter. This bill will give Canadian businesses a chance to help other countries meet their legitimate defence requirements, while observing the strict limitations imposed by Canada's weapons control policy. These amendments concern the Canadian defence industry, first of all, and two companies in particular.

In 1976, Diemaco, a company in Kitchener, Ontario, was established by DND as a centre of excellence for the provision of small arms to the Canadian Armed Forces, to ensure they would not be totally dependent on foreign suppliers in times of emergency. Its facility is unique in Canada and it is important to DND's long term operational readiness.

The awarding of a contract to produce the new family of small arms for the Canadian Armed Forces created 300 direct jobs for the company itself, 200 direct jobs at its Canadian subcontractors, and an equal number of indirect jobs. This contract is nearing completion, however, so that Canada may lose Diemaco's substantial manufacturing capability and that of its 75 subcontractors.

These are quality jobs with a focus on technology. The Canadian government's investment of $40 million in this computer based manufacturing capability contributes and will continue to contribute very substantially to Canada's competitive position.

There are a few examples of the capabilities covered by this investment: product design, engineering, metal finishing, plastic molding, precision casting, forging and machining, and extrusion techniques.

Mr. Speaker, recently, Diemaco bid on a contract to supply the Netherlands Department of Defence with a series of small arms, a contract worth more than $120 million that might be followed by another contract worth $100 million to supply spare parts and other maintenance items. A successful bid would mean 7,680 person years of employment in Canada, a figure that might almost double for the duration of the contract.

This would also mean it would be possible to continue designing new weapons systems for the Canadian Armed Forces until the year 2000. The Dutch have now entered a new testing phase for which weapons have been provided by the Department of National Defence. If this bill is not passed, it will be very hard for us to convince them to take our proposal seriously.

The U.S. Defense Department will turn to Diemaco and its subcontractors for the components required to maintain its supplies of rifles and machine guns. This could affect 20 Canadian companies and represent $5 million a year in export sales.

Diemaco and Hughes Leitz together developed an optical kit for the Canadian forces. This kit could easily be exported and create 200 person years of employment.

Without these changes, we will lose the whole small-calibre weapons industrial infrastructure before the end of 1995.

Saudi Arabia has decided to buy some light armored vehicles and it may place other orders that could create between 1,500 and 2,000 jobs. GM would have to provide automatic weapons with their vehicles. These weapons would have to be imported and then exported. It would be illogical to insist that these vehicles, made in Canada, be sent to another country to be equipped with automatic weapons.

Note that light armored vehicles are considered defensive. They are on rubber tires and are very lightly armored; they are used to patrol oil fields and pipelines. For offensive purposes, heavy tracked armored vehicles would certainly be preferred.

Not only will this bill implement stricter controls on the export of automatic weapons but it will prove that the federal government is determined to meet Canada's strategic defence needs, to ensure the survival of the facilities created as part of the North American defence industry infrastructure, to improve legitimate export prospects, and to create new jobs in Canada.

In summary, we must create and safeguard employment. We must increase competitiveness by developing and keeping leading-edge technology. Exports must increase to improve the trade balance. Small business must also be supported by keeping many subcontractors employed. Canadian capacity must be maintained for times of tension. Canada must be allowed to contribute to its allies' defence capability. The destination of automatic arms must be closely controlled. Finally, we must help Canada remain an active and competitive partner in the North American defence industry infrastructure.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I particularly enjoyed the comments on this bill from the member opposite.

As a follow-up to a question I put to the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, I would be interested in this member's comments on the point I made about the need to have a conversion developed in this country. This would be a means by which, in a very realistic way, we would have a chance to get out of the arms race, giving those people working in these industries an opportunity to work in other areas that could be developed.

I think that is important. The author of a very important book entitled *The Rise and Fall of Great Nations of the World* made the point that one of the reasons Japan, as an example, was able to develop such a dynamic economy and put considerable resources into developing trade in its technological and automobile industries was that it did not have to allocate all those funds to armed forces.

Clearly, if it is not guns, it is butter. If a country allocates or spends in Canada some $1.5 billion annually on arms, I would be interested in knowing the member's views on conversion. What ideas does the government have on how to redirect some of those funds so that we could get out of the arms race and have people employed in the peace sector.

Mr. Langlois: Mr. Speaker, we have to recognize that Canada is not a very big player in the manufacturing of arms. We are a minor player in that field in that we do not produce on a mass level a high volume of offensive arms. We are mainly engaged in producing conventional weapons that are used for defence.

In this case the two industries that we are talking about, Diemaco and GM, are supplying the Canadian army with light vehicles and the type of weapons that are used normally in defensive action.

Those two industries, based in Ontario and employing several hundred people, would not survive by supplying only the Canadian army.

• (1720)

We have an opportunity to sell some of those products to friendly countries and maintain those high quality jobs in high technology.

The government would be ill-advised not to take this opportunity to enhance those jobs and solidify those two companies and their contractors.

As for the conversion aspect of my colleague's question, I certainly appreciate and agree that we should be

looking at ways to augment and increase jobs in our production capacity in more society-oriented products. However, since there is a market and we still have a limited capacity to access that market, the country and the government should put every effort possible together to give our manufacturing firms access to those markets in order to consolidate their base and maintain the jobs that exist in those plants at the present time.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the hon. member's response to the question put by the member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley. I find it very interesting that he says he wants to enhance those jobs and solidify the positions of the two companies, but on the other hand he agrees that we might want to think at some time in the future about changing the role of those workers and changing the direction of those companies.

If we, as Canadians, do not agree with being in the arms race, and if we genuinely want to ensure that those workers have jobs, would it not make sense that at the same time as this government allows these contracts to be let that it begins to do some serious planning about conversion of those jobs into peace-type jobs as opposed to jobs that create war machines?

Mr. Langlois: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Mission—Coquitlam for her question and her comments. Of course, we should be very careful not to put the country in a position where we would have to import the arms that our forces may need in the future to provide the defence of our country and to help them to fulfil the role that from time to time we will ask them to perform for the United Nations.

We should maintain in Canada a basic industrial manufacturing capacity for the type of conventional arms that our forces will need. If we do not maintain that position, one day Canada will be a net importer, a net buyer of that type of weapon. That would put in jeopardy our balance of payments, create hardship in the economy and lose jobs. I personally think that we have to maintain a level of manufacturing capacity in Canada that will assure that we can equip our Armed Forces with the type of equipment they need to perform the job that we ask them to perform.

On the other hand, we should, as the government is doing, look at alternatives, look at ways to diversify the economy in order to create the type of jobs that will benefit the Canadian economy.

I repeat, we should be very careful not to put ourselves in a position where we will have to buy the equipment we need to ensure our security.

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in this very important debate which we are undertaking today. Some of the most eloquent and cogent arguments I have heard on this subject in many years of following the debate on arms control and the questions of disarmament have come in the debate today.

I would like to compliment very much a number of my colleagues whom I see seated around me, particularly the member for Trinity—Spadina, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle and others who have spoken very eloquently. I would hope that this debate reaches far beyond the limited confines of this Chamber and becomes a debate throughout Canada. It is a very important debate, one of the most important debates perhaps that we have engaged in yet, although its subject matter may seem on the surface to be relatively mundane.

What startles me the most, and has startled many of us, is the utter hypocrisy of what we are witnessing today. Many of us who were involved in the gulf war debate in January, when we were called back to debate the resolution supporting United Nations action, will remember the government saying repeatedly that the situation in the Middle East was indeed the result of actions in the past. Weapons had been sold to people who clearly should not have had them.

There were repeated references made to the fact that Saddam Hussein had been allowed, in fact encouraged, to build up a massive armaments inventory in order to counteract the growing threat of the Ayatollah in Iran some years previously. The government repeatedly assured us that our fears about engaging in the gulf war were not grounded, that what we were doing was preparing for a new world order in which these kind of conflicts would no longer take place. The government said that after the gulf war the nations of the world would see to it that a new world order was established in which weapons of destruction would no longer be circu-

lated or sold, that mechanisms would be put in place to control the sale of arms and that we need no longer worry.

The government said to us if only we would support its position on the gulf war, if only we would support the position of the United Nations—speaking essentially for the United States—that this war was necessary, afterward everything would be all right. We would no longer need to fear the effects of the arms race.

In fact, in the period immediately following the war, the government, seeking to assure Canadians of that, went so far as to issue statements such as the following. On March 8, the then Secretary of State for External Affairs said:

> The world cannot let a victory become a truce, an occasion for nations to rearm, regroup and return to battle. The peace which now beckons—must become a pattern.

He went on to say that to have peace in the Middle East region would require addressing the full spectrum of problems including, and I quote:

> The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the arms trade, the constant chase for spheres of influence.

He then went on to describe how weapons used by Iraq were supplied largely by the five members of the Security Council: Britain, France, U.S., China and the U.S.S.R., the very people who sanctioned and, indeed, spearheaded the effort to fight that Gulf War. They in fact were fighting against their own weapons.

Following that we all remember that our own Prime Minister took the opportunity when President Bush was making his visit to our nation's capital to say to President Bush very clearly, and I quote:

> There's a general view—without getting into the question of total interdiction for the moment—that clearly a lot of these weapons, to understate the case, fell into hands that should never have had them in the first place. We could be much more active in that area if we wanted. We have all the technology in the world; we have all the resources we need. We could be big arms merchants; we've chosen not to be, although it is a very lucrative business.

"We have chosen not to be because it is fundamentally inconsistent with our policy to develop it, to peddle it, to finance it, and then to deplore its use".

• (1730)

It is very hard to believe that the government led by the people who made those statements would now be proposing Bill C-6. It would vastly increase the scope and the range of weaponry which Canada peddles in the world.

It is very hard to believe that the government should be coming forward with this bill when we heard statements during that war that these kinds of wars are inevitable if weapons are allowed to build up and the arms trade is allowed to flourish because these weapons must sooner or later be used. I recall very clearly during the gulf war, because it startled me so much, an expert on weaponry and the arms trade discussing the issue on one of the many TV programs. The expert was asked whether in fact the war would have any impact on Canadian arms exports, and whether there was an opportunity there for arms manufacturers and exporters as a result of the war. The answer that this arms trade expert gave was that there would in fact be no sales as a result of the war because this was an inventory war.

I recall very clearly, as we all do, seeing signs in different stores in our communities where we come from indicating that there is an inventory sale. They have too many shoes. They have to clean out their inventory or whatever the commodity is. Here we got to the point where we had to have an inventory war because there were so many weapons awash in that region that sooner or later the temptation to use them became overwhelming.

We have had our inventory war. We have had our commitments from the government that we were in fact going to seek a new world order based on limiting very dramatically the flow of arms around the world. But what do we get? We get Bill C-6 and we see the Minister for International Trade, when he was defending the introduction of this bill, and other members from the government who have defended the bill before us, saying there are essentially two reasons why we have to adopt this particular piece of legislation. One is that they need to protect the jobs in the industry and the other argument is that in fact they are not weapons of mass destruction. Really all they are saying when they talk about arms control is that the methods of mass destruction and these particular weapons that would be affected by this bill will not be included in it.

Let me deal with those arguments for just a minute. First there is the question of jobs. Certainly I do not want to underestimate the importance of jobs in our economy. I do not want to see people unemployed who currently work in the armaments industry any more than I want to see farmers thrown off their farms. I do not want to see aboriginal people whose traditional lifestyles are being undermined forced to go on welfare.

I have particular feelings for this case because in 1974 I was a candidate for my party in the constituency of London East where the GM plant that is to build these weapons is located. Many of the brothers and sisters in Local 27 of the UAW are good friends of mine and I know them well. Clearly they are concerned about the loss of jobs, and well they should be.

I would like to say to those brothers and sisters in Local 27 that they are not in fact the victims of a move by the opposition to curb the arms race or to unrealistically restrict a legitimate trade in these kinds of things but rather they are victims of a whole trend which we see more and more of.

A lot of that trend is wrapped around the whole question of free trade. Certainly the concern that people feel in southwestern Ontario about the loss of jobs stems directly from the fact that there are not alternate jobs or economic opportunities in that region because of the massive devastation wreaked on that region by the free trade agreement with the United States.

Second, I think it is symbolic of the fact that we are more and more integrating our economies between Canada and the United States, and a big part of that integration will inevitably mean in my opinion that we will become more and more involved in the arms trade. That is a result of the fact that the United States depends very heavily on the arms trade. Its economy is based in large measure, in far too great a measure many Americans and many other people in the world believe, on the arms trade. We are very rapidly coming to the same position.

Many of us have seen the arguments. Even when it comes to things like Minute Man missiles and other weapons of mass destruction, we see feature stories on television and read articles in the papers about citizens of communities in California, in Georgia, and other places that depend very heavily on the arms industry. We see stories that these people will lose their jobs, that whole communities are in danger of being wiped out. Therefore it becomes a rationale to continue even the most appalling kinds of weapons manufacture. Those kinds of things are rationalized by the need for jobs, and we are getting closer and closer to that.

The other aspect of the whole free trade philosophy involved here is the commitment and the orientation toward viewing things only in terms of the bottom line. If there is a market opportunity, if there is a buck to be made, we have to be there. That is the free trade philosophy and that is the philosophy that we are seeing today.

The second argument the minister made was that these are not weapons of mass destruction, that these LAVs, these light armoured vehicles, are really a very insignificant kind of weapon. Let me read a little bit about the particular weapon that we are talking about:

> The light armoured vehicle is a multi-role small tank on wheels, built to operate in a wide range of environments. It is amphibious, relatively fast, capable of moving up to 63 miles an hour on a road, can climb steep slopes, can be air-lifted or dropped by transport aircraft and helicopters. In its many variations, all of which are included in the Saudi sale, it can be used as a troop carrier, a communications command centre, a towing vehicle, a mortar launcher or an anti-tank weapon.

When I see things like "having the capability of being a mortar launcher or a communications command centre", we are not talking about something that is removed from warfare that includes mass destruction. We are talking in fact about a weapon that can be very integral to warfare, including weapons of mass destruction, as we saw very clearly in the gulf war where 250 of these vehicles were used by the United States military in their operations.

There is another aspect that disturbs me about these weapons being pooh-poohed as not being weapons of mass destruction and therefore not significant. This is the fact of what will necessarily happen when we sell these to various governments with dubious human rights records and with very poor records of allowing their citizenry to have influence in the affairs of their countries. I think we are going to see that they will be used on a widespread scale for putting down civil disturbances.

In other words, we will see people like Saddam Hussein, or the leadership in Syria, or other countries such as that, using this weaponry to quell civil disturbances, to further oppress their own people and to

further perpetuate the kind of power that they already have.

I cannot see that allowing countries with these kinds of regimes to obtain this kind of weaponry for the purpose of quelling their own populations represents a step forward for Canada in any way.

The third problem I see here is that it will become even more tempting to get involved in all kinds of Third World trouble, to pursue a strategy of intervention in Third World disputes, and in fact to foment those Third World disputes if the whole question of spheres of influence and control by the superpowers is in some way threatened.

I see this very much as being part of a new world order that might not be so much based on mutual assured destruction, the old theory of having a balance of nuclear forces. That theory is being eclipsed by the end of the cold war. What we are seeing is a new world order based very much on strategic interventions all over the world with just as destructive an effect, and perhaps more destructive because there is much less public outcry when these kinds of interventions are made.

• (1740)

Further, I would like to speak about the arms race in general. We had all hoped when the cold war began to thaw, when it became clear that the old power blocs were disintegrating, that there might well be a peace dividend that would accrue to the world and that would be a benefit to the world's people.

We are cutting budgets here by 5, 10, 15 per cent and saying that the activities of departments thus cut will not be affected. We are talking about a cut of 2 to 4 per cent in the arms trade which would yield over $200 trillion in the next decade. When we are talking about countries with per capita incomes of $150, $300 or $500 a year, $200 trillion is a massive amount of money. It seems quite ironic that we should be talking about increasing the arms trade while at the same time we are cutting foreign aid from our own country.

Furthermore, I would like to make the argument that the arms trade has been a big factor in creating many of the current economic problems we see world-wide. Certainly the high interest regime we have just come through has been directly related to the arms trade. There are very many credible economists who have said that the inflationary interest rate spiral we were in was fuelled directly by Ronald Reagan's arms build-up during his 1980 to 1988 regime and that our own economy has suffered as a result. We are hearing arguments continuously that we have to absorb the kind of Draconian economic measures here because of high interest rates. In fact, those high interest rates were fuelled originally by the arms race.

The arms race has created a situation where very, very poor countries are in a position where they are almost forced to devote huge percentages of their Gross National Product and of their national budgets to support buying armaments to defend against others who have had arms sold to them, their neighbours and so on. Therefore, there are situations in Central America, the Middle East, and elsewhere, where poor countries are devoting huge amounts of money to the arms trade. First of all, the only thing they can afford to do in their own countries is starve their own people. Second, when they import from other countries they are importing armaments instead of other very useful commodities which we could be exporting to them.

I am worried as well about Canada's international credibility. We have consistently taken a good line when it comes to arms control, when it comes to search for peace around the world, and for new mechanisms to ensure that a new world order would be a peaceful world order. But what does it do to Canada's credibility when, so quickly after a major war which should have taught us a lesson, we are out there flogging weapons with the best of them? Surely the countries around the world that look to Canada for leadership must be very, very disappointed when they see Canada leaping with both feet into what it sees to be a small commercial opportunity, the way we are doing here.

I see you are telling me that my time has almost expired. In closing, I would like to quote a few words from a former Conservative member of Parliament from Edmonton, Douglas Roche, who was Canada's ambassador for disarmament from 1984 to 1988. Certainly members from all sides of the House recognize Doug Roche as one of the most articulate and committed people when it comes to the whole question of disarmament.

He said:

> The government is rushing this legislation, trying to get it passed before the summer recess. Public opinion ought quickly to be mounted to fortify opposition efforts to defeat the bill. It was public opinion that stopped Canada from joining the U.S. Star Wars initiative, that

stopped West German arms manufacturers from settling in Cape Breton, that stopped the acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines.

Bill C-6 is another watershed moment. It must be killed.

I agree with those sentiments. I would hope that the public of Canada becomes aware very quickly of what is happening here, that the public of Canada will make its views known very quickly to the Government of Canada and to all members of Parliament. We cannot afford to proceed with this legislation. We will be forever branded as hypocrites if we do.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I just want to pose a question to the hon. member. He paints a rather lurid portrait of Saddam Hussein, Third World repression, and the government leaping in to the selling of arms. It is a kind of exaggerated, lurid portrait which has nothing whatsoever to do with this very technical amendment to a piece of legislation.

The hon. member should be reminded that there will be three criteria applied to the exports of automatic weapons under this bill. The three criteria, first of all are transparencies. It is very important to him that we be open about what we are doing and the transparency is in this bill. Canada will report exports of automatic weapons in its annual report on exports of military goods. It is a public document and it is also submitted to the United Nations. He made reference to the United Nations. This document will be submitted there. It is very important that he not exaggerate secrecy. This is transparent.

Second, there is consultation. We are going to initiate consultations with other countries, particularly our NATO allies and close defence partners, on controlling exports of automatic weapons.

Finally, in terms of restraint, he talks about these weapons or these firearms ending up in the hands of Saddam Hussein or somebody else. Canada will export automatic weapons only to those countries with which we have bilateral agreements. Right now, and I listed them a few hours ago, we only have agreements with 10 countries, of which Sweden is the only one that is not a member of NATO.

It is not fair of him, it is not furthering the cause of truth and openness, to paint portraits of countries such as Iraq as receiving these weapons.

These countries will be listed on the automatic firearms control list which will be available to the public. So it is very important that the House realize there is not only transparency in this bill, there is not only an undertaking to consult, but there is very great restraint on the countries that will be eligible for these firearms.

Mr. Funk: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to expand a little more on some of the remarks I made. I can understand the minister's concern because the plant that is to manufacture these weapons is located in the city which he represents.

I am aware, as the minister says, that there are 1,000 CAW workers there. I know many of them personally. I had wished, though, that the minister would have explained to us what the government has done about the commitment that it made in 1987 to prepare facilities like the GM plant in London for conversion to non-military purposes. We made a clear commitment four years ago. As far as I know, there has been absolutely nothing done. We spent huge amounts of money, $300 million a year or thereabouts, gearing up for the arms trade, and nothing for conversion. I think that is one argument that needs to be made more often.

When the minister speaks about transparency and so on, the member for Mackenzie says it is so transparent we see right through it. I think there is a certain ironic truth to that.

Certainly the groups that monitor the arms business, such as Project Ploughshares and others, are not at all convinced that the mechanisms that are in place either in this bill or in other legislation are adequate. In fact, they said they are very inadequate. One of the big problems is the trans-shipment of arms from one point to another. We have no control over what happens once we have sold them to one country; they can very easily sell them to another and so on down the line. This is something that is widespread in the arms business and it happens every day.

• (1750)

He also says that we should accept the government's assurances about countries that are on the list and that it is a very restricted list. I am not aware that Saudi Arabia is on that list or has met any of these criteria. In fact, in a lot of people's opinion, Saudi Arabia should never be on

that kind of a list, even if you accept that the criteria are adequate.

Furthermore, I hear that countries like Thailand, which recently experienced another in a long series of military coups, is considering a purchase. I would not be at all surprised if the same arguments were made there.

We have a list of criteria that is supposed to rule out arms going to human rights violators, people in danger of imminent conflict, and others like that, but those have been around for a while. In spite of that, over the last three years we have exported military commodities to countries like South Korea, Turkey, the Philippines, Indonesia—which is still occupying East Timor in a manner very similar to the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq—Peru where a civil war is going on, and Zaire which is a notorious civil rights violator, one of the worst in the world. We have exported military commodities to those particular countries.

When I see the government exporting other kinds of military commodities to those kinds of countries, I am not reassured. I am sure many other Canadians are not reassured by the argument that this particular class of weapons will be restricted only to our very best and most trusted friends.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a comment on this matter and put a question to my friend who gave an excellent speech. It is too bad that I cannot put the question, in some way, to the minister who just posed a question. I would say to him, are these contracts we are talking about not with the Netherlands and Saudi Arabia, and did not even the government, the Department of External Affairs which has become like an international trade agency, seek out the the contract with Saudi Arabia?

I see the minister leaving the House, but I have to put the question to my friend anyway.

The government should face the issues squarely and not mislead us. Deal with the issues squarely. The government's problem is that the Prime Minister has got such a big mouth that he gets himself into trouble, not only in Tokyo but when he was here talking about these arms deals, and the former minister of external affairs, Mr. Clark, is clearly on the record saying: "We should cut arms sales to the Middle East."

The government now brings in a bill to amend the Criminal Code which would allow arms sales in the Middle East. It is in a sticky wicket.

I want to ask the member two questions. Does he find it as ironic as I do that on the same day the government brings in legislation for arms control in Canada we are also getting legislation to export guns? I find this very strange.

Second, I would ask him to comment on this. Has he picked up the problem, as he mentioned, with workers and jobs and so on? When Diemaco, the gun manufacturer, was Canadian Arsenals, a public corporation, we could cut back the labour force. We were just making guns for Canadians and we could move them somewhere else. Once we privatized it and made it a private corporation it has got to have more arms sales. It has got to go into the foreign market. It has got to virtually sell to anybody it can. That is another result of privatization.

I wonder if the member, in the short time I have left him, could comment on those two points.

Mr. Funk: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member very much for his intervention. Certainly I also note the tremendous irony of the comparison between what the government was saying during the gulf war and persuading Canadians that in fact it was serious about bringing these kinds of situations under control and particularly persuading Canadians that they needed to support the war effort because the government was committed. That was part of the strategy to bring these kinds of situations under control.

It is indeed ironic that we have today witnessed the introduction of gun control to our country which, I must confess, in my own constituency makes it much tougher for Dene hunters to obtain food for their families while, at the same time, the sultans of Saudi Arabia will be riding around with our automatic weapons.

That is truly an ironic situation which I think will not be lost on the Canadian public.

The last point that the member made is also a very good one and I am glad he raised it. It is an important part of the public debate. I know people in the House who were here when Canadian Arsenals was privatized. When the Crown corporation was privatized many of my colleagues made the argument that in fact this is precisely what would happen. Rather than supplying those needs which we as a small peaceful country have on a

peacekeeping basis, ensuring our own forces have what they need, produced by ourselves—it was a nice neat little industry in so far as these can be—we are now being driven by the profit imperative.

Certainly, I can sympathize with the workers in London, but when they have built for Saudi Arabia, who are they going to build for next? Are they going to build for South Korea next? Are they going to build for Guatemala next? Once we start on that slippery slope we cannot get off.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated.

Shall I call it six o'clock?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

CANADA POST

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday in this House I informed the minister responsible for Canada Post about the fight being waged by the community of Avonmore, Ontario, to keep its post office. Avonmore has had a post office since Confederation. It is sadly ironic that it will soon be closed at a time when Canada is seeking to preserve national unity and its federal symbols.

On May 23 over 60 residents of Avonmore stood on the steps in front of the House of Commons and held a rally to save their post office. They presented a petition with over 700 signatures, calling upon the government to rescind its decision to close their post office on June 27.

They also gave me a children's petition. It showed that the whole community has come together to voice its objections over the callous action taken by Canada Post to close the Avonmore post office.

The community of Avonmore feels betrayed by Canada Post. It is frustrated and angry that it was simply told that it was going to lose its post office and there was nothing it could do to stop it. As far as the people of Avonmore are concerned, their meeting with Canada Post representatives was a sham, nothing more than a farce.

The point I want to make today concerns the issue I was trying to get across to the minister responsible for Canada Post in my question to him last Thursday. That is, Avonmore will not only lose its post office, it will also not receive a retail postal outlet. There is only one store in the community and the owner does not want to have an RPO.

Canada Post has informed the people of Avonmore that it will be installing mailboxes when the post office is closed. However, this means that to register a letter or buy a stamp, the people of Avonmore will have to travel over 24 kilometres to the nearest post office. Postal service in Avonmore will therefore be considerably downgraded when the post office is closed.

The people of Avonmore should not have to leave their community and travel 24 kilometres to obtain such basic services as the ability to buy a stamp. This is totally unacceptable. It is a blatant contravention of Canada Post's promise to rural Canadians.

In June, 1988, Canada Post placed full-page ads in newspapers across Canada emphasizing, in its own words, that it would be "keeping our commitment to rural Canada". The ad stated that, and I am quoting: "Canada's rural communities are vital to Canada Post. In fact, one of the most important parts of our commitment is making postal products and services more accessible to rural Canadians".

This ad was nothing short of deception and propaganda. It went on to state that the corporation's commitment to its customers "will be to maintain and improve service as we evolve". Well, something must have gone terribly wrong during the evolution process. Canada Post's pledge to provide equal or better service when a post office is closed is not worth much to the people of Avonmore.

For all Canada Post and this government cares, the residents of Avonmore and other rural Canadians, who have no post office or shining RPO to serve them, could travel over 100 kilometres to buy a stamp. As long as the

master plan to eliminate over 5,200 rural post offices by 1996 goes ahead, the government and the corporation will be happy.

• (1800)

In conclusion, the people of rural Canada feel betrayed. Luckily they will have an opportunity to throw a monkey wrench into the master plan long before 1996. The government has ignored rural Canadians far too long. As a result, it will be the government that will be closed down come the next election, closed down in the very same quick and harsh manner in which the people of Avonmore will lose their post office.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Post Corporation has been working very hard to improve the efficiency and availability of postal services in Canada, to meet the expectations and changing needs of all Canadians.

Like other organizations that provide a public service, Canada Post has had to resort to new ways of providing this service in order to respond to the pressing needs of all Canadians, and it will continue to enhance the availability of postal services and products.

For instance, Canada Post meets its objectives in rural Canada by using the resources and skills of local businesses to significantly increase the number of locations offering postal services and products. Incidentally, other businesses providing services to Canadians in rural areas have made necessary adjustments by cutting some of their services. Canada Post has made every possible effort to maintain its business ties with these communities by strengthening its partnerships with local businesses with which it already had a long-standing relationship.

Furthermore, the corporation has developed a number of ways to ensure postal delivery is maintained in a community. Some examples are: mail boxes in retail postal outlets, community mail boxes at a single designated location or on individual sites.

Meanwhile, Canada Post ensures that the community retains its specific postal identity and that all customers are able to send and receive their mail locally. Recently, Canada Post reviewed postal services in the community of Avonmore which, as the hon. member of the opposition is no doubt aware, has been provided by a term employee since the postmaster retired.

On March 27, Canada Post sent a notice to all customers, informing them there would be changes in their community's postal services.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, about two weeks ago I raised with the minister of defence speculation in the press that the government was considering closing Armed Forces bases across the country and two bases that we now operate and have operated for some time in Europe.

This speculation has gone on for some time. It has gone on in the complete absence of any defence policy in this country whatsoever. In 1987, when the last white paper was written, it was out of date. It is even more out of date at this time. We have been operating all this time with absolutely no defence policy in Canada or no indication of the date when a defence policy may be brought forward.

Yet we go on with ad hockery in this country. We go on with the administration of defence by the Department of Finance. There are $2.5 billion worth of cuts in the last budget. This was the most severe cut to any department probably in Canadian history and certainly the most severe cut that the Canadian forces have received for some time. However, rule by the department of defence is no way to create a defence policy for this country. It is incumbent on the Government of Canada to bring forward a policy so that the people of Canada, who are now discussing the Constitution, who are now discussing native rights, will also be able to discuss how they want sovereignty to be maintained in this country and how they want security exercised in this country.

It is 1991 now and it is time not only for the government to bring forward suggestions as to the direction they want to go, but to engage the Canadian people in a public debate on those very directions.

What makes the lack of policy at this time even more reprehensible is the fact that Canadian forces have just performed well in the gulf. They performed with professionalism, they performed with competence, and they deserve better. They deserve better, as do the people

who work at the bases we have all across this country. There are hundreds of thousands of people in Canada now whose jobs depend on those bases, either directly or indirectly, and it is not fair in a time of economic recession to keep them in suspense, to keep them in concern and in distress, and in worry about their future and the future of their jobs. That is not the way to run the country. We had the example of Summerside, where a whole province was affected very negatively by the closing of one base. There are areas of this country that depend very, very much on the presence of the Armed Forces to create jobs, particularly in areas of the country normally referred to as have not areas, less developed areas of the country.

It is important, when that policy is brought forward and when the closure of bases is contemplated, that economic and social aspects be taken into consideration. We did not see that before. Before, when the government closed bases in Canada, it used an axe where a scalpel would have been desirable. We probably do not need all bases across this country. My colleague from Toronto even called for the closing of Downsview in Toronto, and yet Downsview continues to survive and prosper in spite of the need for land, for development, and for housing in that community. It mystifies those of us on this side.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret that the hon. member's time has expired.

Mr. Barry Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is aware that fiscal and geostrategic realities now before us have a direct impact on national defence. A comprehensive examination of the defence policy enunciated in 1987 has been undertaken by departmental officials. Both the minister of defence and the Associate Minister of National Defence regard the review as vital to the future direction of defence in Canada. They are fully committed to formulating a policy that will set forth a balanced, workable, affordable, and appropriate plan for the Canadian forces.

I can inform this House that the socioeconomic impact of our options is being factored into the policy review and we are doing our best to ensure that effects will be minimal. It is certainly premature at this point to discuss the closing of specific bases as a decision on this matter has yet to be reached by cabinet. However, no part of the defence program is immune from scrutiny.

Allegations that Canada is operating within a defence policy vacuum are not valid. The principles upon which Canadian defence policy rests have remained virtually unchanged. For example, we continue to remain committed to defence and collective security, arms control and disarmament, and the peaceful resolution of disputes. All members of this House will recognize that during the crisis in the Persian Gulf, Canada accepted its responsibility as an active member of the United Nations and made a credible contribution to the multinational effort.

This review was not conducted in isolation. The government continues to listen closely to the views of Canadians and has taken these views into account—

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, May 24, I had the pleasure of attenting a meeting between Quebec Liberal caucus members and representatives from the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CNTU). The member for Saint-Denis, who is the president of the caucus, the member for Saint-Henri—Westmount, the member for Mount Royal and myself discussed the serious economic crisis Quebec is facing with the representatives of the CNTU. There is one thing that I find absolutely unacceptable. The CNTU had also asked to meet with representatives from the Conservative Party, the government party. That meeting was never held. Not only was there no meeting, but they told us that they had not even heard back from the Conservative caucus.

On May 27, the Minister of Employment and Immigration replied to the question I put to him about a document prepared by the CNTU by saying that he knew of no such document. For the purpose of this debate and maybe also for the person who will be designated to answer me tell us and, more importantly, tell the CNTU if the government is willing to accept the economic recovery plan put forward by the CNTU to fight the recession.

• (1810)

The CNTU asked the federal government, first, to reduce interest rates; second, to improve eligibility requirements under the Older Workers Assistance Program; third, to reform the unemployment insurance

system to provide real protection to the workers losing their jobs; fourth, to bring forward selective income tax cuts; fifth, to come up with a tax reform that would do away with the GST and the harm it is causing the Quebec economy as well as across the country; finally, to undertake a review of the free trade agreement which is causing enormous problems, as we all know, particularly in a city like Montreal.

The CNTU told us that Montreal was like a city after an air raid. A number of industries in major sectors of the city have closed down as a direct result of the free trade agreement with the United States. As a matter of fact, 7,602 jobs have been lost in the Montreal area because of free trade.

The CNTU provided us with this list—and I will gladly pass it on to the minister or his representative—of all the businesses affected by job losses as a direct result of free trade, with the company names, date of closure or lay-off, and number of jobs lost. So this government would be well advised not to come and tell us that free trade is a good thing!

Free trade has done a lot of harm. It has seriously hurt a host of Quebec businesses. I would like the minister to reply.

Mr. Charles Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Employment and Immigration, I am pleased to provide some answers to the questions and points raised by my hon. colleague, the member from the Montreal area.

Mr. Speaker, I will let other more senior cabinet members answer the various initiatives proposed by the CNTU. I just found out about them when I heard the hon. member read them and I must tell you that some points certainly deserve attention and consideration, but others are not at all realistic. Removing the GST and changing the free trade agreement are not among the government's priorities. On the contrary, these measures were implemented to strengthen the economy of Canada, Quebec, and Montreal, and to make businesses more competitive.

In answer to the arguments made by my hon. colleague concerning closures and layoffs in some industries in Montreal, I would say it is not different from other places. In the early 1980s, the North Shore, which I represent, went through a frightful slump because the iron ore industry declined. Our iron ore exports dropped; north shore mine workers who had been there for thirty years lost their jobs. It is not unique to Montreal. It is happening across Canada.

The industrial structure of the country is changing every year and my colleague from Papineau—Saint-Michel could also have listed Montreal companies that have grown and expanded and reached new markets, obviously because of free trade.

An hon. member: Name them!

Mr. Langlois: My colleague asks me to name them. He says that he is prepared to table a list of companies that closed down; he should be just as able to table a list of companies that have grown and progressed and created new jobs, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

CROSS-BORDER SHOPPING

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that border shopping is a serious problem in eastern Ontario. Ernst and Young was commissioned by the Chamber of Commerce of the City of Kingston to undertake a study concerning the cross-border traffic in the Kingston area.

It did a study for the neighbouring riding of Leeds and Grenville at the bridge at Lansdowne, Ontario, which is represented by my seatmate.

Written declarations, which are filed when someone is returning to Canada with less than $300 in goods after an absence of more than seven days, increased the first quarter of 1988 to the current year from 6,600 declarations to 19,500 declarations, an increase of 197 per cent.

B-15 forms, which are filed at the border when duty or taxe is paid, increased from 2,100 for the similar period in 1988 to 13,200, an increase of 517 per cent in the three years.

Finally, verbal declarations, which are made when someone is returning to Canada with less than $100 in goods after an absence greater than 48 hours, increased

from a total of 46,000 for that same period in 1988 to 130,000 entries in 1991, an increase of 182 per cent.

Similarly, verbal declarations from 1990 to 1991, that is the one year period, for the same three months, increased 51 per cent.

The merchants of Kingston are well aware that Tory times are hard times. Some 33 increases in taxes since 1984 have crippled the Canadian economy. They are driving Canadians south of the border in increasing numbers, radically increasing numbers, as this study indicates.

The anticipated loss to the Kingston community to the purchases being made south of the border as a direct result of this government's ridiculous policies is about $100 million this year.

That is estimated to cost Kingstonians alone job losses of between 500 and 700 people. That is a disaster for the Kingston community. This particular problem is affecting all the communities along the St. Lawrence River that are close to the American border. It is time this government took action.

I asked the minister the other day to take action and I am asking now: what is the action going to be? We got a bafflegab answer.

Mr. Barry Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is aware that the minister and his department have undertaken an extensive consultation process with the people who are involved in the cross-border shopping issue.

We have to deal with it, and we are dealing with it through consultation with the stakeholders, including all three levels of government, the private sector, labour and consumer organizations, and we are making headway toward a better understanding of the complexity of the situation and needs for specific solutions.

The Minister of National Revenue has spent a great deal of time and effort ensuring that we find more efficient and effective ways of dealing with this matter. He has been addressing the issue of border congestion and I can assure the hon. member that he and his department will continue to develop ways to ease congestion, better ways for the travelling public, both Canadians and Americans.

There is no one solution to this complex problem, and I think the hon. member knows this. What may well be appropriate for eastern Ontario border locations may well be inappropriate for others. As the hon. member is no doubt aware, the minister and departmental officials at all levels have been meeting with local mayors, provincial government officials, and other concerned parties to ensure that the solutions for each border office are tailored to the needs of the community served.

Canada Customs continues to perform a delicate balancing act between enforcement and protection of Canada's borders while, at the same time, providing efficient service to the travelling public.

I would emphasize that only through consultation with members of local interest groups can we come up with well thought out solutions to the varied concerns of border communities. I would urge the member to encourage his constituents to join with business, labour, governments, and consumers in dealing with this issue.

EDMONTON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I rose yesterday, May 29, to ask a question of the Minister of Transport and that question was: Would he include a purchase clause in the lease agreement? In other words, would he make the lease agreement for the transfer of the Edmonton International Airport to the local authority a lease to purchase agreement?

He gave me the answer: "No." He did not want to privatize the airport. He missed the question because I was not talking about privatization. I was merely asking that a purchase clause be inserted into the lease agreement so that at some point in the future the local authority, the Edmonton Airport Authority, could exercise an option or negotiate with the federal government to take over the international airport.

The reason this is important is that when the local authority will lease the airport, it will put $10 million a year into infrastructure improvements each year for 10 years. It wants a little certainty about whether the return will come to it after this time. Also the people who will lend the money to the Edmonton airport authority would like some certainty as to who is to own the assets after this 10-year period. Having a lease agreement only is not very workable now.

In fact, I would like to quote a consultant which the federal government consulted on this issue. The consultant, the Royal Bank of Canada, said: "We believe it is much cleaner to avoid these issues entirely by leaving ownership of the assets with the federal government indefinitely". They would like to have the assets owned by the federal government indefinitely. They would like a reversion clause in the lease agreement so all the infrastructure improvements might revert back to the federal government.

This is very unfair to the local authority. The government wanted to privatize it at first. It was realized that maybe some local authorities might fail and the government might wish to take it back. The government started out with a lease to purchase option. In fact, the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada went to Edmonton in 1989 and signed a memorandum of agreement for a lease to purchase. Two years later the purchase option was taken out.

I would like an answer tonight whether the parliamentary secretary, the member for Calgary Southeast, will make a commitment to ask the Minister of Transport to put a purchase option into the lease agreement. It will not cost them anything. It is just an option that the two of them get together near the end of the lease to discuss terms and allow the airport authority to take over and purchase the airport after it has put in $100 million or more worth of infrastructure improvements.

The building is now 30 years old and a consultant hired by the local airport authority has said the building might have to be replaced. Transport Canada has been very negligent in the upkeep of the building and it is very important.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member if he will make a commitment to go to the Minister of Transport and have this clause added.

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's question and also his efforts on behalf of his constituents in Edmonton to get involved in the negotiations between the department and the local airport authority.

However, my hon. friend may not be aware of all the background that went into the developing of the government's position regarding lease versus sale. I can assure the hon. member that the matter was thoroughly examined and not just by bureaucrats.

As you may recall, when the government approved the principles for the creation and operation of local airport authorities in May, 1989, it gave a specific negotiating mandate to the Minister of Transport. This mandate states that the airports are to be transferred on terms to be negotiated to newly created community based non-profitable organizations, the local airport authorities. In other words, they were not to be privatized.

This is not to say that the transfer will disregard sound business principles. On the contrary, the mandate also requires that the airports be transferred on the basis of fair market value with appropriate consideration for their future earning potential.

Finally, the government, not the department, decided for several reasons that negotiations were to be initiated on the basis of transfer by way of long-term lease for a number of reasons.

For one, it was felt that the sale of airports to new and unproven business organizations might be seen by the public as putting at risk these essential elements of our transportation infrastructure.

As the hon. member noted, early in 1989 Transport Canada's airport transfer task force retained the corporate finance division of the Royal Bank of Canada to report on the financing for local airport authorities. The report considered the question of lease versus sale from the perspective of lenders and investors and took into account the legal, financial, and perceptual implications.

To put it succinctly, the Royal Bank found that from a technical perspective for financiers, it does not matter if the airport authority owns or leases the property and assets as long as it has the unfettered right to use the facilities and, more importantly, the authority to generate revenues from the airport's assets.

They also concluded that they believed it to be preferable in Canada for the airports to be leased to the local airport authorities rather than sold.

I can also add that the conclusion that leasing is preferable to an outright sale has been strongly endorsed by the airport authority advisory board. This board was constituted in 1989 to provide the Minister of Transport with advice from a private sector perspective on all aspects of the airport transfer initiative.

Officials at Transport Canada and the Department of Justice are meeting regularly with the four local airport authorities and I believe that progress has been made within the framework set out by the government.

The hon. member's interest in this matter is most appreciated, and I sincerely hope that my comments have alleviated his concern.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock a.m. tomorrow pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.25 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 31, 1991

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—CANADA POST

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent) moved:

That this House call upon the government to institute policies that would require that service to Canadians be the priority for Canada Post.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure today to bring forward concerns I have heard over the last two years I have been in Parliament about what primarily is happening in Canada Post, concerns which people in my riding and across Canada have voiced over the difficulties they are experiencing with service within that organization.

• (1010)

If we consider the situation around the world, probably the most changing technology is in communication. It is my opinion that Canada Post represents in Canada a very, very important means of communication which must serve Canadians to its utmost, must smooth its process and make certain that every Canadian, whether living in the far north, metropolitan Toronto, Vancouver or the maritimes, receives a service that is first and foremost number one.

How Canada Post Corporation deals with this type of quality service which we need is going to be fundamentally important to all of us. In rural Canada its dealings with this type of service seems quite strange to me. In rural Canada corporate post offices are being closed; in rural Canada the 5,221 post offices that existed in 1986 are dwindling. Today about 1,000 of those post offices have already been closed or converted. What has this done to rural Canada? This has taken away the only federal presence in many small communities. It has taken down the federal flag in those small communities. It has left those small communities without the pride and the privilege of Canada's presence.

This has eliminated about 3,000 jobs at the same time. Those jobs in small communities are very important. In most cases they are relatively low-paying jobs, but I think another significant point here is that 80 per cent of those jobs are for women. We are seeing women in small rural communities losing the privilege of working and helping others in those communities.

We have eliminated the one-stop service of Canada Post. In certain cases, mail is now picked up in one location and other postal services, the services one would expect to have, at counters, are being done elsewhere. In some cases, rural Canadians have to travel as much as 12 miles in order to receive service today which they could have counted on just a few short years ago.

What have we heard the government say on this issue? The government and Canada Post Corporation maintain that changes in postal service, for example a closure or a conversion, would only take place under certain circumstances. Canada Post and the government have suggested these circumstances would only be through resignation, retirement or promotion of a postmaster, loss of a postal site, or local initiative. In other words, they have very clearly set out the premise for which closures would occur. These are called by the government "natural occurrences". The correspondence that I have been receiving suggests that natural occurrences are not the means by which many Canada Post facilities are being shut down.

A small community, Mossley, Ontario, stated in a letter to me just a short while ago: "Canada Post Corporation has promised and continues to advertise that communities of Canada are given a 90-day period of meaningful consultation before community consent". A period of consultation was never offered to the Mossley

community. The Mossley post office will be shut down on June 28, 1991.

It is interesting to note that I have a letter from the member for London—Middlesex who represents Mossley: "By working together, as Minister Andre said himself on Mossley Heritage Day, June 6, 1987, we can ensure that the Moseley post office remains operational for at least another 122 years". It is being closed this June. What a change in position.

I also have the notes from the statement of the minister at that same meeting. He very clearly stated that Mossley post office was secure, adding that he hoped it would remain that way for another 122 years.

The minister, speaking to a group of heritage people in Mossley in 1987 suggested that this government would protect our post office and make sure it remains open. Now, five years later, there is a total change of commitment.

It appears that the guidelines, the rules and the regulations that have been set forth for rural closures are changing day by day, month by month and week by week, but not to improve service to Canadians. Let's be very clear. The primary goal of Canada Post service to Canadians is the goal that is being torn apart by the actions of this government. However, a very unnatural occurrence happens every time a Canada Post office gets closed in these communities.

Across Canada, 157 post offices have been targeted for closure or conversion in a very short time. Across Canada, another 250 jobs will be lost. I would like to point out that I have a listing of post offices that are scheduled to be closed. I can say very clearly that there is a full sheet of the names of post offices to be closed in Ontario. Post offices are to be closed in maritime Canada; Newfoundland, Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and in Quebec. There are 63 closures scheduled for Ontario, 18 for Manitoba, 22 for Saskatchewan, five for Alberta and seven for British Columbia. Every province in this country will have several closures.

This list, by the way, comes from negotiations with Canada Post, and it is a Canada Post target list.

An hon. member: The hit list.

Mr. Pickard: A very good point.

We realize that we are talking about 150 communities which are going to lose their postal outlets the way they see them existing today.

Across Canada, another Canadian institution will be dismantled. In front of every post office, the presence and the pride of all Canadians flies. We know that when people see our flag in our communities, it brings pride and respect to them, to their community and to their families. When we see the elimination of post offices, we also see the elimination of the symbol "Canada" in these small communities. That is what is happening. That is what this government is permitting Canada Post Corporation to do.

The government will argue that natural occurrences give rise to Canada Post action, that in each of the 157 cases a natural occurrence has happened. Did it? Or did Canada Post utilize a January 1991 agreement with the Postmasters Association to push nature along, an agreement which stated that over an interim period of time it would eliminate part-time workers?

Where a Postmaster had retired or was urged out of the job by certain offerings of Canada Post, the post office became available to be shut down. I think there are very many actions taken in Canada Post to unnaturally close post offices. In some post offices, term employees have been doing the work of regular employees for over two, three, four years and longer.

• (1020)

The work has been getting done. The people have been working for Canada Post, but now those people are done.

What criteria does Canada Post use to decide on post offices to be saved or post offices to be sacrificed? In 1991, in Quebec, Canada Post has targeted 12 post office conversions to date. Yet, Canada Post Corporation has advertised to staff 12 group-type post offices and seven grade-type post offices.

The group-type post offices are very small. Hopefully, Canada Post will staff these and will not let the competitions expire without filling the positions.

Why do 12 small post offices close and 12 group and 7 grade post offices have post office job competitions? What are the criteria? Where is the quality of service? Where is the equality of service for 7 communities in

Newfoundland and Labrador, 15 in Nova Scotia, 4 in Prince Edward Island, 2 in New Brunswick, 12 in Quebec, 63 in Ontario, 18 in Manitoba, 24 in Saskatchewan, 5 in Alberta and 7 in British Columbia?

Equality will end this summer as we see Canada Post's massive campaign to convert the 1991 crop of post offices into oblivion. It is not only through Canada Post Office conversions that the government and Canada Post attacked rural Canada. Earlier this year, rural Canadians dodged another bullet fired by the government with, as a result of the government's policy direction, the elimination of a postal subsidy program. Canada Post was preparing to pass increases along to community weekly newspapers, which would have increased mailing costs from 200 per cent to 1,000 per cent.

How does that affect the lot of our average Canadians? Letters have come in to my office, and I thought, Madam Speaker, I would relate to you one which came from my home community. This was sent in to the *Kingsville Reporter*, in my home town, by a person who was very distressed at the fact that these postal rate increases would alter her ability to have the newspaper delivered.

"I was just ready to seal my envelope with a cheque for the *Reporter* covering the period to June 1, when—cancellation—cancellation when I read your editorial. I do not feel we can pay all that extra money to a government I absolutely abhor. It has brought nothing but depression and disillusionment into my life. Now that we are both retired and watching our pennies a little more carefully, I cannot, in conscience, let Jack send off the subscription cheque for such an increased amount."

Now we are going to hear from the government that it has put a delay on those rate subsidy changes. However, it has only put a delay on rate subsidy changes in postal code 2. Postal codes 3 and 4 already have those subsidies decreased. They are going on presently and it appears that by March those increases will go ahead.

I have talked to people from many, many, many small newspapers across this country and it has been very, very clear. Loss of subscription, loss of revenue, loss of news and loss of communication is the result of this government's callous way of looking at subsidies in rural Canada.

We have seen losses in transportation: VIA Rail and Air Canada. We have seen losses in CBC. We have seen losses with Canadian small newspapers. I wonder: would the same actions be taken against Canada's daily newspapers if in the same situation? Would this government stand against the great dailies in this country? I do not believe so. I believe the actions are usually taken against the small who are unable as a unit to protect themselves as well.

The postal rate subsidy given to rural Canada was given for a very specific reason. I would like to take a second to quote Bill Pratt, President of Canadian Community Newspapers Association. In his article he states:

> I mean, dammit, I thought we had a pretty good relationship going for the past couple of centuries. There was even a time when politicians thought newspapers were important. The thoughtful knew newspapers could be a valuable tool for bringing people together through sharing of information.
>
> Some politicians encouraged establishment of papers, and, because papers were a vital part of the political and social infrastructure, they decided to subsidize delivery of those papers to readers through the postal service.
>
> The relationship began to cool a few years back. I'm not sure why, but I suspect it was about the time they invented "Canada Post".
>
> I like to think we might discover some intelligent life form in Ottawa: that someone will realize community newspapers can mean a lot of business for Canada Post at very little real cost;

I think he is putting on the line a very direct comment: communication in small, rural Canada, communication in distant regions is just as important as communication in major cities. The government should be concerned about those people in outreach areas who need a little help because of the vast size of this country and because the local communication in smaller towns is not as efficient as *The Globe and Mail*. They also cannot have advertising and other costs that one might get from a major newspaper.

Coming from a community like Windsor, seeing a small newspaper close is going to be very drastic to that community. We saw CBC close; we saw the end of local news on television. Are we to see the end of local news in the media, in the local newspaper now? It appears we

are heading in that direction under this government and Canada Post's policy.

Early this year, rural Canadians did dodge that bullet, but I would suggest to this government at this point in time that it make every effort to re-analyse postal subsidies and not just say it is going to put a moratorium on it for nine months; re-analyse it and look at a fair system for all Canadians across this country.

I believe it is extremely important that rural Canada gets its fair share.

What I would like to do is go back to a statement that was made when this newspaper legislation came in. The newspaper legislation did come in on the basis that the government House leader, in response to a question I had in the House, said that rate increases would only be 25 per cent. On further inspection, rate increases for rural newspapers came up as high as 1,000 per cent. I think the decision was made on a very ill-timed, very ill-conceived bit of knowledge that the government had. It has certainly hampered rural Canada tremendously.

Finally I would like to come to the point of the government's idea that it has become a much more lean, efficient organization for Canadians. We have heard the government brag about the profits that Canada Post has shown. The government, for its part, did not listen to all Canadians on concerns, but it certainly was very proud that in the last year, 1988-89, it showed a profit of $96 million and that in 1989-90 it showed $149 million.

• (1030)

May I just point out that in those two years it also received $500 million in subsidy from the Canadian government. That certainly throws a different angle on what it is bragging about. The profits of Canada Post have only been gained through a $500 million subsidy.

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold): Madam Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague for his very thorough analysis of the problems which are facing Canada Post at this time.

He mentioned the problems in his area of southwestern Ontario. I too come from a highly populated area in the Niagara Peninsula. He mentioned some assurances that he received from Canada Post at an earlier time.

My question to him concerns the fact that assurances were given to him directly, and to the people in his area, about keeping the post offices open, and he used the term I believe, "at this time". I too have received that kind of assurance from Canada Post. I was told that the post offices in Welland, Thorold, St. Catharines and Niagara Falls will be kept open, notwithstanding the fact that Canada Post has put in a huge sorting plant in Stoney Creek.

I would like his opinion as to how much credence I should put into these assurances that the post offices for which I am responsible in the Niagara Peninsula would not probably suffer the same fate as many of his have suffered.

Mr. Pickard: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank very much my colleague for that very good question. It does bring into perspective an issue that I happened to see yesterday here in this House: statement one, statement two. It appears that from time to time, and I am not sure how long a time period, everything changes. The example of Mossley in my opinion well illustrates a situation where a minister said: "This post office will remain open for another 122 years. No questions. No worries. No problems". However, just a few short years later the post office is scheduled for closure.

There are 157, and I have got the listings of each one of those post office here in this document which came from the negotiations with the union and Canada Post—it is Canada Post's documentation—closures listed on this document.

We know that what is said at one time, over a long period of time, could change. It seems that there have been statements made politically which change very rapidly. I have a major concern that we do not have solid policies suggesting where we are going. We see changes occurring. That type of thing happened, I believe, with the postal rate increase.

The opposition on this side of the House and the back bench on that side of the House shook enough fences that there was a delay in the increase. It was very political.

This government must examine its policies, clarify its policies and tell the Canadian public where we are going—not piecemeal, and chop, chop, chop Canada Post apart.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Madam Speaker, I too want to compliment my colleague from Essex-Kent for an excellent presentation on his valid conclusions as to what is happening with Canada Post in this country, and where we as a nation should be going.

He mentions several regional areas in the country that are being hurt and also the people in this country who are being hurt. For many years the rural post office was what bound communities together, it was the meeting place where people gathered.

With our current great concern with national unity, this should be a major consideration of this government when it considers closing rural post offices.

My question has an economic basis. If we examine the position of Canada Post during the past two years, we will find it is true that on the books Canada Post shows profits of $96 million in 1988-89 and $149 million in 1989-90. This is what Canada Post shows as a profit. Yet for the same two years almost $500 million was paid to Canada Post as subsidies to offset certain mailing costs. That eliminates that so-called profit that Canada Post is claiming.

For almost two years the 46,000 CUPW workers have been without a contract. Since July 1989, 46,000 CTC employees have not received wage increases. While Canada Post boasts of profits, it conveniently takes almost $500 million in subsidies and does not give its work force a raise.

What would happen if these points were factored into the statements of Canada Post Corporation? I am sure there would be no so-called profits, and the numbers would be inclined to prove it.

Mr. Pickard: I thank my colleague for a very astute question, one that illustrates our consternation. Many times in this Parliament partial truths are told, the whole picture never being revealed.

The government has been telling us for two years that Canada Post is in the black, that Canada Post is a profit-making corporation with profits of approximately $100 million two years ago and $150 million last year.

That is total fiction. The truth is that we support the Canadian government in its endeavour to subsidize Canada Post, don't get us wrong on that. However, the truth has to be told that there is a $500 million subsidy to Canada Post for regions, for disabled people. Those subsidies must remain for communication.

The other point made by my colleague is that two years of negotiations have not brought a contract with Canada Post employees yet it states that it has a profit of $100 million, $150 million. Once it settles that negotiation there will be retroactive pay which has not been taken into account anywhere in the documents of Canada Post, meaning that the $100 million and $150 million—and we are talking about 60,000 employees—may not all be there. It may be another sham.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Youth), Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to speak to the members of this House about the services offered by the Canada Post Corporation.

[*English*]

Canada Post is organized in 10 divisions with a head office located in Ottawa. Canada Post has a national customer base of about 26 million people and over 1 million businesses served by more than 16,700 locations where postal products and services are available.

With approximately 47,000 full and part-time employees Canada Post also deals with more than 7,800 entrepreneurs across the country who provide mail transport and delivery in urban, suburban and rural areas. Canada Post delivers, on average, 40 million pieces of mail every working day, serves over 11 million addresses in every part of Canada, walks, drives and flies over some of the most formidable terrain in the world in some of the worst weather conditions. It runs a network of 26 major mechanized processing plants, buys more transportation services in Canada than any other corporation, and Canada Post makes a profit.

• (1040)

When Canada Post became a Crown corporation, its revenues were in the $1.5 billion range and yet it had no modern standards, systems or procedures and no balance sheet or general ledger in place.

The management team had to put these into place to improve and expand service and break even financially while business was proceeding full speed ahead.

In its bleakest year, Canada Post cost taxpayers around $600 million. That was more than nine years ago. Since then the corporation has moved from that deficit to a profit of $96 million in the fiscal year 1988–89, which was the first in over 30 years, and to $149 million profit in the fiscal year 1989–90. That profit allows Canada Post Corporation to invest in new equipment which will improve postal services.

The biggest story, which you do not see in the headlines, is that at the same time Canada Post has improved the reliability of and accessibility to its services, increases in the basic letter rate have been limited to less than the rate of inflation. In real terms, the price of a stamp has actually decreased. Canada Post is committed to giving Canadians more reliable, accessible and affordable service.

Let me explain what the people at Canada Post have been doing to improve postal service in each of these areas. With respect to reliability, Canada Post has set up a program of operational improvements for collecting, processing and delivering mail. Uniform standard systems and procedures were introduced at all processing plants so that mail would move in a co-ordinated, predictable way across the country.

For example, a special system for colour coding the mail has been instituted. This allows employees to designate which mail should be treated with priority within a postal facility in order to maintain service standards.

[*Translation*]

The corporation's National Control Centre is linked to nine divisional control centres, and its role is to monitor mail flow 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Corporation management meets every morning at the control centre to evaluate the results of the past 24 hours and measure them against projections. This procedure is essential, Madam Speaker, because in this way, Canada Post can evaluate its performance in terms of meeting its commitments and take specific action to make it even more competitive on the market.

[*English*]

This state of the art technology has won the corporation international acclaim. Canada Post is vigorously marketing the management system on the international scene with success in New Zealand and the United States.

One may recall news articles announcing a multi-million dollar contract with the United States Postal Service and Systemhouse, based on technology used by Canada Post. Clearly defined standards for the delivery of properly prepared letter mail were established, and an independent firm of auditors, Ernst and Young, was hired to measure Canada Post's performance regarding those standards and publish the results every quarter.

Canada Post is one of the first postal administrations in the world to have its performance independently measured and the results published. Other postal administrations such as USPS have implemented a similar procedure and the results show that they have a long way to go to achieve similar results to Canada Post.

The delivery time standard here in Canada for properly prepared letter mail is within two business days within the same urban centre, within three business days between major urban centres in the same province, and within four business days between major urban centres in different provinces.

[*Translation*]

In fact, Madam Speaker, the results have confirmed Canada Post's progress. For instance, Canada Post is the first postal administration in the world, as I said earlier, to have its performance measured by an independent auditor and to have these findings made public.

The last report by the firm of Ernst & Young for the quarter ending in March 1991 shows that, at the national level, 97 per cent of local mail was delivered in accordance with the standards to which Canada Post is committed. These performance standards were met, Madam Speaker, while setting a priority on outstanding customer-oriented service. Three factors are involved in providing this service and maintaining this priority:

reliability, accessibility and reasonable cost of products offered.

To achieve this, Madam Speaker, the Canada Post Corporation embarked on an operations enhancement program for mail pick–up, processing and delivery. It has put in place the requisite standards, systems and procedures in all its facilities, to ensure that the mail is routed across the country in a manner that is co–ordinated, controlled and predictable.

[*English*]

The people at Canada Post are constantly looking for ways to improve service performance to those set standards. By using resources more efficiently, better service to customers can be provided and costs for providing the service can be managed more responsibly.

Another indication of reliability is the greater volume of mail delivered. That volume has increased by 38 per cent since 1981. By trusting Canada Post to deliver more of their mail, people are showing confidence in its ability to provide efficient and reliable service.

Canada Post promised to make its products and services more accessible. The corporation's goal is to make it easier for customers to buy stamps, mail letters and receive packages. That is why Canada Post is extending its century–old traditional partnerships with local businesses and setting up retail postal outlets with the people who best understand retail sales: the small businessman or, as I should say, the small business person.

This program will increase the number of outlets by more than 25 per cent over the next five years. This is only the beginning. Canada Post has one of the most extensive delivery networks in the world, serving over 11 million addresses throughout the country. Over each of the next five years, an estimated 225,000 new addresses will be added to this network.

One of the biggest demographic changes in Canada over the past 20 years or so has been the growth of sprawling suburbs around our major cities and towns. The community mailbox is one method used here as well as in the United States to extend service to suburban areas. One of the advantages of community mailboxes is that they have special compartments for packages.

At the present time, the corporation has approximately 27,400 community mailbox sites across the country serving approximately 712,000 customers. Under the Community Mailbox Implementation Program, a further 6,000 sites are scheduled to be opened in the fiscal year 1991–92, which will serve about 157,000 additional customers.

Retail postal outlets located in communities across Canada offer extended hours, giving customers greater access to products and services Monday to Friday and on the weekends.

Canada Post business is increasingly meeting its competition, not only private courier companies, but the avalanche of electronic message transmission technologies. In order to stay in business, it must provide its customers with products and services which meet their needs. Canada Post is doing just that. A system for letters and parcels which allows both customers and commercial customers to choose the best speed/cost combination for their needs has now been introduced through various parcel products.

Canada Post wants to regain a significant part of the parcel delivery market. It is making parcel products more competitive and attractive to commercial customers, providing both regular and expedited services.

• (1050)

In meeting the challenge of the electronic age, Canada Post offers customers electronic mail, Telepost, Intelpost, Envoy Post and volume electronic mail, which usually provide next day delivery. For an added cost, Telepost and Intelpost can provide same–day delivery for top priority messages. Priority Courier will deliver urgent documents the next morning, guaranteed. Canada Post provides timely information on delivery status and location via the track and trace system. Special letter products offer unfeatured courier service which also guarantees delivery within the purchased time frame as early as the next day, or the customer receives a new special letter envelope of equal or greater value, free.

The corporation has also made significant inroads in the commercial market with its own unique advertising medium called Ad Mail. Using the postal code in combination with demographic and socio–economic data allows Canada Post to compile a variety of data on any targeted market. Adding this to the extensive network and flexibility makes it possible for mailers to distribute

advertising material in areas as small as one carrier route or as large as an entire region, to all the rural communities in a given area or to all of Canada.

Another commitment to Canadians is affordability. When Canada Post became a corporation nearly nine years ago, Canadians were promised they would get their money's worth. Since then, basic letter rate increases have been kept below the rate of inflation. Comparisons are often made between postal rates in Canada and other countries without taking into account the different wage rates, geographic sizes and population densities involved.

Canada is the second-largest country in the world and our relatively small population is widely dispersed. By comparison, all of Great Britain would fit into an area the size of the maritimes. The basic letter rate when measured in terms of the minutes of labour required for the average worker to earn the price of a stamp is lower than in many countries. In comparison to the major OCE countries, Canada ranks second only to the U.S. In Canada, mail is moved from St. John's, Newfoundland to Vancouver, B.C. for the same price as between Ottawa and Hull.

By any yardstick, that is value for money. Canada Post is delivering on its promise of better service to its customers.

In 1989-90, as was indicated earlier, the profit was $149 million. While this amount may appear large in absolute terms, on revenues of $3.6 billion it is small. It represents a return on equity of 10.5 per cent and is a step toward the industry norms of 14 to 15 per cent. The corporation has made its second consecutive profit and for the first time has paid dividends of $60 million to its shareholder, the Government of Canada. That means that Canadian taxpayers are no longer subsidizing postal operations. They now only pay once for their postage stamp.

To Canadian businesses, which provide approximately 80 per cent of the postal volume, the availability of reliable, accessible and affordable postal service is essential. Inefficiencies in the postal network mean higher costs for businesses, increasing their vulnerability in the highly competitive marketplace.

To build the postal service for the future, Canada Post must maintain its profitability. The corporation must maintain its profitability and invest those profits into revitalizing its aging plants and equipment, while continuing the improvement in efficiency. It must continue to increase volume by providing services which meet market needs and focus even more on serving its customers well.

Through the 1990s and into the 21st century, Canada Post will continue to improve upon its success by providing Canadians with reliable, accessible and affordable products and services specifically adapted to the needs of the Canadian consumer.

It is clear that the opposition, through its statements, would have the government direct Canada Post to move itself backward to those dark days when it was a main drain on the Canadian taxpayer.

Mr. Pickard: We had good service.

Mr. Cadieux: I do not have much more to say. I will finish soon and you will have your chance to address whatever issue you want to address.

The responsibility of Canada Post is to collect and move the mail efficiently while at the same time maintaining self-sufficiency. It has done it. It is doing it and it will continue to do it.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Madam Speaker, in listening to the hon. minister's speech, I could not help but think about how hard the Canada Post public relations people must have been working last night to prepare.

That was an incredible statement of statistics supporting the national objectives of the corporation. Not once in the minister's speech did I hear him talk about the needs of the Canadian people.

He talks about the market needs, but whose market are we talking about? Are we talking about the market needs of Canwood, Marcelin, Gallivan and Edam, which are communities in my constituency? The market needs of those communities are directly related to the service component of Canada Post.

I did not hear one word from this government or from this minister about commitment to the policy of serving the needs of rural Canadians.

My question to the minister in the short period of time I have is twofold: First, is there a commitment from this government to needs of rural Canada? Second, when I listened to his speech, he talked about colour coding and

the way in which colour coding speeds the process of mail delivery. Is the minister aware that in colour coding blue is for Monday, yellow is for Tuesday and red is for Wednesday? If a red box arrives on Monday, it sits in the goldarn post office until Wednesday until it goes out.

That mail is not being processed to service the needs of that community. It is being serviced to meet the needs of Canada Post. I would like to know if the minister is aware of that and if he is prepared to do anything to correct it.

Mr. Cadieux: Madam Speaker, in his introductory remarks, my hon. colleague said that he could not help but listen to the speech. I suppose that is flattering and I thank him for listening, even if he could not help it.

On the other hand, I think perhaps that my hon. colleague, when he eventually gets the "blues", will re-read the speech very carefully and perhaps reassess his statement in general.

It is always odd to hear the opposition members of this House bitch about statistics when they are not in their favour.

Whenever a statistic comes up, regardless of the subject, if it happens to be damaging to the government they quote them every hour of the day.

In this case we have statistics which demonstrate that not only does the service improve but that the customers are happy with the service, including those in the rural areas.

Why should we not use those statistics? We cannot expect the opposition to acknowledge or even underline *en passant* that the majority of Canadians are happy with the improvements brought about by Canada Post which are directly for customers in general, including those individual customers in rural areas and not just the commercial customers as my hon. friend tries to demonstrate.

A little bit of clarity and honesty in statements in this House with respect to what the Government of Canada is doing for Canadians would be appreciated once in a while.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: It being eleven o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to statements by members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

STRAWBERRY GROWERS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Madam Speaker, strawberry growers in Nova Scotia have recently been advised that the application of federal sizing standards will be enforced more rigorously than in previous years. The variance standard will require strawberries to meet standards within one-eighth of an inch in diameter. This precise measurement would prevent our growers from being competitive and will result in much of the crop being left in the fields and many part-time jobs being lost.

In March, the horticultural council passed a resolution increasing the allowed variance to one-quarter of an inch and although it has been approved in principle, the department has advised that the change will not be implemented in time for this year's crop.

I ask the Minister of Agriculture to address this situation and ensure that any unnecessary obstacles are removed and that this change be implemented as soon as possible.

* * *

MYANMAR

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Madam Speaker, this week marked the first anniversary of the democratic election in Myanmar, formerly Burma, during which the National League for Democracy won a landslide victory. Yet these newly elected government members are not allowed to take their seats in Parliament. The transfer of power seems no closer today than it did a year ago.

By April of this year, the military junta has arrested almost 80 of 457 elected NLD members. There are over 500 party officials now in detention. Reports of torture abound, and at least three parliamentarians have died while in prison.

I call upon the Government of Canada to demand the following on behalf of all fair-minded Canadians: First, the immediate transfer of power to the democratically elected government of Myanmar, the immediate release from prison of all members of the National League for Democracy, and that Canada officially recognize the duly elected government of Myanmar.

The Government of Canada must then bring all its influence to bear at the United Nations so that the rest of the world can also begin to do what is right for the people of Myanmar.

* * *

PEPIN-ROBARTS COMMISSION

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Madam Speaker, it is interesting and significant to note that in 1979 the task force on Canadian unity, commonly known as the Pepin—Robarts commission, said that our French-speaking minorities will make more headway as a result of social consensus and provincial legislation than they will from constitutional guarantees.

That commission went on to recommend that each provincial legislature should have the right to determine the official language or languages for that province. Some are now suggesting that this 1979 task force was ahead of its time.

If, as the Prime Minister says, this House of Commons is the real constituent assembly, should we not dust off the Pepin—Robarts report and openly debate its pros and cons?

* * *

HAMILTON HARBOUR COMMISSION

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Madam Speaker, the mayor of the city of Hamilton has written me a letter advising me that at the City Council meeting of May 14, 1991, a resolution was passed condemning: "the actions of three local Conservative MPs in refusing to meet with the Finance Administration Committee to discuss the composition of the Hamilton Harbour Commission".

Some hon. members: Shame, shame.

Mr. Keyes: As most members will know, Canadians have the right to demand that members of Parliament must be accountable, not only to their constituents, but also to their communities and institutions. When a member fails to even meet with officials of their own city, town or region, there develops a lack of trust and confidence.

The resolution also stated that the Prime Minister would be made aware of the dereliction of duty by the three Tory MPs and that the City Council would instead meet with the Liberal MPs from the area. One Hamilton alderman summed up Hamilton's frustrations with the members of Lincoln, Burlington and Hamilton—Wentworth this way: "When our local MPs adamantly refuse to talk to City Council, we have a real serious problem."

* * *

TOBACCO INDUSTRY

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Madam Speaker, documents filed before the Quebec Superior Court indicate the insidious, pernicious and unethical tactics used by tobacco industry advertisers to sell death to youth and other targeted consumers.

A 1988 advertising plan notes that very young starter smokers choose *Export A* because it provides them with an instant badge of masculinity, appeals to their rebellious nature, and establishes their position among their peers.

Similarly, we know young women of child-bearing age are manipulated into smoking by advertising which associates smoking with slimness, attractive appearance and popularity. What incredible gall do these poor corporate citizens have, to challenge federal legislation banning their obscene advertising and recently to ask smokers to protest tax increases on cigarettes that certainly do not compensate for either the public cost or private suffering caused by tobacco addiction and the poor societal values they propagate? I urge a complete ban on advertising and promotion of cigarettes in Canada and exemption from copyright legislation for educators and critics of such advertising.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Madam Speaker, fishermen in Cheticamp, Nova Scotia, are occupying the Fisheries and Oceans office today to protest the federal government's mismanagement of the fisheries resource in their area.

The problems facing east coast fisheries have been wreaking havoc on the economy and the social fabric of maritime communities. Years of Tory and Liberal fiddling has done nothing to provide for a stable and prosperous fishing industry in the Atlantic and the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

I spoke to the fishermen this morning and they told me that they are being squeezed by declining stocks, inequitable quotas and increasingly Draconian UIC requirements.

The government has to sit down with all sectors of the inshore fisheries to work out a fair and equitable distribution of quotas and plan for a fisheries with a future.

Express your support for the fishermen. Phone them in Cheticamp at 902–224–2017. Tell the fisheries minister as well. Call him here in Ottawa at 613–992–3474.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Madam Speaker, last week I rose to protest the human rights violations against Jews in Syria.

Today, I rise to protest the bizarre and inhumane treatment of two particular Syrian Jews, Selim Swed and his brother Elie.

They have been imprisoned without charge for three and a half years. They were beaten and tortured during this period and were ultimately brought before a tribunal last week.

Their *in camera* trial lasted only a few minutes. They were not allowed to speak or have a lawyer. They were sentenced to six and a half years in prison, even though no charges were ever made public.

I call upon the Secretary of State for External Affairs to make an urgent representation to President Havez Al–Assad on behalf of the Sweds before the 15 day clemency period expires on June 5, next week.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, the Department of Employment and Immigration recently handed out scores of lapel pins to its employees in Kingston. The pins were stamped with the logo "C–21", a reference, of course, to that pernicious piece of legislation which reduced unemployment insurance benefits for thousands of Canadians and drove up premiums for millions more.

The pins are in recognition of work done by public servants to learn and implement the new act. The employees were not amused. Over 60 pins have been delivered to my office in protest. With the government claiming the cupboard is bare, it is hard to understand how the department could spend money on pins, bells and whistles and not on salaries.

To add insult to injury, this government, which is supposedly doing all it can to alleviate the losses being caused by cross–border shopping, did not even adhere to its "buy Canadian" policy. Stamped on the back of the hooks of the pins are the words "Made in the U.S.A.".

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Madam Speaker, the decision by the Solicitor General to reinstate contracts to provinces and municipalities for the provision of RCMP services must be applauded.

So must the efforts of my New Democratic colleagues, as well as representatives from municipalities across Canada, who fought together to convince the government of the error of its ways.

Extending RCMP funding provisions, initially terminated on March 31, demonstrates that the government has finally listened.

While the Solicitor General has indicated the contract extension is only for one year, it provides provinces and municipalities an opportunity to properly negotiate a new agreement.

It also provides further opportunity for my colleagues and I to press our position that the federal government should not renege on traditional funding for provincial and municipal RCMP services.

Speaking on behalf of B.C. municipalities, the Solicitor General's decision demonstrates his good judgement. Speaking on behalf of my B.C. colleagues, it is proof positive that things can happen when you have an effective voice in opposition.

• (1110)

HOUSING CO-OPERATIVES

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Madam Speaker, tomorrow I will officially open the Artspace Housing Co-operative in Edmonton East. This will be the first Edmonton housing co-operative to operate under new CMHC guidelines which will house more lower and moderate income families than previous housing co-operatives.

A surcharge will come into effect if a family's income is or rises above $54,000. This will ensure government funds are targeted to those most in need.

I congratulate the government on implementing its new guidelines.

In another co-op in Edmonton East, the Sundance Housing Co-operative, there are 30 families on the waiting list. There is an NDP MLA and an NDP member of Parliament living there, the member for Edmonton East, both high income individuals. They are shutting out these families from affordable accommodation. This is a travesty perpetrated by two free-loading politicians and they should have the decency to get out.

* * *

THE SEVENTEEN DAYS OF JUNE

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Madam Speaker, beginning on June 8 in Winnipeg, the largest gathering of aboriginal people in North America will begin a major convention entitled "The Seventeen Days of June".

First peoples in Canada are wondering what will be the federal government's recognition of this event. Organizers have asked the government to support their efforts and the Secretary of State has said no.

Distinguished Canadians, including Peter Gzowski, David Suzuki and nearly 500 chiefs from across Canada, will be participating. The Assembly of First Nations will be meeting to elect a new grand chief. Will the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development be there?

A children's program has been planned, as well as an arts and cultural show, an elders' forum and an international pow-wow.

Canadians would like to know why the federal government would have a portfolio to supposedly support events of such historical proportion when ministers cannot find the will to participate. The international pow-wow may even have to be cancelled without help from the Secretary of State. This is truly indicative of how the federal government really treats matters important to aboriginal peoples in Canada.

* * *

TOBACCO-FREE CANADA

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, this morning in Montreal the hon. Jean Corbeil, Minister of Transport, is speaking at a ceremony where the Canadian Council on Smoking and Health is presenting Air Canada with an award for its leadership in helping to create a tobacco-free Canada. Members may be aware that today is World No-Tobacco Day.

On January 1, 1990 the Non-Smokers Health Act came into force. On that day, all inter-city buses became totally smoke-free at the owner's request. Smoking on trains was reduced to one-third of every third car and terminals and stations were limited to one-third of the area accessible to the general public.

With respect to airlines, the minister banned smoking on all Canadian registered aircraft on flights of six hours or less. For longer flights, a progressive reduction in the number of seats reserved for smoking passengers is still in effect. These numbers will be reduced by 25 per cent each June 30, until all flights become totally non-smoking on July 1, 1993, making Canada a world leader in the elimination of smoking in air travel.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC'S REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Madam Speaker, more bad news for Quebec! Ministers Michel Pagé, André Bourbeau, Marc-Yvan Côté, Lucienne Robillard, Claude Ryan and Gilles Rémillard have had reason to criticize the federal government, and now Yvon Picotte, Minister of Regional Development, is up in arms against Ottawa's intrusion in the area of regional development.

At a time when it is generally agreed in Quebec that the province should have exclusive responsibility for regional development, Ottawa once again wants to insult us by interfering.

Quebecers will no longer let themselves be manipulated in this way. We don't want a federal department for regional development. We don't want a patronage machine in Quebec.

This is blatant provocation on the part of Benoît Bouchard, who dares to call himself a Quebecer and a defender of Quebec's higher interests.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sorry, but the hon. member's time has now expired.

* * *

[*English*]

CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, over 7,500 students coming from more than 400 schools participated in a series of chess tournaments earlier this year leading to the national championship. School teams went to 50 regional championships and the best players from these went on to provincial championships. On the Victoria Day weekend, the winners from each province played off in the finals in Montreal and national champions were declared:

Grade I, Jonathan Gottlieb of Hampstead, Quebec; Grade II, Andrew Ho of Vancouver, B.C.; Grade III, Roman Golts of Willowdale, Ontario; Grade IV, Erez Davy of Windsor, Ontario; Grade V, Darryl Kong of Vancouver, B.C.; Grade VI, Anthony Castillo of Longueuil, Quebec; Grade VII, Matthew Grabove of Quispamsis, New Brunswick; Grade VIII, Nicolas Soudre of Pierrefonds, Quebec; Grades IX and X combined, Howard Wu of Victoria, B.C.; Grades XI and XII combined, Peter Olszewski of Oakville.

The winner over all was Quebec. Congratulations to the participants and the good work they do for the disadvantaged children of the world.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister.

On May 15 the Prime Minister said in this House that he was only advised of the Al-Mashat affair on April 30. It is now public knowledge that not one, not two, but three senior officials in the Prime Minister's Office were informed of this affair on April 8.

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he is in communication with the Prime Minister to ask if on his return the Prime Minister will be acknowledging that he knew of the Al-Mashat affair much earlier than the April 30 date that was given to this House.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, first and foremost I am pleased to note that the opposition are now acknowledging the fact that there was no ministerial involvement in the Al-Mashat case prior to his entrance into Canada on March 30. I think that is a very significant development, and perhaps the information that has been provided clearly states that.

Ministers and members of the Privy Council Office and members of the Prime Minister's Office are making themselves available to the committee to deal with all of these particular issues. That is why the committee process was utilized to get to the bottom of this issue. I invite the hon. member to participate in that process. All the witnesses they have asked for will be there and all of those areas can be clarified.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): We are talking about who will appear before the committee. It may well be that the Deputy Prime Minister should appear before the committee because we have also learned in the public reports made yesterday that the Deputy Prime Minister's own office was informed of the Al-Mashat affair, again on April 8, and we would like to know whether the Deputy Prime Minister's office told him, and did the Deputy Prime Minister in receiving this knowledge from his office inform the Prime Minister?

The whole point is this: This is a government that knew what was going on but did not acknowledge it publicly in any way.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, just to clarify the point the hon. member is making, I was first apprised of this issue on May 7 or May 8 and I heard it in a television report. It was also drawn to my attention at that time by the Minister of Employment and Immigration, at which time he took the necessary action to deal with this particular issue.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Madam Speaker, it is absolutely incredible that it was a whole month from the time that his own office and his own political assistants were seized of the matter, were given information, were given a memorandum, and the Deputy Prime Minister himself says he did not find out for another month.

Is that any way to run a government, when you don't know what is going on and your office won't even tell you?

It is clear that there are so many contradictory, differing versions of what happened, what did not happen, who did what, who did not do what, that the only way we can get at the truth is to see the original sources ourselves. We have been asking since last Monday for the tabling of the essential documents, including the memos that went directly to the Prime Minister's Office and the Deputy Prime Minister's office.

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister this: Can we be given assurance that there will be no more foot-dragging, no more puck ragging, that they will proclaim and table those documents first thing Monday morning in this House so we can begin to get to the truth for ourselves and get rid of all these false reports?

• (1120)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, it is quite obvious that the hon. member is not interested in the truth because when the truth is stated they will not accept it. They want their version and not the correct version. There is no cover-up. There is no ministerial involvement. There is no contradiction.

If he wants to have all the information, why does he not participate in the committee process, read the documents, ask the proper questions, call the proper witnesses and he will get his answers.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister as Minister of Finance. Perhaps he will be willing to take responsibility for that part of his duties.

Today, Statistics Canada reported that the economy began shrinking again in March. Today the government's made-in-Canada recession is 12 months old.

The minister has been saying that the new *r* word is recovery, but Canadians say the new *r* word should be resign.

I ask the Minister of Finance: Will he produce immediately a new economic recovery budget and, if not, will he and other ministers produce their resignations?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, after all these years of being in the House of Commons, one would have thought that the hon. member might be a little more original than that. That is an old trick.

Mr. Tobin: You're trying to sell a used budget.

Mr. Mazankowski: If this is a used budget, it is much better than the budgets we saw when his party was in office. They failed to deal with—

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): This budget is a lemon.

Mr. Mazankowski: Madam Speaker, the hon. member from Winnipeg was there as well and he knows very well that in those days they failed to deal with the fundamentals.

There is nothing new in what has been reported. My predecessor, when he tabled the budget in February 1991, indicated that the economy would begin to stabilize by mid-year, after a total decline of about 2.5 per cent in output. He also indicated that the unemployment rate would exceed 10 per cent.

This is all part and parcel of the projections in the budget. We are taking steps to ensure that we can bring interest rates down if we deal with the inflationary pressures, the inflationary expectations. There are signs

we are making some progress and we stand by our projections that there will be growth emerging in the second half. That has all been outlined in the budget.

I ask the hon. member to reread it and particularly pay attention to page 4.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Madam Speaker, I ask the Minister of Finance in turn if he will read today's Statistics Canada release which said that after the economy ceased shrinking in February, it began shrinking again in March. That may be the Tory version of recovery. That is not what Canadians say.

The Minister of National Revenue yesterday made a remarkable confession, a death-bed confession for this government, when he said and I quote:

> We have moved too far in the taxation area, and we're in the process of reviewing the whole thing.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of National Revenue is half way there. He has admitted the government has gone too far in raising taxes 33 times, including the GST.

I ask the Minister of Finance: Will he go all the way and bring in new, fairer tax policies that will stop killing the Canadian economy?

[*Translation*]

My question to the minister is this: When will he introduce new tax policies that will not destroy our economy?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I think in fairness the hon. member would acknowledge that the weakness in the first quarter largely centred around the month of January. Since that time there have been a number of positive indicators in terms of improvement in business confidence, improvement in employment, and interest rates have continued to come down. There has been an improvement in terms of housing sales and starts. That was taking hold in April and I think the hon. member would recognize and acknowledge that that turnaround has in fact started to emerge.

Insofar as the comments of the Minister of National Revenue, I think he was making the point that taxes are but one component and clearly the taxes on liquor, gasoline—let us talk about taxes at the provincial level for example. That is part and parcel of this issue. The whole cross-border shopping issue is a matter that involves more than taxes. It involves marketing, the costs of doing business *vis-à-vis* the United States, important new methodology and practices of marketing which are employed in the United States and are not employed here.

Furthermore, in terms of Canada's overall position in the G-7, we are about number three in our level of taxation *vis-à-vis* the other G-7 countries.

We do not stack up as bad as the hon. member—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think we are getting into a speech now.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. This morning, Statistics Canada confirmed that the recession is still with us and that it is getting worse. A few days ago, we heard that the number of people on unemployment insurance continues to rise and that in two years, Quebec lost 124,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector. As for the human factor, today in Montreal more than 20,000 young children will have to be fed at school, because they are undernourished and unable to learn. What is the government going to do to deal with this situation and put the country back to work?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the hon. member may be aware that last week as well Statistics Canada reported that the worst of the recession was over. In fact it indicated at that time, according to its statistics, that there was a turnaround emerging. As I indicated in response to her question last week, the April employment figures indicate that the worst of the recession is over and that we are optimistic and confident that growth will re-emerge in the second half. That is what we said in the budget. That is what we indicated in our economic statements in 1990, and what is really developing is holding true to form for the projections that we advanced at that time.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Madam Speaker, those Canadians who are unemployed and their families cannot eat projections, projections by this government that are usually wrong.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. McLaughlin: Yesterday the Minister of National Revenue admitted that Canadians are over-taxed. Today Quebec unions and the Quebec Manufacturing Association are denouncing the high-dollar policy that is making it very difficult for Canadian exporters.

If the Minister of Finance will not resign, will he repent and bring in some fair taxation policies so that Canadian businesses can compete and Canadians can buy goods?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, all I will do is try to respond to the hon. member with some facts which are very simple. The United States and Japan extract about 30 per cent of their Gross Domestic Product in the form of taxes. Canada extracts about 34 per cent; the U.K. and Germany, 37 per cent; France, 42 per cent; and Sweden, 55 per cent—that one country that is held up as a model by the members of the New Democratic Party.

I realize that that may not provide solid comfort, but the fact of the matter is that until we deal with the fundamentals, as the former Minister of Finance indicated, the key to growth and prosperity is to bring down interest rates, and the way to bring down interest rates is to remove the inflationary pressures and deal with the deficit problems throughout the country, and indeed all the provinces have to join in that effort. That is what is going to bring about sustainable growth. That is what will bring about price stability and that is the tack we are on. I am convinced it is the correct tack in this matter.

• (1130)

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): A supplementary, Madam Speaker, for the Minister for International Trade. If the government wants to make some fundamental changes and to reverse policies that are costing Canadian jobs, we better take a look at the trade deal because we know how many jobs that cost Canadians.

We understand that on June 10 the government will begin talks with Mexico and the United States here in Canada on an action plan around the trade deal. Yesterday the Minister for International Trade admitted that Canadians will not be able to compete with cheap Mexican goods because of low Mexican wages.

The U.S. Congress spent months discussing the trade deal with Mexico. It had a long debate, as did the Senate. It was an opportunity for the American population to hear some of the views on this, while this government has not allowed this opportunity for Canadians in this House.

Given the serious consequences of the Canada-U.S. trade deal, would the Minister for International Trade postpone his talks and put into action a plan that will include a full debate in this House on both the effects of the Canada-U.S. trade deal and the projected effects by this government of the Mexican trade deal? Workers out there know what the effects will be, and they want to hear answers.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, I know it is difficult for Canadians to understand the beneficial impacts of the free trade agreement.

As we have been implementing the free trade agreement, we have had a serious recession. If my hon. friend will be fair and look behind the numbers, she will realize that the free trade agreement has softened the impact of the recession on the country.

Let me give her three specific statistics on this. Our trade surplus with the United States in 1988 was $14 billion. It increased to $17 billion in 1990. That represents increased jobs. Exports to the United States were up 12 per cent comparing 1990 over 1988. We had seen a swing of direct foreign investment between Canada and other countries going from a negative to a positive position, the first in 16 years. That swing was in the order of $6.5 billion. That also is a positive element and had a positive impact on the economy.

In those three ways, we can demonstrate that the free trade agreement has softened the impact of the recession on this country. My hon. friend is talking—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. minister is now getting into debate.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture.

The Minister of Agriculture knows that the National Farm Products Marketing Council held hearings last year regarding the feasibility of the establishment of a national apple marketing agency for fresh apples. The minister knows that the report has been in the hands of his predecessor and himself for a few weeks, even a few months. The recommendation was to set up such an agency for Canadian apple growers.

Will the minister today stand in his place and announce to Canadians and Canadian apple producers his acceptance of that report so that the next step can be taken, the establishment of a national agency for Canadian apple producers?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, as I am sure the hon. member is aware, the philosophy of this government is to support national marketing agencies when they are supported by the producers. Once that is shown, we will be very pleased to support that outcome and that effort on behalf of apple producers in Canada.

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Madam Speaker, a supplementary for the same minister.

The minister knows that he has to give approval to that report before the producers can be asked for their approval. The ball is in his court and he is fumbling it. He is not responding to the producers and giving them the opportunity they are requesting.

The minister also knows that American producers and the United States government do not like Canadian agencies and organizations such as the Canadian Wheat Board and supply management organizations. Will he admit that it is pressure from the United States government and United States producers of these products that ship a lot into Canada that is causing his and the government's heel dragging and the further steps that need to be taken to put this agency in place?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I expected a statement such as that to come from a little to my right, from the New Democratic Party. The hon. member is seeing his blatant anti-Americanism come forward in a strange way.

The apple producers, and the member knows several, rely on their ability to compete in the United States so that they can derive profit from their efforts. If the hon. member is suggesting that we should not be sure, and the apple producers themselves should not be sure that they will still have the ability to take advantage of export markets along with the domestic market, these are questions that have to be addressed and these are questions that will be addressed.

Mr. Vanclief: They have been.

Mr. McKnight: The hon. member says they have been. I can read to the hon. member letters from several large apple producers who question the report. What we will go through, and I am sure the hon. member supports this, is the process of the council. We, on behalf of the producers, will support the outcome. But the hon. member has to remember that the outcome is in the hands of the producers.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Madam Speaker, my question is for the President of Treasury Board. It concerns the damage that his slashing of jobs in the Public Service is doing to the health and welfare of Canadians.

This memorandum, sent by the deputy minister of health and welfare to all employees, says that the government's policies mean cuts to health promotion, cancelling the campaign against drinking and driving and even delaying approval of life saving drugs.

With health care costs skyrocketing and medicare in danger, how does the government justify cutting services that help keep Canadians healthy?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, because of the fiscal situation that we have explained time and again in this House, we have to take difficult measures. In the budget, for example, we did not target the Public Service, but we had to ask them to be part of the solution, among others. These cuts, of course, have their impact, but what is the alternative? The alternative is that we can go out and borrow more money, keeping services beyond our capacity to pay, disregarding com-

pletely the result that in a few years' time it will not be a reduction, it will be massive cuts.

Of course these cuts may have some impact. We want to contain them as much as possible. This is why we are proposing a freeze to the unions to give them some comfort because we want to maintain the number of public servants, even to increase it.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

It seems to me we have money for pins so that employees can advertise the GST, but no money for health care.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, the Deputy Minister stated that instead of producing more with fewer resources, everybody will now have to do less with fewer resources.

Is the minister at all concerned that his Preston Manning agenda implies that the elderly will have to wait even longer for their pension cheques and for the drugs that relieve their pain and suffering? Does the minister have at least some concern for the sick and the elderly in this country?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, the government is fully aware of the importance of effective service delivery.

That is why—and I believe my opposition colleague is fully aware of this, since we are constantly in touch on this matter—we are proceeding with a thorough reform of the public service, our purpose being to try to do more with less. We all have to go this route, both industry and government.

It would be unthinkable to keep evading the problem. It would be irresponsible. We must learn. And I can inform the hon. member that after travelling across the country from Vancouver to St. John's, I found to my delight that public employees are ready. They have come up with some extremely positive recommendations and I am delighted.

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Members of this House learned yesterday for the first time, in the government's version of the report on the Al-Mashat affair, that on Tuesday, April 30, the Clerk of the Privy Council sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister based upon suggested responses by two senior ministers of this government on the Al-Mashat affair. What ministers were instructed to respond if they were asked questions in the House was that Al-Mashat was processed under normal standards and was not accorded preferential treatment. That came out of the Prime Minister's office.

• (1140)

Will the Deputy Prime Minister explain to this House and to Canadians why the Prime Minister's office and the Privy Council office were prepared to have ministers deliberately mislead this House on the fast tracking of the Al-Mashat application?

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. member knows that such language cannot be accepted in the House. I do not think that anybody wants to deliberately mislead anyone. The hon. minister may want to answer the question.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, my understanding is that the Clerk of the Privy Council is prepared to appear before the committee and the hon. member can ask him that very question.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Madam Speaker, we also learned yesterday for the first time that on April 8, not only the legislative assistant to the Prime Minister, but the deputy press officer to the Prime Minister, the Privy Council Office, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and a member of the Conservative caucus, all knew the circumstances of Al-Mashat. Yet the Prime Minister says he knew nothing until April 30. My question—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member is bringing to the floor of the House of Commons something that is before the committee. He is not, in my view, referring to

things that belong in this House but questions that can be asked in committee.

I will give the floor to the hon. member, but I would advise him to be very careful with his questions. This has gone a little too far.

Mr. Robinson: Madam Speaker, I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister a supplementary question.

In view of the glaring inconsistencies in this report which point to either a massive cover-up or a massive screw-up, will the Deputy Prime Minister assure the House that the Prime Minister will appear as a witness before this committee to come clean with Canadians on his role in this affair?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, there is no cover-up. There are no contradictions. What the government has attempted to do is provide all the information that is available, to update that information, and to refine it. The document that was tabled yesterday was a refinement of the earlier information. There are no contradictions. There is no cover-up.

PCO officials, PMO officials have been invited to appear before the committee. They will appear before the committee and the hon. member can have his fun at the committee, get the answers, and get the truth. The truth is going to hurt the hon. member.

* * *

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister if he is not too busy talking to the opposition.

Southern Ontario is now the only part of Canada which lacks a regional economic development agency. At least one minister has said that if Ontario does not like it it should complain.

Well I am here this morning to complain. I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will immediately have the government establish a regional economic development agency or department for southern Ontario, bearing in mind that some 42 per cent of all of the job losses in this country recently have occurred in the greater metropolitan Toronto area.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, Ontario companies benefit from various policies of the federal government in a number of ways. They are one of the largest beneficiaries of the defence industry productivity program. They are major beneficiaries of the trade policies that we follow, the program to help people sell into border states, to sell into the rest of the United States. They are also major beneficiaries of the EMDP, the Export Marketing Development Program.

In addition to that we do have a regional development program in northern Ontario called FEDNOR. There are a number of research and development programs that assist companies across Canada, and the companies in southern Ontario are large beneficiaries of this.

It is important to realize that the effect of the announcement by my colleague from Quebec on the change in the regional development programs in Quebec is simply an administrative change. There is no change in the funding. It is designed to put the delivery of the program closer to Quebec companies and closer to the people who are receiving it.

If my colleague wants to review the basis for these programs, going back in the past, western diversification is to help companies diversify—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think the question raised by the hon. member has been answered.

* * *

EDUCATION

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Last year the Prime Minister attempted to set up a task force on education. It did not get off the ground. It was a complete failure. This House will know that this year in the Speech from the Throne the Prime Minister talks about doing more or less the same thing.

Why should Canadians believe the Prime Minister in this particular initiative? Why should they believe that he could launch a successful educational initiative when in fact he failed a year ago, when it was an utter, complete, total failure?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, if the hon. member will read the Speech from the Throne carefully he will see that the pledge to develop a learning culture also is a pledge to respect the constitutional jurisdiction of the provinces.

The government is attempting to build on a constitutional responsibility to provide equal opportunities for Canadians and to provide regional economic development or the reduction of economic disparities. The implementation of that kind of strategy and that kind of leadership requires consultation and co-operation with the provinces because their jurisdiction is essential for the delivery of these programs.

My colleague, the minister for industry, will be producing a very important component of this in terms of the competitive strategy. My colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, will be part of this very important component.

The most important thing that the Prime Minister stated in this was the need to bring all levels of government in Canada together, to commit ourselves mutually to use all our powers, whatever they are, at all three levels of government to create a culture of learning so that Canadians can be world leaders in the 21st century.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the same minister. The Speech from the Throne contains no specific measures indicating how the Prime Minister and the government intend to proceed with this initiative and get good results. I have here a confidential paper prepared for the government, following the Speech from the Throne, and it does not contain any strategies for this purpose. Canadians wonder whether this initiative is a sincere proposal or whether it is simply a ploy to enhance the government's popularity.

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, the Speech from the Throne described the main themes of the government's policy. Further details concerning training and the creation of a learning culture in Canada will be given next month. I am sure Canadians will be very happy with the specifics of this policy and will be reassured as to its authenticity.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADIAN FORCES BASES

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Yesterday in Germany the Minister of National Defence said that before he closes Canadian forces bases that he did not have to get permission from anybody. He has to get permission from the people of Canada, who put him where he is.

He also said at the same time that he would be making a statement on defence this coming summer.

When hundreds of thousands of Canadians all across the country depend on Canadian forces bases for their livelihood, and have serious anxiety about the future of those bases, why is it that the government refuses to do what other major countries are now doing, and that is to have full and public discussion on national security and national defence in this country? Why does the government refuse to do that?

• (1150)

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that the hon. member has misquoted the minister who has been in Germany the past week and who was quoted as saying: "It is not done in isolation. At the end of the process it is a decision of the Canadian cabinet".

We have already said the decision will have to be made right here in Canada. When decisions are going to be made and when it is time for a discussion, which we are looking at as a possibility, we will open up and tell the people what decisions the government has made at that time.

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Madam Speaker, by that time it will be too late.

I understand that the House of Commons committee is the master of its own fate, but for two years I have been asking that the House of Commons committee be the vehicle for that public discussion of defence policy.

Will the minister, or will somebody on behalf of the government, undertake to write to the chair of the House of Commons defence committee requesting pub-

lic hearings across Canada on defence policy before decisions are taken by cabinet that are irreversible? Why not do that?

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, if a cabinet minister wrote to a committee, that member would be the first one to say we are interfering in the independence of the committee. Obviously, if he cannot get more than one person to voice the same concern he has not got a majority to get his own way.

* * *

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Many violent crimes including wife battering and the sexual abuse of women and young children can be traced to the hard core pornography which is so readily available today. Moral values and the vital role which the family plays in our society have been under attack because of the cancerous effect of hard core pornography.

Will the minister address this urgent issue by introducing legislation soon?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the hon. member. The government does intend to introduce legislation during this session of Parliament aimed at child pornography.

We will also be very interested to review a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in a case known as Butler that will be argued before the Supreme Court of Canada in June and will help to elaborate the guidelines with respect to other forms of pornography.

I would also point out to the hon. member that from June 10 to 12 of this year I am convening a symposium on Women, Law, and the Administration of Justice in Vancouver which will address this among other issues and will, I hope, provide some very useful guidelines to the government on a broader approach to the question that he raises in the House today.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment.

Twenty thousand truckloads of toxic soil are being trucked from the Expo land sites in Vancouver to environmentally sensitive lands at the mouth of the Fraser River. This is being done without any consultation, without any notification, and without the mandatory environmental assessment review that this government is supposed to hold. This contaminated soil will be one kilometre from the Fraser River. It poses a risk to fisheries, to farmland, and to the residents in that area.

The Minister of the Environment will be in Vancouver this week. Will this government finally take its obligations to the environment seriously? Will the minister announce in Vancouver a halt to the dumping of this toxic soil? Will the minister institute the environmental review process which is supposed to be mandatory?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to inform the House that the Fraser River Harbour Commission during the course of this week has been conducting an initial assessment on the proposal to move the landfill in question.

I am advised that steps will be taken to ensure that no environmentally significant damage is done and that if there are mitigating circumstances, the remedy will be put in place.

Furthermore, I can inform the House that the Minister of the Environment will be in Vancouver later today and I know this will be an item of concern for him in terms of his consultations with the appropriate officials.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

On May 16 the Federal Court ordered a full environmental review of the Alcan project in British Columbia. This House also knows that a management plan for the Fraser River basin will be incomplete without such a review.

Can the minister tell this House if lawyers in her department have reviewed this issue and the decision of the Federal Court? Will she tell the Federal Court that this government will finally do the right thing and order a full environmental assessment of the Alcan project in British Columbia? If not, why not?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, again I am pleased to have the opportunity to inform the House that this very important but very complex decision which was issued by the courts referred to during the course of last week is under full examination at the moment by the Department of Justice officials and by the relevant departments concerned.

I would anticipate that an announcement will be made in the very near future as a result of those determinations. I am sure the House will be informed of that information as soon as it is available.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

The free trade agreement is hurting some 70,000 Canadian employees of the printing industry. Free trade was supposed to relax the obligation to mark the country of origin on printed products. It has not. As a result, Canadian products are strictly monitored and turned back at the border. Worse, American clients of Canadian producers are closing accounts because their consumers are rejecting products marked "Made in Canada".

Why is the minister not pressing his American counterparts for a level playing field? Why is he not asking them to end the discriminatory practices of American customs officials?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend is quite right that the free trade agreement is designed to avoid the problem that he sets out. If he has specifics that he would like to bring to my attention, I would be very happy to look into it right away.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Madam Speaker, I already did and I will be pleased to be even more specific. The minister is quite aware that Canadian customs regulations regarding the entry of American printed matter are both loose and loosely applied. American printers, for example, bidding on Canadian contracts do not have to identify the country of origin on their products. The Manitoba telephone systems directory and yellow pages are an example.

Will the minister undertake to have the revenue department be as tough as American customs officials unless the regulations imposed on Canadian products are relaxed?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the specifics that my hon. friend has given me just now. This will give me an opportunity to look into it with more precision and I will get back to him.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC'S REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the minister who wants to answer for the new minister responsible for regional development in Quebec. The people of the Gaspé region and the Magdalen Islands are quite disappointed with the empty shell the minister unveiled to them yesterday. Does the government not believe that $340,000 a year is insufficient for the economic development of that region, whose official unemployment rate is 27 per cent? How can you develop the economy in a region where unemployment is 27 per cent with $340,000?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, I am amazed at how changeable the hon. member for Saint-Léonard is. For weeks now, the members for Saint-Léonard, LaSalle—Émard and Windsor West have risen to ask what the government was waiting for to act in Quebec, Montreal, etc. We have a structure for action in regional development. For several days, no doubt for electoral reasons, opposition members had fun saying that we should not intervene in regional development. I do not understand his logic very well.

On the other hand, I had the opportunity to speak to the member for Gaspé, who is next to me today, Madam Speaker. He told me the opposite of what the member just said. He said that the government's decision was very well received in the Gaspé. Of course more should

be done but the important thing is to start by doing something.

• (1200)

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Madam Speaker, this amount for the new economic development agency is part of a sum already allocated under the 1988 Canada-Quebec Agreement. Everyone will remember the election announcement that was made then.

Is this new agency another recycled election promise?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, I would like to repeat that the government is trying to take effective action within the limits of its budget and is preparing action programs. This is one of them and I would ask the hon. member to take another look at the reaction of people in the Gaspé. To his short-lived shame, he will see that he is not right—we are.

* * *

[*English*]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

As the minister well knows, the question of whether co-operatives should have to pay the GST on their share capital has been kicking around his department for over a year. Co-op people are getting very irritated by being told that investment in a co-op is no different from buying a membership in a country club.

Therefore I would like to ask the minister: Why should this 100 per cent Canadian owned sector continue to be the only business sector in Canada that has to pay the GST on its investments?

Could he tell us, since this situation can be rectified by either the stroke of a pen by the Minister of National Revenue, or by a legislative amendment, which I am sure we would all support, which one we can expect and when we can expect it?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the hon. member and other members have made representations to me with respect to the treatment of co-operatives under the GST.

My predecessor and myself have been trying to make the necessary refinements and administrative changes to ensure that the GST works smoothly. We are looking at that at the present time, but I am not in a position as of now to indicate precisely whether in fact we can take action on it.

I think the hon. member knows we have to examine it in detail to ensure that it does not create demands for other concessions in other areas. However, I can assure him that we are looking at it very seriously.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. I certainly appreciate the opportunity to ask it.

Changes have been proposed by the Horticultural Council of Nova Scotia, the Department of Agriculture and the producers. They all agree on changes proposed for the sizing of strawberries. However, the changes are being delayed through the department because of a backlog. This delay will cause berries to be left unharvested in the field and the loss of jobs.

Would the minister commit today to trying to expedite these changes so that they could be made in time for the harvest, or could he instruct the department to accept the standards prior to the paperwork being completed?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, as the member knows, any changes have a regulatory process. Although there is widespread support for those changes, the regulatory process must be observed.

I can tell the hon. member that we will work on it as efficiently as we can. I am sorry I cannot commit to him that I will bypass the well established regulatory process even though I recognize the importance to him and to his constituents.

Point of Order

PRIVILEGE

COMMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I will be very brief. My question of privilege arises out of yesterday's exchanges after Question Period. As you well know, Madam Speaker, although you were not in the chair and Mr. Speaker was, there were several points of order, somewhat heated and at times very aggressive. My point of order arises from what happened in the exchange between the hon. member for Saint-Denis and myself and my point of privilege is this: Beauchesne's citation 234.(1) says in the final part of it that:

> A point of order cannot be raised on a point of order.

I take that to mean that a point of order cannot be interrupted by another point of order. What happened, if you look at yesterday's *Hansard*, was that I was speaking on a point of order and was interrupted by the hon. member for Saint-Denis on a point of personal privilege which turned out, if you continue to read the arguments, not to be a point of privilege but rather a point of order.

My request is that the Chair review *Hansard*, have a look at that exchange and relay back to me whether I was, in fact, interrupted by another point of order.

Mr. Prud'homme: On a point of order.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Saint-Denis on a point of order.

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Madam Speaker, first, I think it is really childish to raise this today.

Second, it was a question of privilege because motives were imputed to members. When Mr. Speaker in his wisdom reviews the debate he will conclude this, I am sure. If not, I will take note. If Mr. Speaker is to render a decision I would hope that he would not communicate it to the member privately. I would hope that, as he just mentioned, he will make his judgment public because I am interested in following that.

I repeat that I find it rather childish to raise that today, but it is in good spirit. I will be waiting for Mr. Speaker's decision on the point of order raised by the hon. member that was not a point of order.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Madam Speaker, just to reaffirm what my colleague has said, I do not believe the intervention made by the parliamentary secretary is in fact a point of privilege. It is a bogus point of privilege. If anything, it may fall within the definitions of a point of order. I think the hon. member for Saint-Denis has carefully put to the chair both the circumstances as well as some of the motives which were being attributed to him. I believe the hon. member for Saint-Denis was quite appropriate in rising when he did to respond to the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

I submit that it is certainly not a point of privilege.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Peace River, the hon. member for Saint-Denis, and the hon. House leader for the Official Opposition.

Having heard all sides, I will of course take the matter up with the Speaker, who will then act according to his usual very wise judgment.

On a different point of order, the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Madam Speaker, I just wish to bring to the attention of the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader—and I am certain that he is aware of it—some of the deliberations that have taken place in one of the standing committees of the House. I do not wish to get into what was said or what was not said, but I refer of course to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs.

I believe the parliamentary secretary and the appropriate ministers have been informed of some of the statements attributed to one of the members of that particular committee. I would just ask the parliamentary secretary if he would review those circumstances to make certain that our committees can run well and run effectively without having that kind of provocation, I suggest, being touted about.

I just raise that as notice for the parliamentary secretary or, indeed, the chief government Whip who might want to take it under advisement. That was the intent of raising it here this morning.

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, I missed the very early part of that point. As the House will know, Whips are commonly charged with the responsibility of suggesting membership for committees. Throughout my 3 years of experience, I think all of us attempt to take the seriousness of the responsibility of committee membership as a primary concern as we begin to exercise that responsibility.

I guess part of what bothered me yesterday was the number of press people who called. It was interesting to me. In each and every case when the press called I asked if they had ever seen a transcript of remarks, and not a single press person had seen a transcript. Some of them had talked to native people. I asked them if the native people had seen transcripts of the total situation, of the total set of remarks.

All of us in this Chamber from time to time develop a public perception based on something a newspaper headline writer does, or a 10-second clip, and all of us feel the unfairness of that from time to time. We feel we are misinterpreted, and difficulties are created for ourselves and for our families.

I guess the best advice I have to the House is to accept a couple of principles.

• (1210)

We are all elected democratically to come to this House to represent our constituents. What is being called into question here, particularly by the media and I hope not by the Liberal Party, is the reputation of a member of this House who has been returned or re-elected by constituents to serve in this House on behalf of all of the people in the riding. The riding we are talking about obviously has a number of people of aboriginal descent. They are certainly a well-known group in the country.

We might all simply say that this House unanimously approved that committee report. We have a member on the committee. The member will have a chance to both teach and learn and to live through some very difficult times. The nation might indeed be very well served by the reality of the experience that member has had to undergo over a period of time.

I just hope that we are not moving in this Chamber to the point where we think that something a newspaper says about us or something we are supposed to have done would be a factor in this Chamber in excluding somebody from accepting the responsibility and the role to serve to the best of their ability on a committee. If somebody does things on a committee, perhaps we could—

Madam Deputy Speaker: This was to be my suggestion, if I can interrupt the hon. member. The Speaker has been very patient and has listened very carefully to the question.

Perhaps the hon. member for Saint-Léonard will allow me to make a comment and then, if he still wishes to rise, I will of course recognize him.

I think this is a very important matter, but it really does not belong in this place. It belongs in either the House management committee or the aboriginal committee. It really does not belong in the House.

I have listened to the hon. government Whip. Of course I will listen to the hon. member should he still insist on having the floor, but I still do not feel that it belongs in the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Madam Speaker, I will be very brief. I simply wanted to point out that first of all, I don't think my House leader wished to impute motives to the member on the committee.

The important thing here is that our committees each have certain areas they are supposed to consider. It is all a matter of credibility, and I think my House leader was merely making suggestions to the parliamentary secretary and the chief government Whip. Perhaps we should take the trouble to become familiar with all the issues; we may have to review our whole committee system some day.

This is only a suggestion, and it is certainly not my intention to impute motives to anyone in this matter.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government responses to six petitions.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

BANK ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance) for leave to introduce Bill C-19, an Act respecting banks and banking.

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

* * *

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 1991

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-20, an act to amend certain statutes to implement the budget tabled in Parliament on February 26, 1991.

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

* * *

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-213, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other acts in relation thereto.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this bill today. I had introduced it during the last Parliament, so this is a reintroduction.

This voluminous bill is a reprint of Bill C-79 introduced before the last election, which the Deputy Prime Minister will be very familiar with. I know he will want to support this bill.

I have made some modest changes to it to reflect what I believe to be the wishes of most hon. members. This bill should be dealt with promptly by the House and referred to committee so that changes can be made to the Canada Elections Act before the next election.

Like other hon. members, I am apprehensive that the report of the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing expected in October may come too late to be enacted before the election and we will be stuck with the Elections Act we now have.

I am bringing the bill forward in that spirit, and hope for co-operation on all sides.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-214, an act to amend the Criminal Code (human being).

He said: Madam Speaker, this is a bill which is identical to a bill I introduced in the last session. I regret that I have to do it again, because it is an awful lot of paperwork for nothing.

We could have, perhaps, taken the suggestion of my colleague the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River and simply reprinted these matters.

However, this bill is an attempt to come to grips with the very difficult question of the personhood of the unborn child. It adds in the Criminal Code of Canada a definition of human being which would thereby extend personhood to the unborn child and give it the same protection and rights that we all have in Canada, the primary one being the right to life.

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

• (1220)

NARCOTIC CONTROL ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–215, an act to amend the Narcotic Control Act.

He said: Madam Speaker, this is a very short bill. Its purpose is to amend section 16 of the Narcotic Control Act and it is very specific. The idea is that when the police forces of any particular jurisdiction seize the ill–gotten gains of drug dealing, specifically cash money, after due process of law that money will not go in to the Consolidated Revenue Fund; rather, the money will be sent back to that police force, dollar for dollar, to fight drug–related activities in the municipality where the cash was seized.

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

* * *

CONSUMER PACKAGING AND LABELLING ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–216, an act to amend the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act (nutritional value of food).

He said: Madam Speaker, again this is a bill that was before the House previously and I am bringing it forward again. I hope the government will see some merit in this bill particularly. It is an attempt to provide for legislation to ensure that the nutritional value of all packaged foods is stated on the package. Included would be certain vitamins and minerals, the carbohydrate content, the fat content and the caloric content of each individual portion.

Most members will know that many foods have some of this information on the package, but it is completely voluntary. This bill would require that it be compulsory for all packaged foods in Canada.

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

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, I wonder if I may have the consent of the House to revert to the tabling of committee reports, concerning Private Members' Business.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House for the hon. parliamentary secretary to present his report?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Consent has not been given.

* * *

PETITIONS

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, my petition today includes signatures from various parts of my constituency regarding the proposed cutbacks to RCMP funding coming from Blue River, Avola, Little Fort, Barrière, Clearwater, Blackpool, Birch Island, Vavenby, Monte Creek, Monte Lake, Darfield, Chase, Westwold, Pritchard, Logan Lake, Savona, Deadman's Creek, Kamloops, Pinantan, Paul Lake, Cherry Creek, and Kamloops Indian Reserve, as well as rural areas, and neighbourhoods and communities within the city of Kamloops. The petitions ask the government to restore proper funding to the RCMP.

Now it has been done. On behalf of all of these literally thousands of petitioners, I want to say thank you to the minister responsible for the RCMP for listening to these people and restoring funding, at least for the next year, so that a contract can be negotiated that is fair to the provinces, municipalities, and rural areas, as well as to the Government of Canada.

Again, I think it demonstrates clearly that petitions can be very effective from time to time.

TAXATION

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Madam Speaker, I have the pleasure to introduce a petition to the House today signed by residents from Prince George, Robson Valley, Vanderhoof, Burns Lake, Fort St. James and the Houston area of my riding of Prince George—Bulkley Valley.

It is an important petition because it calls upon Parliament to reform the taxation system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a petition of well over 5,000 signatures by my constituents of Scarborough—Agincourt calling on the government to present fast changes to the Young Offenders Act, because they feel that the need to protect society is far more important than the need to protect the young offender.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk)

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, Question No. 21 will be answered today, and I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

[*Text*]

AGRI-FOOD POLICY REVIEW

Question No. 21—**Mr. Althouse:**

For the year 1990, did the Consumers' Association of Canada receive funding from Agriculture Canada to take part in the agri-food policy review and, if so, (a) how much money did the Association receive (b) how was the money disbursed (c) what was the amount allocated for each task force that the Association participated in (d) was any money used to fund the study entitled "The Reform of the Canadian Supply Management System of Agricultural Commodities", and, if so, did the Department request the study from the Association?

Hon. William Hunter McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): (a) During 1990, the Consumers' Association of Canada received funding from Agriculture Canada to take part in the agri-food policy review, in the form of two contracts: December 1, 1989 to March 31, 1990 for $40,000.00 and April 1, 1990 to November 6, 1990 for $80,000.00.

(b) The money was disbursed to the Consumers' Association of Canada directly for work completed on the basis of the requirements of the contracts. In the first instance, it was through four payments of $10,000.00 each to cover costs of participants in the Dairy, Poultry and Competitiveness Task Forces and for Secretariat support. In the second instance, there were payments of $35,000.00 on September 17, 1990 and of $45,000.00 on November 6, 1990 to cover costs of ongoing participation in the Task Forces and of Secretariat support and costs of preparing a report on a new generation of supply management.

(c) There is no breakdown available in regard to the amount allocated for each task force in which the Association participated. However, payments were made against agreed overall estimates of costs for participation and support to the Dairy, Poultry and Competitiveness Task Forces and the Supply Management study in order to ensure the Department's arms-length relationship with the Association.

(d) The Consumers' Association of Canada study "The Reform of the Canadian Supply Management System of Agricultural Commodities" was financed in part by the second contract as indicated above. The specific deliverables included consultation by the Association's team with agri-economic experts and other stakeholders, the organization of regional workshops and preparing their report and analysis.

The Department responded with financial support to the Association's request.

[*English*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: The questions as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary have been answered. Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Karpoff: Madam Speaker, in the last Parliament I had questions on the Order Paper from February 26 for 77 days until the House prorogued. These were starred questions and should have been answered in 45 days. I have now resubmitted these questions and they are now 63 to 67 again on the Order Paper.

I have a couple of questions to the government as to why it is not answering written questions expeditiously and why these could not be dealt with immediately, seeing they have already been on the Order Paper and expired once for 45 days.

Why did the government, if it saw fit to roll over its own legislation to this House, not do the same thing with written questions on the Order Paper?

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, I will take the hon. member's intervention as a representation and see what I can do for him.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY S. O. 31—CANADA POST

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Pickard (p. 863).

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Madam Speaker, I hope I still have the opportunity to question the minister on this issue.

In the minister's comments he consistently said that any increases Canada Post had were particularly within the rate of inflation. If my memory serves me correctly, from last year to this year we went from a 39-cent stamp to a 40-cent stamp and then the GST put us up to a 43-cent stamp. Therefore, the cost for purchasing a stamp to mail an everyday letter in this country has gone from 39 cents to 43 cents within one year which is an increase of 10.25 per cent.

If my mathematics is correct, that is well beyond the rate of inflation within that same period of time. I do not know how the minister can stand in this House and say that any increases by Canada Post have been certainly within the rate of inflation, because, in my estimation, this is not correct.

I would like the minister to respond, please.

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Minister of State (Youth) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, again, what I think the hon. member and all hon. members should do when they are using numbers is to apply the appropriate numbers to the appropriate places and in the appropriate comparisons.

If I were to follow the logic of the hon. member to every increase in the cost of any product in this country we should add the GST. Obviously, if that logic is "logical", we come up with a bigger increase.

On the other hand, we are talking about increases imposed by Canada Post. If the hon. member looks at increases imposed by Canada Post, it is not 39 cents to 43 cents, but Canada Post administers the GST, which is a tax applicable to all products and services including the services given by Canada Post and any other competitor to Canada Post in the country.

[*Translation*]

• (1230)

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the minister whether he would care to provide some clarification in connection with a number of myths that are doing the rounds about Canada Post's services. They say that residents in rural areas are thoroughly dissatisfied with mail services. It is a myth that people do not like the kind of service being offered by Canada Post in rural areas. The second myth is that Canada Post is getting out of rural areas and that people doubt services will still be offered in small communities. However, as far as I know, the people in my riding who live in small rural communities are still getting their mail, so perhaps this is one myth the minister could debunk.

Finally, Madam Speaker, could the minister comment on the notion that Canada Post is destroying the economy and the social fabric of small towns and villages across Canada?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Youth), Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, although opposition members have repeatedly tried to make Canadians believe that people in rural areas are dissatisfied, their attempts have obviously been unsuccessful, since after consultation with people in rural areas the statistics clearly show the vast majority of rural residents are satisfied with the service offered by Canada Post and with the changes and improvements made in rural areas in recent years.

As for Canada Post withdrawing from rural areas, Madam Speaker, it is not; except perhaps in the minds of certain opposition members. Of course, changes are being made, positive changes, which have in fact improved services in those areas. As for destroying the social fabric, I think the hon. member was correct in calling this a myth. It is another myth created by opposition members, because there has been no withdrawal of service. The service is better, and postal communications are continuing. So there has been no

destruction of the social fabric in rural areas as a result of the service offered by Canada Post.

That this House call upon the government to institute policies that would require that service to Canadians be a priority of Canada Post.

[*English*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: On a very short question, the hon. member for Essex—Windsor.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Madam Speaker, the minister has suggested, in his answer to the last question, that in fact local communities affected by the shutdowns which have taken place have supported it.

I just want to indicate that in my constituency there is a new town being formed this very weekend by the name of LaSalle. They have written to the person responsible for the post office saying: "Happy Birthday, LaSalle. By the way, we are closing your post office. Yours truly, the federal government". They go on to say precisely what damage this is going to mean for LaSalle and its hopes to be able to develop itself as a good, small town serving its areas.

I want to ask the minister if he is prepared and if this government is prepared to put into effect a mechanism for consultation with local communities like LaSalle.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am glad the hon. member understood when I said I would recognize him on a short question. The time has expired. I will allow he minister a minute to comment.

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Minister of State (Youth) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, first of all, I am not personally aware of the specifics of the case with respect to this new town of LaSalle, not that I doubt that my hon. colleague would quote accurately. If he would provide me with a copy of that letter which allegedly was sent by Canada Post, I presume, and not the Government of Canada, I am sure the department or the minister will get back to him with the facts and appropriate responses.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and speak on this motion, a motion presented on an opposition day in reply to the motion of supply.

The motion on the table today reads very simply:

I have been the post office critic for the federal New Democratic Party for quite some time. Earlier this year I sadly turned it over to the member for Churchill, who is now serving as the federal New Democrat Party's post office critic. I am now serving in environmental areas, areas I am also very concerned about.

On behalf of the member for Churchill and my colleagues in the New Democratic Party, I want to say a few words about Canada Post, the service coming from Canada Post and the motion before us today.

I believe this is a very appropriate motion with very appropriate timing. It is a time when Canada Post is actively engaged in closing rural post offices. Canada Post has been acting over time in the way it deals with post offices; it started to close post offices in 1986 and just prior to the federal election in 1988, it slowed down; and then stopped closing post offices.

Shortly after the election in 1988, after the people had returned members of the government to their seats, post offices began to close again. Now we are seeing an escalation during the summer, the summer before what should be a year prior to a federal election.

In 1986, Canada Post came out with a plan which indicated that all rural post offices in Canada would eventually be closed, probably by the year 1996. Here we are engaged in a furtherance of that plan. We are seeing that the plan Canada Post talked about in 1986 is coming to fruition.

One of the hon. members just a few moments ago talked about the myth of commitments to rural Canada. We know that since 1986, 1,028 rural post offices have been closed or privatized and out of those 3,000 full or part-time jobs have been lost. Three thousand full or part-time jobs have been ripped out of the heart of rural Canada, jobs which have served those communities very well and which quite often have provided income for people who were engaged in helping with the church, the school and the business community in many forms other than just simply selling stamps to members of that community.

The motion is very appropriate because these closings are continuing. This year they have been stepped up. In

Canada this year, I believe, there are close to 250 post offices under attack and scheduled for closure, 24 of which are in my own province and four in my own riding.

I have just returned from Saskatchewan where I have already met with Canada Post in the communities of Canwood and Marsden. Next week, during which Parliament is sitting, Canada Post will be visiting the community of Edam to tell it that its post office will be closed. I mentioned that there were four in my riding. The other community is Gallivan, Saskatchewan. Its meeting with Canada Post has also concluded.

• (1240)

Canada Post's closing of these post offices in the three month period—the announcements were made at the end of March—of April, May and June has been greater than it has been for any equivalent period of time since 1986, when the Prime Minister and the cabinet approved the policy of Canada Post which allows for the closings to take place.

I want to quote briefly from Cynthia Patterson who is Rural Dignity's national co-ordinator. Cynthia Patterson has been working diligently on behalf of rural Canadians for many years. In my mind, she is doing a very admirable job.

Rural Dignity and Cynthia Patterson have to be congratulated for the work they have been doing.

Cynthia Patterson says: "Rural Canada's back is up against the wall with Canada Post at this time. We cannot afford to lose our post offices. The federal policy attacks the rural infrastructure, rural service and rural jobs. The Prime Minister promised in 1984 to support small towns with big dreams, but what he has done is make us small towns with big nightmares."

Very appropriate. As I said, I have just returned from my constituency where these community meetings proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the members of those communities are experiencing the nightmare of having their post office taken from their midst.

The mandate of Canada Post is indeed one of service. That this motion addresses service is most appropriate. When the Canada Post Corporation was created, the mandate that Parliament gave to Canada Post was very simple and very clear.

I want to just state for the record, one more time, so the government understands the mandate and what the Canada Post Act says about the mandate. Section 5(2) of the Canada Post Act reads:

> (2) While maintaining basic customary postal service, the Corporation, in carrying out its objects, shall have regard to
>
> (a) the desirability of improving and extending its products and services in the light of the developments in the field of communications;
>
> (b) the need to conduct its operations on a self-sustaining financial basis while providing a standard of service that will meet the needs of the people of Canada and that is similar with respect to communities of the same size;
>
> (c) The need to conduct its operations in such manner as will best provide for the security of the mail;
>
> (d) the desirability of utilizing the human resources of the Corporation in a manner that will both attain the objects of the Corporation and ensure the leave as is commitment and dedication of its employees to the attainment of these objects; and
>
> (e) the need to maintain a corporate identity program approved by the Governor in Council that reflects the role of the Corporation as an institution of the Government of Canada.

Every single one of those clauses indicates the desire of Parliament in 1981 to ensure that Canada Post was delivering a service to the people of Canada, doing it in such a way that its employees felt a part of that needed service to the Canadian population, and ensured that the corporation knew that it was meeting the needs of the people of Canada and not the needs of its corporate structure.

What has happened since 1981 when this act was passed by Parliament is that a government changed. We have now a corporation that is attempting to meet the financial needs of the corporation rather than the needs of the people it is serving.

I am very committed to the needs of all Canadians and particularly to the needs of rural Canadians when it comes to getting the postal service they deserve.

One point in that regard—I want to make it very clear—is that I want the people of Canada, those who are reading the *Hansard* of today's debate and those who are watching on their television screens today, to rest assured that when this government changes so will this policy against Canada Post services.

No longer will rural or small communities have to pay the price of this corporation's profits. Rest assured that when this government changes, so will this policy. I am

committed to that from now through until this party forms the government and has to adopt the policies that we know will work in rural Canada.

When the Corporation Act was established in 1981, the second thing in the mandate was self-sustainability. The first element of the mandate was service, but the second was self-sustainability. We on this side of the House agreed that self-sustainability was a goal that we should be working toward within Canada Post and we proposed many different ways of dealing with it, ways in which the government and the corporation could utilize the creative ability to increase revenues and not decrease expenses, which could only come at the expense of service and the people of Canada.

The government has ignored all requests and flexibility within the network to help increase the revenues for Canada Post except when it comes at the expense of employees, people of rural Canada and the services that are provided to the Canadian population.

We must know Canada Post went beyond self-sustainability and has run into the realm of profits: two years ago, $96 million; last year, $143 million; and well on its way to its goal of a $250 million profit this year, about 60 per cent of which is supposed to be earmarked to return to the federal government. We have gone from the point whereby the users of Canada Post were being subsidized by the taxpayer to a point where the taxpayer is now subsidizing the government through Canada Post.

The corporation has taken self-sustainability to new limits and it is astounding to hear members opposite stand over there and talk about how good all of this is for Canada in general. We might note that the way in which Canada Post describes self-sufficiency is that there must be a 14 per cent return on its investment. Canada Post will not feel that it is self-sufficient until it has a 14 per cent return.

In my mind, in a government agency self-sufficiency means you do not cost the taxpayer any money and you do not take any money from the taxpayer for other purposes. Self-sustainability is a very simple concept: you simply break even on operations. Canada Post is quite able to become self-sufficient without closing a single post office in Canada.

A couple of years ago the government recognized that the Canadian population was quite concerned about the operations of Canada Post, and in trying to meet the needs of the Canadian population it set up a committee, something called the Postal Services Review Committee. It staffed the committee and provided it with about $1 million in funds to travel around the country and listen to the concerns of people and to report back on what was happening within Canada Post. The report in November 1989 was particularly interesting. I will quote from the recommendations to the Canada Post Corporation from the Postal Services Review Committee and I think it will enlighten all members of this House, particularly government members on this issue: "The committee is deeply concerned that these changes," talking about rural post office closures, "which have reduced the level of service for some rural residences continue to be implemented. Canada Post has acknowledged that the savings to date from all 319 rural conversions," and it is almost three times that number now, "have not been material. "The corporation could, therefore, readily modify its planned activities without adverse impact on its goal of self-sustainability." In other words, according to the Postal Services Review Committee, Canada Post could become self-sustaining without the closure of one rural post office in Canada.

• (1250)

The report's conclusion is that: "The corporation's commitment to the objective of financial self-sufficiency and what appears to have been the corporation's concentration on improved service to large volume mailers has and continues to cause service reductions primarily affecting households and small businesses. There is room for eliminating service inequities and for improving service without putting undue strain on the corporation's financial requirements."

The group of people that this government hired to look at Canada Post operations says that this can be done without closing rural post offices and, more importantly, that what is being done is cutting services to the people who rely on the post office.

How did the government respond to this report which was tabled in the House of Commons and debated here both on the floor of the House and in committee? The government fired the committee and refused to give them any more funds to continue the work of investigating Canada Post operations. By firing the committee, it put back the entire evaluation of Canada Post operations on to the corporation itself.

Now we see the corporation hiring public relations firms and polling organizations to give us statistics which tell us that Canadians are happy with the service.

The government's own committee found out that Canadians are not happy with the service. We, who come from rural Canada, know that the people are not happy with the service that is being provided by Canada Post in any of this conversion closing or privatization policy and practice that is taking place out there.

In the meantime, what is Canada Post doing while it is closing operations and putting 3,000 rural Canadians out of work? We find out that Canada Post has just spent money to ensure that Canada Post Corporation has a box at Skydome so it can entertain its business clients while watching the Blue Jays play baseball.

The minister responsible for Canada Post in this House on May 24, just a couple of days ago, supported Canada Post's decision to buy a box at Skydome by saying that from time to time the corporation has to entertain its business clients. In the meantime, I have got a postmaster who has put in 14 years of service, has never been declared a full-time postmaster, has served her community for the last three years, and is being put out of work so that Canada Post's corporate management can entertain business clients at a ball game in Toronto. It is just a shocking indication of how much time, money and thought the government spends on the large corporate structure in this country while ignoring the needs, wishes and will of the ordinary Canadian people, the people who live in, enjoy living in and want the quality of life provided by rural communities. It is something that I am not going to forget for a long time.

I also want to indicate one thing in terms of service that I alluded to earlier in a question to the minister who was responding so well for the public relations department of Canada Post. When the minister talked about the corporation providing new service qualities for mail delivery, he talked about the colour coding delivery requirements so that you can put priority on mail. Even in my own community, a small community, the boxes arrive at Canada Post from sorting depots in some other part of Canada marked with a red tag for Monday, a yellow tag for Tuesday, a green tag for Wednesday. Those are boxes of mail that are supposed to be delivered on those particular days based on Canada Post's new schedule of efficiencies.

Sometimes the mail arrives in North Battleford with a purple tag on a Monday. Purple tagged mail is not supposed to be delivered until Wednesday so the letter carriers are told: "Don't touch that box of mail, leave it until Wednesday", even though he has only got half a bag to deliver, a half-empty bag. He could take that purple box, sort it into his bag and deliver it on Monday. But no, Canada Post corporate efficiency structure requires him to keep that mail on the side of his sorting table until Wednesday when he can pick it up, take it out and deliver it. I know that there is some first class mail in those boxes that is being held for days.

The general public doesn't know that. When the general public gets its mail it says; well, today was the day I was supposed to get my mail because the letter carrier delivered it today. But, in fact, the mail the letter carrier should have got today may not be arriving until tomorrow, because that is the way Canada Post operates its new efficiencies and proclaims so well that everything is going fine and dandy, it is meeting its schedules—schedules that it has established.

The one other point is that Canada Post changed its schedule of delivery in rural Canada, whereby the postmaster was in the past required to ensure that the mail was sorted to rural boxes within an hour and a half of the truck arriving. The truck arrives now and the postmaster is not required to put the mail in the box within any period of time. It used to be, before they cut the subsidy and the *Western Producer* had to be reduced in size and lay off some of its people, the farm publication used to arrive like clockwork on Thursday mornings in every one of these rural communities. Now, some of these communities don't get their *Western Producer* **until—**

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret the hon. member's time has expired. Questions or comments, the hon. member for Eglinton—Lawrence.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment my colleague on outlining the deficiencies and anomalies of both Canada Post and its operations.

I am glad that he is concentrating on the rural area. From the point of view of someone from a city, I just wanted to draw to his attention the fact that Canada Post

is at least as negligent and at least as shoddy in its operations on the urban side.

For example, the Armour Heights area in the riding of Eglinton—Lawrence used to have a post office that had been at that location for 20 years and served an elderly population that is growing in numbers. They have moved that post office from a pharmacy, previously Leonard's Pharmacy, down the street a kilometre and a half to an area that has no parking, no accessibility. It just staggers the imagination that instead of making the service much more accessible to the clients, we are moving it into an area where it is less accessible, less efficient, causing further aggravation and strain to the people who depend on it.

In addition to that—and I know my hon. colleague will agree with me—what we are doing as well is putting two people out of work. At the same time we are ignoring the fact that 1,100 people have signed a petition asking the post office to review the reasons that led to this kind of decision. Just imagine the kind of operations and the kind of management techniques that are being applied in Canada Post.

While rural Canada is a very important component in the importance of the post office to the economy, those of us in the cities—and I would ask the hon. member to make a quick comment or an observation— are being given short shrift as well on post office matters.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

There are probably two to three hours worth of observations that any member of the opposition could put on the record concerning Canada Post's deficiencies in service and quality. Certainly I was not ignoring the urban side in my remarks, there is simply not enough time allocated to any one member to deal with the inequalities that exist.

In my former capacity as the postal critic for my party, I did travel extensively in Canada and visit quite a number of urban postal stations and discuss urban postal needs as well.

The member is absolutely correct in his description of the way in which Canada Post is operating in urban Canada. I can give a couple of examples from my travels, one of which is just down the street here in the centretown area of Ottawa. Over the last four years the Canada Post retail outlet has existed in three different locations. If you happen to live in the centretown area of Ottawa, you do not know where to get your mail any more because the post office has moved from one location to another, as each retail postal outlet operator has found that the contract they were provided by Canada Post has not met their personal needs and, therefore, have given up on the contract.

• (1300)

This is also one of the major concerns that we have in rural Canada, that when a post office is established in a rural community in a retail outlet, when the retail outlet closes or ceases to exist or the owner retires, there is no place left for the post office to go and the community loses its post office.

The one other thing I wanted to talk about on the urban side was quite simply the inequalities that exist when new developments are brought on stream. In Halifax, for example, where they have built a new subdivision in one part of the city, the letter carrier will deliver the mail on one block. He or she will not deliver mail for the next block and begin delivering again in the subsequent block. It is quite simply because the block in the middle has been considered a new subdivision in downtown Halifax. It is a most discouraging situation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands on a question or a comment. I am afraid that will be the only one I will be able to entertain.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I rose because I had a particular problem in my own riding that the hon. member may be familiar with and perhaps he would care to comment on it.

There are two rural post offices located fairly close to one another. One is still a post office and the other is now a retail outlet, because a few years ago Canada Post closed this post office and moved it in to a video store. I understand they now sell postal supplies in the video store.

I am told that when the video store orders new supplies from Canada Post, the delivery time is approximately one week. When the post office a few miles down the road orders similar supplies, the delivery time is three to four weeks.

It appears to me that what Canada Post is trying to do is to lower the level of service in the post office so that they will be able to stand and say: "Well, the post office is losing business. Nobody goes there. Everyone is going to the new retail store because it is so wonderful and convenient". Of course, everyone knows that is claptrap.

I wonder if the member who has just spoken, who has had some considerable experience as critic in this area, could say whether this kind of practice on the part of Canada Post is, in fact, commonplace. Are the actions of Canada Post designed to make the figures that the minister responsible cites with such glee and enthusiasm in this House, saying how wonderful things are at Canada Post, if those figures are not cooked by the kind of policies the post office is pursuing in denigrating service in rural post offices and trying to force customers to use their new retail operations contained in stores, which obviously are not providing the same service to customers of the post office?

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, to my colleague from Kingston and the Islands I want to say thank you again for pointing out a very important part of this Canada Post debate.

The hon. member from Kingston and the Islands is absolutely correct. It is not just a problem that affects his constituency, but is one that has been brought to my attention from communities across Canada. In particular, it has been voiced in my own constituency, where we also have retail postal outlets operating near rural postal stations.

Before I forget, Canada Post likes the term RPO, retail postal outlets. But for us, the only RPO that we want is the rural post office. That to us is the real RPO we have to be working with.

But to get back to the point that the member for Kingston and the Islands raised, I know of many situations where the retail postal outlet receives supplies weeks in advance of the rural post offices. In fact, rural postmasters have had to borrow from each other in order to get enough stamps, money orders, priority post envelopes, to have enough security mail envelopes, and the paper required to keep notes on the registered mail, the security mail going out.

In fact, several of the postmasters in my own constituency have even resorted to the practice of buying their own staples, their own pens, their own paper, because they simply cannot get it from Canada Post in time for—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. Debate, the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas.

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on this motion, moved by my colleague from Essex—Kent, that this House call upon the government to institute policies that would require that service to Canadians be the priority for Canada Post.

We are at a point now where Canadians are wondering just how far this government will permit Canada Post Corporation to go before it steps in, if at all, to restore full national postal service for the people. We have been witnessing the disintegration of postal service throughout the country. Rural and urban residents are realizing that the Canada Post of the future will not reflect its past motto of service to the people. Instead, it has taken up a bottom line corporate mentality. This policy has been particularly hard on rural communities across Canada.

Over the last month I have been involved with the people of Avonmore, which is in my riding, who have been fighting to keep their post office open. Canada Post has indicated on June 27 that Avonmore will join the hundreds of other rural communities across Canada without a post office. In fact Canada Post has made no secret of its plans to eliminate over 5,200 post offices in rural Canada by 1996.

In many cases this means that the only federal presence in these communities will be removed; the Canadian coat of arms will be taken off the wall, the flag pulled down and the building sold. At a time when Canadians are wondering about the future of Canada, it is truly amazing that the government is content to sit back and allow Canada Post to close up shop in rural Canada. What is particularly unacceptable is that the people living in these communities do not have any say in the matter. They cannot veto a decision by the corporation to close a post office. In April 1987, the second report of the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations recommended to the government that: "No closure of a post office or change in postal service be undertaken without meaningful consultation and the consent of the commu-

nity affected". Obviously the government and Canada Post did not think much of this recommendation.

In the case of Avonmore, Canada Post sent a letter to the residents informing them in no uncertain terms that a traditional post office would not be maintained in Avonmore after June 27. It invited the people to attend a meeting with Canada Post and the community to discuss total service for Avonmore after the closure.

At this meeting the people were bluntly informed that their post office was going and there was nothing they could do to reverse the decision. The so-called 90-day consultation period with the community is a joke. How can you have reasonable consultation if one party is told what is going to happen and you must accept it? This is not constructive dialogue. This is dictatorship. The people of Avonmore left their meeting angry, upset, and naturally resolved to fight this closure every step of the way.

I have received numerous letters from the people of Avonmore on their meeting with Canada Post. Each one clearly outlines the disgust felt at the manner in which Canada Post conducted the meeting and their frustration and helplessness over the lack of participation in the decision to close their post office.

One of my constituents in Avonmore wrote me asking how in the world did these people get so much power. She went on to say: "I can appeal the decision of a judge. I can appeal the decision of Revenue Canada taxation, but Canada Post can tell me that is just how it is as they devastate my small community and I cannot appeal the decision taken by people who clearly know nothing at all about rural communities".

The people of Avonmore are steadfast in their resolve to save their post office because after it closes there will be no retail postal outlet to provide postal services to the community. There will be no conversion in Avonmore, just straightforward elimination. There is only a limited number of businesses in the community and no one wants to operate an RPO.

• (1310)

As a result, Canada Post has indicated that it will install mailboxes somewhere in Avonmore. However, to buy a stamp or register a letter, residents will have to travel 24 kilometres to the nearest available post office. Imagine, 24 kilometres to obtain such a basic service as purchasing a stamp.

This is outrageous in a country such as ours. There are a lot of elderly citizens in Avonmore. How are they going to get to the post office in Finch? What happens if they do not have transportation?

Is postal service in Canada going to be available to only those with a car? This is incredible. Rural Canadians are being made second-class citizens by a second-class Canada Post. We should be getting a rebate from Canada Post. It is not improving to meet the challenges of the next century, it is going back to the pony express and the people of rural Canada better own the pony.

Canada Post has promised to provide equal or better service to any community which loses its post office and where an RPO is established. However, the corporation is strangely silent about its promise when an RPO cannot be provided. Canada Post, like the government it represents, likes to brag about how successful and popular its RPOs are. It simply chooses to ignore the many cases across rural Canada where residents have no mail service beyond a mailbox by the side of the road.

In the Postal Services Review Committee's recommendations to Canada Post, in November 1989, the committee stated that some of the corporation's customers have been undeniably disadvantaged by the rural conversion program. The committee stated, and I quote: "There are households in small rural communities where a post office closure has resulted in a requirement for local residents to travel to a neighbourhood community, as much as 58 kilometres distant, in order to obtain counter service".

According to the committee, at the time some 66 communities representing 3,500 households were affected by this form of reduction in postal services.

The committee went on to state that this decline in service was in contravention of Canada Post's commitment to its rural customers. The committee stated that the corporation initiated the rural conversion program, in its own words to, and I quote: "increase in the most cost effective manner access by customers to services". In contrast to this declaration, postal services in 66 rural communities were dramatically reduced. This is not good enough.

The damage being inflicted on rural Canadians by Canada Post has not abated since 1989. Right now the residents of Mabou, Nova Scotia, are fighting alongside Avonmore and other communities to keep their post office open, thereby maintaining at the same time the single most important federal symbol in their community.

Mabou is located in the constituency of my colleague for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso. The hon. member cannot be here today for this debate, but I know of his strong commitment to the efforts of his constituents in Mabou who are trying to save their post office.

Last Thursday, the people of Mabou expressed their solidarity with the people of Avonmore who had come to the steps of the House of Commons to protest the impending closure of their post office. It is rather ironic that the callous actions of Canada Post to close both of these post offices has forged a common bond between people in rural Nova Scotia and people hundreds of miles away in rural Ontario.

This is the unity Canada needs now. I am only sorry for the circumstances in which this friendship and common cause has been created. Why then has Canada Post refused to keep these post offices open?

One can only conclude that it is afraid it would set a precedent and the whole master plan of rural conversion would be ruined. If this were to occur, it would be difficult for the government to sell Canada Post to private interests. Like Air Canada and Petro-Canada, the government is trying to mould Canada Post into top financial health so it can sell it.

The government does not care about people. It does not care about rural Canada and it does not care about how it implements the master plan, as long as it is successful. Canada Post and the government should review its policy on the future of the corporation and its privatization.

I believe most Canadians would firmly support the comments made by Professors Brian Osborne and Robert Pike in the December 1990 issue of *Policy Options*. They adequately summarized the serious problem the privatization of Canada Post would create for Canada and our postal system. The professors stated, and I quote: "to delegate postal services to private sector actors—without any central control and direction—is to pose a major threat to the underpinnings of social and regional integration which are, after all, the foundation of a modern nation state".

To many rural Canadians, it will always be the quality of mail service they receive which will be the most primary concern. An RPO will not provide the mail with the priority that a post office does. The argument that RPOs are opened longer than post offices and, therefore, people are receiving better service just does not satisfy rural residents.

They are, however, concerned about the security of their mail. They are concerned about the dismissal of acting postmasters and postmistresses and the part-time staff of a post office and the lost jobs in rural regions that are already economically depressed. As well, the symbolic loss of a post office reinforces the alienation rural residents feel for a cold and distant federal government, a government which is ignoring rural Canada.

Finally, what of those 66 communities which had their postal services clearly downgraded when their post offices were closed, as a result of not being able or willing to provide an RPO. Canada Post is punishing them by still going ahead and closing their post offices. The traditional post offices in all these communities should be restored.

Even the postal review committee said that such a move would "not impinge negatively on the corporation's goal of financial self-sufficiency."

The people of Cornwall are also concerned about the fate of their own post office. The main post office is located in a building that requires considerable repairs. Rather than allocate the funds to fix it up, the Department of Public Works has declared the building surplus. As it appears Canada Post will have to vacate the building, a number of my constituents believe that the corporation will use this occasion to close down this post office. To do this would have a serious negative impact on the city of Cornwall and it will also eliminate several jobs.

Cornwall wants its post office and the postal employees want to stay at work in their own community.

I trust the minister responsible for Canada Post, the corporation and Public Works Canada will endeavour to provide a similar postal facility to that currently in Cornwall located in the downtown area.

Canada Post and the government have embarked on a carefully staged selling scheme which glosses over the flaws in the rural conversion program. The corporation and the minister responsible for Canada Post never miss an opportunity to sing the praises of RPOs and how its surveys show a 90 per cent approval rating from customers who have an RPO established in their community. I doubt the value of these surveys.

Canada Post refuses to divulge the questions on the surveys. In addition, how can we give credibility to surveys which ask postal customers questions when the customers are actually in or near the RPO? Not very many people in rural Canada will bad mouth their neighbourhood storekeeper, whom they have known for years, in front of a Canada Post pollster.

One thing I can definitely say about the results of these surveys is that the 90 per cent approval figure would be somewhat lower, I might add drastically lower, if the survey was conducted in Mabou or Avonmore.

I urge the government to take the initiative and put a stop to the rural conversion program and re-evaluate the direction it has set for Canada Post. The corporation does not need to be sold off and the people of Avonmore, Mabou and all of rural Canada do not want to be sold out.

In conclusion, I join with my colleagues in the Liberal Party in calling upon the government to support our motion that the government institute policies requiring that service to Canadians be the priority for Canada Post.

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member who just spoke. I think postal service to communities in Canada is very bad right now.

I would like to point out to the member that I made a statement in 1986 requesting a new postal station in Calgary Northeast. After a long study, which cost the postal service a lot of money, a service was established in the Marlboro shopping centre. At that time, I had received a letter from Mr. Lander, President and Chief Executive Officer of Canada Post, dated April 17, 1986. He said: "I am unable to give you a positive undertaking at this time. However, you will be interested to know that the Canada Post Corporation has contracted with Thorne, Stevenson and Kellogg to undertake a study of the postal network of the city of Calgary."

• (1320)

I have here that study. The study recommended that a postal station be established in Calgary Northeast in the Marlborough shopping centre. My constituents have written a petition and in answer to this petition, it was stated, and I quote: "As well, Canada Post is committed to opening 19 new direction outlets across the country as part of an experiment to improve customer access to retail postal service and to improve the quality of in-store service."

A site was chosen and an outlet was established in the Marlborough mall. This happened and everybody was quite happy. They spent $1 million to establish it.

Now they are closing it down and putting it again in a private store that cannot service that area. I would like the hon. member to comment on that.

Mr. Kilger: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member from Calgary Northeast for his comment and question.

I think it just reminds us, once again, that the government is not listening to the people. Whether it is in rural or urban Canada, Canada Post is delivering a second-class service and making citizens second-class citizens. In communities like Mabou and Avonmore, we are not talking about a conversion, we are talking about the total elimination of a post office.

In urban centres such as Calgary, and other large centres across the country, some housing developments have door-to-door delivery, others have supermailboxes. There is just no consistency. There is no equity of service across the country.

I should have taken the time to add a few other comments with respect to the Avonmore post office. It sits physically at the centre of the village and, as such, has always been the focal point of the entire community. Now we are going to take the flag down. Not only that, the cenotaph is located on the same physical land as the post office in Avonmore. Now they are going to be asked to remove the cenotaph and put it elsewhere. I think it is a total disrespect to Canadian veterans who have served their country.

Last week we had the visit of 60 residents of Avonmore who presented me with over 700 names on petitions on a day they designated as "Avonmore's Drive for Dignity."

I hope the government, through the corporation, will re-evaluate its position.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt): Mr. Speaker, I want to share with my colleague from Stormont—Dundas something that is very particular to my riding, a city riding in Scarborough.

The post office in my riding did a study and it wanted to take away something like 15 boxes. It did not notify the residents of the area. All of a sudden, one morning, those boxes vanished. These were boxes from in front of seniors' buildings, boxes from areas where the seniors cannot walk more than two blocks to deposit their mail. You know, Mr. Speaker—because I know you are reaching that golden age—it is very important for grandparents to communicate with their children and grandchildren. If they do not have the opportunity to go and deposit their letter in the mailbox, they lose that.

I presented to the corporation a petition of 400 signatures from the area in my riding of Pharmacy and Huntingwood asking it to bring back a very important mailbox.

My question is as follows. Does my colleague from Stormont—Dundas also realize that we in the city also face the same dilemma with the corporation and it is about time that the government stands up, the minister responsible for the corporation, and listens to the people of Canada? They are fed up with being second-rate citizens. They want the post office the way they used to know it.

Mr. Kilger: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to my colleague from Scarborough—Agincourt. I certainly want to detach myself from his introductory remarks. You look fine in your middle-age, sir.

I think the point should be made very briefly. I would say that profits are put ahead of people. These notices go out to every community and their citizens when finally Canada Post is going to take action. Here is the last paragraph, "We look forward to meeting and working with you on the changes to be made to your postal service". I wish they would start working with them and listening to them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. Debate.

Mr. Karygiannis: A point of Order, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to clarify very much that I hold you in great esteem and in great honour. I want to say, sir, that you are a fine individual and a good grandfather.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Well, I did not cut the hon. member off just because of his statement. His time did expire. Thank you very much for the comment.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona and the hon. member for Carleton—Charlotte will be splitting their time, 10 minutes each.

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on this motion.

Canada Post has come a long way since the days of the traditional post office. It has had to adapt to new methods of providing services in order to respond to the evolving needs of its customers. In other words, Canada Post has had to change, as Canada has changed, and the members opposite refuse to recognize that.

In order to meet these changing needs and expectations, Canada Post has worked hard to improve the reliability and accessibility of postal services in Canada, particularly as they have related to rural customers in rural areas. In fact, there are 4,000 more outlets today than there were when Canada Post became a corporation. Four thousand more outlets out there to serve Canadians.

It has had to manage the operations of its services in the most cost-effective way and the services must be managed effectively. At the same time, the corporation has the responsibility of eliminating postal deficits that have burdened the Canadian taxpayer in the past.

As you know, 10 years ago, all three federal parties agreed with the legislation to change government policy and make Canada Post into a postal corporation. There were a number of reasons for this.

Canada Post had been faced with a great number of debilitating strikes that had resulted in Canadians being denied postal services for periods of over 40 days, and there were many of these strikes.

The reputation for service and reliability had gone out the window. It had been lost. A department that had once achieved surpluses on a regular basis, was reaching annual deficits of more than $600 million. Some of these

were threatening to reach $1 billion. A $1 billion deficit. Outrageous.

There was a new management team put in place and it began to operate the Canada Post Corporation on a model of efficiency and service to Canadians. It improved reliability, accessibility and affordability. Canada Post has met all of these services.

Uniform standards, systems and procedures were introduced to ensure that Canada Post operated as a fully integrated distribution system. It delivers an average of 34 million pieces of mail every day to almost 11 million addresses coast to coast. That is an enormous amount of mail it moves to a great number of addresses in a very short time.

It has established a national control centre which is linked by computer to airlines and trucking companies that carry the mail. It is also linked to the plants that process the mail.

• (1330)

This centre monitors the movement of mail 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so that situations that threaten the delivery of mail can be dealt with immediately. Because of this, the reliability of Canada Post has been much improved.

Canada Post also measures its performance. Ernst and Young sends 50,000 pieces of properly addressed mail through the system four times a year and publishes the results.

Today these reports show that Canada Post's on-time delivery performance is almost 97 per cent, compared with an average of below 85 per cent when monitoring began in the fall of 1987. In fact, other countries and other postal systems have emulated this model which Canada Post put in place.

Canada Post is working to make it more convenient for people to buy their products and access their services, whether they live in cities or in rural Canada. With the largest retail network in Canada, larger than all the banks and all the financial institutions together, in order to meet the needs of Canadians, they are making it even larger.

However, Canada Post must do this in a cost-effective manner in order to achieve the objective of affordability. If costs are high, then these costs are passed on to post office customers.

Canada Post is readjusting its retail network in urban Canada to ensure that customers have access to postal products and services at times and locations which reflect the changing shopping patterns of the majority of Canadians.

I would like to give you an example of what has happened in my own constituency of Edmonton—Strathcona. Two years ago, a person named Mr. Eugene Baravash took over the Maurice Pharmacy which housed the McKernon postal outlet in my constituency.

Canada Post soon approached him and said: "We would like to turn your post office from a post office outlet into a franchise." Mr. Baravash said: "I cannot do it now. I do not have the money to come up to buy a franchise. I would have to expand the space requirements in my pharmacy and I will not be able to do it."

Canada Post at that time was a little heavy handed. It threatened to close down and take out the postal outlet to put it somewhere else.

I intervened with the post office and I asked the post office to give him a bit of time, to wait a year or two until his cash flow became positive. He had just taken over this store. He had heavy debts and so on.

Canada Post sat down with him and came to an agreement that in a couple of years time they would review this.

Canada Post has now reviewed it and I understand that the Maurice Pharmacy which houses the McKernon postal outlet is on its way to becoming a full-fledged franchise. What this will mean is greater service, greater numbers of hours, and a greater number of services in the post office.

Canada Post, in order to meet its goals, has been sometimes a bit heavy handed in all members' eyes. Over all, Canadians are experiencing greater service, and this is very important.

One thing we have to realize is that, according to inflation, the price of postage stamps is a better deal today than it was before. I would like to give an example

and compare basic letter rates of the major OECD countries.

To contrast the cost of a stamp with how long it takes to earn that stamp in minutes of labour: In the United States it takes 1.6 minutes of labour to buy a postage stamp; in Canada, it takes 1.68; in Sweden, 2.02 minutes of labour and so on down to France where it takes 3.09 minutes of labour to buy one postage stamp for an ordinary first class letter. In Italy it is 3.61 cents.

Canada is ahead of Sweden, Australia, the United Kingdom, Japan, West Germany, France and Italy.

Not only that, according to surveys of Canada Post many people are very satisfied with the service. On conversions that occurred between the years 1987 and 1989, there was a 91 per cent over-all satisfaction rate. Of course there has been an adjustment, and sometimes adjustment and change are uncomfortable, but once they have been made Canadians are generally satisfied.

I must commend Canada Post. There are glitches, yes, and there are complaints from time to time, as hon. members have mentioned. However, Canada Post is willing to work with members of Parliament. It is willing to work with Canadians. It is turning a profit now, two years in a row. It is taking this profit and reinvesting it into capital equipment, which is badly needed, and into mechanization. This is good for Canada Post, good for Canadians and good for Canada.

I would just like to close with one other statistic, which is that Canada Post has 97 per cent on-time delivery, 4,000 more outlets and, again, 90 per cent satisfaction. I believe that is very good.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the remarks of the member. I noticed that he of course quoted many statistics and I do not necessarily disagree with some or all of them.

However, I heard another speaker today talk about one of the decisions of Canada Post. I listened very carefully when he talked about the problem that his constituent had and the apparently heavy-handed approach that Canada Post had for this poor gentleman who was struggling in a business, like many people in Canada are struggling in business.

However, we heard another member raise the fact that this same corporation which is heavy-handed—and we all know of instances where it has been heavy-handed—apparently purchased—and I stand to be corrected, beg to be corrected, if I am wrong—a box at the Skydome in Toronto. Those things do not come cheaply.

Does the member know anything about the following? If it is a fact that Canada Post Corporation purchased a box at the Skydome, allegedly for the purpose of entertaining their clients, first of all, does he agree with it? Second, has his constituent been invited by Canada Post to attend a ball game in its skybox?

Mr. Thorkelson: Yes, I believe Canada Post did get involved in renting a skybox. That was raised in the House last week. At least 80 per cent of the mail, and it could be 85 per cent of the mail, delivered by Canada Post is business mail. There is a large volume of business users. Canada Post is like any other corporation that needs to keep good relations with businesses which provide it with the bulk of its mail and the bulk of its revenue. A large amount of this revenue which is obtained from business users is used to offset some of the services it provides to Canadians. I think that is important.

The corporation is involved in several major Canadian sporting and entertainment facilities, including the Toronto Skydome. It purchases tickets to sporting events in other parts of the country, not unlike businesses.

The member also mentioned heavy-handed. The corporation tries as best as it can to negotiate with Canadians and with businesses, and I applaud it for that. Sometimes for their own interests business, outlets or people are resistant to change. Canada Post at some point in time has to make a decision. We all realize that. It is just like in the House of Commons: we debate and we debate and debate, but the day comes when we have to make a decision. Canada Post is not inflexible. It will change its decisions. At the end of the day it must make a decision and it must move forward.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to take part in this debate. I welcome the opportunity to do so in response to the opposition day.

• (1340)

I guess some of the mistakes of Canada Post in the past are legend. There is no question that before it was made a Crown corporation by this government, the corporation was running into all kinds of difficulty. In fact when we took office in 1984, we made a commitment to the Canadian people that we were going to take the $500 million deficit and turn it around. Turn it around we did. We have taken that $500 million deficit and turned it into a $150 million profit. I do give the minister of the day responsible for Canada Post some credit for doing that.

The down side of that, and there is always a down side to any cost-cutting measure, is that rural Canada has paid the price for that turnaround. It is almost the story of the city mouse versus the country mouse. If you listen to all of the debate on Canada Post in this House, you will notice that most of the criticism of Canada Post is coming from rural members of Parliament like myself who have numerous communities within their rural ridings. That is where the heart of the problem lies with regard to Canada Post.

I want to give some examples. They are not exaggerations but facts. Drivers who drive their own vehicles to deliver mail to rural parts of my riding and many other ridings in this country are getting paid at a rate far less than the mail delivery service in cities. Where a letter carrier service is provided by Canada Post, the letter carriers have a contract, a fairly strong union, and are actually paid more to deliver mail in town without the cost of an automobile than these poor drivers in rural Canada. This is an example of the absurdity of situations within Canada Post.

Drivers in my riding have delivered the mail for years. In fact I was speaking to one of them yesterday. They have decided they are not going to go after the contract, in other words put a bid in or retain the contract to deliver mail in their particular area, because they can no longer afford to do it. It is as simple as that. They are working for less than minimum wage. It comes down to the absurdity within Canada Post of two different situations, two different unions, no union, one working for less than minimum wage, the other working at a far higher wage with fewer expenses.

It is the same with rural post offices. We have had numerous post office closings and conversions in my riding. Rural post offices were in themselves not totally responsible for that $500 million that we inherited when we took office and took over Canada Post. Far from it. The postmistress or the postmaster in those post offices in many cases is working for slightly above minimum wage. Compare their wage scales with the wage scales in the city post offices. There is a vast difference.

That is why members of Parliament on both sides of this House, like myself, get very irritated when they hear of the closing of some of these rural post offices. Granted, sometimes it makes sense and I am sure we can document that. If I have time I will document cases where conversions have worked. In many cases it does not work and it is not working. That is another example of some of the policies that Canada Post forced on the people with no discussion, no dialogue at all. They simply arbitrarily did it.

The best example I have of that is the mode of delivery. Each Canadian is entitled to one free mode of delivery in this country.

In rural areas it usually means a rural mailbox. If I have a rural mailbox, I am entitled to free delivery. For some reason, and it usually comes down to age and a problem of inaccessibility for a rural Canadian to actually walk to the end of the driveway—sometimes driveways in rural Canada are 200 feet long, 300 feet long and sometimes longer, sometimes shorter—but some Canadians, because of a handicap or whatever, cannot get to their mailboxes. They choose, instead of getting mail in a mailbox, to pick it up in town or have a relative pick it up.

Do you know what Canada Post did, Mr. Speaker? The rental of a box in a post office went from $26.50 to $50 in one year. Many residents phoned me about that, wondering why their rental fee went from $26.50 to $50 in one year. I could not explain it.

Name one corporation in this country that can raise prices by 100 per cent and get away with it, where the consumer would actually allow them to get away with it. I do not know of any. Canada Post did, as the member on the other side is nodding, and did get away with it.

Those are the types of things that just turn rural Canadians off when we are speaking of Canada Post. It is very negative. Canada Post has no thought at all for rural Canadians.

There is a little community in my riding called Fredericton Junction. This one is the most absurd case of all. There was a surplus of lock boxes in this particular post office in Fredericton Junction. Canada Post arbitrarily decided that anyone farther than .4 kilometres from this particular post office would be forced to erect a mailbox. In other words, they would be getting rural delivery once they were beyond the bounds of that post office by .4 kilometres, just a little less than half a kilometre. Many of the residents in that community are elderly. Many of them obviously are not. They are still working Canadians like you and I. They preferred to walk down to the post office and get their mail. Canada Post arbitrarily threw this decision at them. They are outside that .4 magic number that Canada Post invented. What they are forced to do now, if they want mail in that little post office, is pay the $50 to walk down to get their mail which yesterday was free. Absurd. To top it off, in this particular post office, most of the residents could not, even if they wanted to, erect a mailbox.

Some of the points I have raised have been taken care of by Canada Post, by just getting in there and fighting tooth and nail to make sure that some of these minor changes take place. Why does Canada Post not start listening?

Members of Parliament have just about zero clout when it comes to Canada Post, as everyone here will nod their head to just about zero, a big fat zero.

An hon. member: Some members.

Mr. Thompson: All members. The parliamentary secretary to the minister responsible for Canada Post might have some clout but the little country mouse in rural Canada does not have any clout with Canada Post, none at all. If you can embarrass it publicly, sometimes Canada Post will respond to complaints by members of Parliament. That is the only tool that I have, to stand up on my hind legs in this place and complain.

It is always the urban members of Parliament who get up and defend Canada Post, because no one from rural Canada in their right mind can get up in this House and defend it. Monday through Friday, there is not one who could get up on his or her hind legs in this House and defend Canada Post. Its decisions are mostly arbitrary. Canada Post has actually lied to members of Parliament.

This morning a senior member of Parliament told me of a situation in his town where a staff person at Canada Post simply fell asleep at the switch, did not inform his office as to what was going on and then attempted to cover up. That is a recurring theme with Canada Post. It is one that I do not want to see continued.

That is why I will stand up on my hind legs in this House any day of the week and defend my rural Canadians.

• (1350)

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): I have listened to a number of speakers who have been focusing on the plight of people in rural Canada as it relates to the post office and I wholeheartedly agree with them.

I want to say that the situations are no different in the metropolitan areas. I would like the member to comment on a couple of things that have been happening in the metropolitan areas.

For example, in my riding of Surrey North, there has been a privatization of post offices, particularly in the drugstores. We have had an incident where the corner drugstore had been running the post office for a number of years and a new owner came in. There were nine women working there, earning between $7 and $8 an hour doing the postal work. He immediately informed them that they were taking a reduction in pay, losing their seniority and that he was cutting back their hours. They finally formed a union and went on strike.

The post office assisted that employer every way it could to bust the union. It brought mail in. It kept the post office going, which was simply being run by the employer as a loss-leader. The community was disrupted. The people who had served that community well were out of work. Finally, the whole drugstore, because it was owned by a big chain and did not want to allow adequate wages in one store because it might have to have it in another store, shut it down. That is being repeated over and over in this whole thrust of privatization.

I would like the member to comment. I appreciate the difficulty in the rural, but what about us in the metropolitan areas?

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I cannot comment as effectively and as passionately on urban areas because I am not a member of an urban area and do not represent an urban area, but I know they are not without their difficulties.

I would like to point out something, although it is not directly answering the question: One of the things Canada Post does very effectively with regard to public relations is send out information notices to the communities. It does it through the community's member of Parliament as if the member could change it. Canada Post offers to meet with the mayor or the council in the cities and villages concerned and explain the process as to how the mode of delivery will be changed. Taking the post office out of that community would be a more accurate way of stating it.

It encourages the community to get involved. It will send out a questionnaire, which is a totally loaded questionnaire because it only gives three options. I mention this for a particular reason and I hope I have time to explain thoroughly.

Canada Post will give three options: a green box, rural delivery or a retail outlet. In most cases, if the communities had a choice it would be number four; maintain the service they presently have. That one certainly is not mentioned. The third one, the retail outlet, is sometimes not available.

It makes it sound as if in this vast country of ours there are retail stores in every community in Canada just waiting, begging to take over the post office. That is not the case in my riding. There are many communities in my riding that do not even have a store. They are very, very rural. The houses are five and six miles apart. I will finished in a moment Mr. Speaker.

In my community of Castalia and Grand Manan, there is a very good example of that. A business person went out and actually took over the old post office and put his own neck on the line simply to bring service to his own people, with a very strong chance of not succeeding in the marketplace. Rural Canadians deserve that service, one which Canada Post simply ignores.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have two further questions. Do I have unanimous consent for two small, short questions—Don Valley North and the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas?

Some hon. members: Agreed

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that there is a very large file in my office on postal complaints. I have had things happen such as Fairview Mall's only postal outlet being shut down with no alternative. I think there are 4,000 to 5,000 employees in that particular complex. In addition, there have been other areas in which postal outlets have been shut down without notice.

I also have letters to the minister and to the authorities with regard to a request for an inquiry into the post office's firing of an employee over an issue of drugs in the work place.

In terms of urban Canada the post office is a major issue. I think we all need to have more information and better service.

Mr. Kilger: Mr. Speaker, I have a quick comment to the intervention by the member for Carleton—Charlotte. He repeatedly used the words "standing on his hind legs". In my books that member stands tall in this House and his frankness and candour will lead Canadians, not only rural Canadians but Canadians all across the country, to have some hope that members of this House will continue to give the best representation to all Canadians on postal and other matters.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I do not think there is any reason for you to answer that. I think it is pretty well self-explanatory.

Questions and comments are now terminated.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I am quite delighted to join in this debate today and speak to the motion that was put by my colleague, the hon. member for Essex—Kent, who has really studied this dossier in a very thorough manner and has brought this to the attention of our caucus enabling us to have this discussion on the motion which reads:

> That this House call upon the government to institute policies that would require that service to Canadians be the priority for Canada Post.

I agree with that statement. I would personally like to add, not that it would have been acceptable in this kind of a motion, that service to Canadians be the priority not

only for Canada Post but also for the government opposite.

The member for Essex—Kent worked very hard on the Canada Post file, ensuring that postal services are in the interest of all Canadians. I believe he has been quite instrumental in arranging to have some help extended through Canada Post and the Department of Communications to weekly newspapers for a short period of time, particularly in the code 2 category, which I will come to a little later on. I think we can all appreciate the Minister of Communications having extended this amount of money. I have the sense that it was the 13 weekly newspapers in his own riding which might have had some impact.

I suggest to all weekly newspaper owners and all citizens who live in all parts of Canada to go and talk to your member of Parliament. Bug them so that if they are on the government side, they will bug the minister and if they are on this side they will insist that the minister do something about it. Sometimes it works, not always.

The daily newspaper in your constituency is a very important asset to keeping you in touch with what is going on in the world around you. Putting that moratorium on for nine months may be fine right now, but how are we going to keep up to date and know what is going on in the future? I think we have some very short-sighted policies which do not take into account the nature of Canada, the fact that we are a country with enormous geography. This has to be thought about when we look at public policy.

Since this government has come to office it has done nothing but see to the dismantling of the ties that link Canadians across this land from coast to coast to coast and the national symbols that help us identify as Canadians. It seems to fail to understand that in order to develop this immense country, services were established to link the regions to create a sense of national unity. The need for transportation led to the birth of Air Canada and the railway.

• (1400)

As our fundamental communicating link, Canada Post was put into place to serve individuals, unite Canadians and enable businesses and communities to be helped nation-wide.

I know there is the argument that that continues under the privatized Canada Post. I would suggest that they did not have to privatize Canada Post in order to have an efficient service. Believe me, it is not only the private sector that is known to be efficient at all times.

I tell them to take a good look at *Teleglobe* under Jean-Claude Delorme and tell me that it was not functioning as well, if not better. If it was not, how come they named him to head the *Caisse de dépôts*. Don't give me the argument that only the private sector knows how to work, because it does not. There are plenty of fine public servants in the public sector. I can see one who was in the public sector before. They gave a great deal to their country and to their province and to the land internationally. They did not have to be in the private sector to be good. There is lots of reason to be very proud.

The need for transportation across this vast land, whether it was Air Canada, whether it was our bus transportation system, whether it was VIA Rail, was important to maintain that sense of Canadian identity, that linking of business and individuals across this land and to keep Canadians informed.

The CBC was also created to become a vital source of news, information and entertainment. That too was a celebrated cultural institution until this government started to cut it to pieces.

There are a lot of things government members have done that make me wonder if they really are Canadians. Canadians have long been associated with all these links. Therefore, the privatization, the closures and the downsizing that have taken place give everyone in this country a sense of abandonment, a sense of not belonging. As everybody knows, if we look at some of the cartoons, we need a sense of belonging. That loss of symbols, the loss of identity, the loss of national unity and the lack of sense of identification have led to and exacerbated the constitutional discussions we have had up till now.

I think one has to realize that in the privatization of Canada Post its business plan of action—the organ-o-gram and that it will do this, that and the other in these number of steps—may be fine and dandy, but it forgot a few human dimensions. One example is that we now have two classes of Canadian citizens: Canadian citizens who get door-to-door service and Canadian citizens who have to walk in snow, sleet, rain or ice; it does not matter what the temperature. It seems to forget that we live in the northern hemisphere. Senior citizens find it a little

bit difficult to walk down to the corner or over the icy, bumpy street to their green postal boxes, those friendly little boxes that the dogs like but not people. I would also suggest that that was not taken into consideration.

Since 1986, Canada Post has been following its corporate plan to close or convert rural and small community post offices. In 1986 there were 5,221 such post offices employing 10,000 people. Today, more than 900 have been closed or have been converted, with over 3,000 jobs lost.

What is most interesting as we look at ghettos in which people work, is that most of the workers in these rural post offices were women—83 per cent. I wonder if that had anything to do with the corporate plan.

In the coming summer there will be 156 more post offices closed in rural Canada, 12 of them in Quebec. *Cela ne fait aucune logique.*

The government tells me that postal rates did not really go up. All I know is that when I speak to people in my riding, when I walk into the post office and there are people standing there buying stamps, they are complaining. They lay out 43 cents for the stamp. They are not standing there calculating that the stamp was 39 cents, which was exorbitant in the first place, and that the GST has added the additional amount. They now pay 43 cents, which is a 10.5 per cent increase.

All they know is that they are paying more money. I do know that the GST is something they hate. All I would have to do if I want to fan the flames and be very partisan—I often do—would be to say: "Just blame the GST and blame those Conservatives who had such a wonderful fiscal plan for Canada. They are bleeding us dry".

Last Saturday, *The Toronto Star* carried a story which led off with the following words: "Every 11 days since the beginning of 1990, a Canadian magazine has folded its covers and winked out of existence." In fact, here is the story. It did not have to be on the floor, but it sure floored a lot of people in the magazine industry.

The Great Depression, two world wars, a small, spread out population, recessions, inflation, overwhelming competition from the United States; none of these killed Canadian magazines in total, but this government's lack of action is going to do that.

Why is this happening? First, because the government cut $110 million from the traditional postal subsidy that was created at the time of Confederation. We created things in this country, and the first thing you did within eight years is that you killed it. What went on here is absolutely disgraceful. For more than 100 years, governments believed it was important for all Canadians to have access to magazines, books and newspapers. Why? Because I would suggest to you that words represent ideas, transmit values and are the cornerstone of democracy.

What have we done? We have cut the postal subsidies, we added GST and we are taxing knowledge. We are taxing brains, the *Bible*, the *Koran*—what does it matter—and we have added a postal subsidy that is just going to be the final straw on the camel's back.

Studies have demonstrated the necessity of postal subsidies over decades. From the 1961 Royal Commission on Publications which is often referred to as the O'Leary commission report, to the special Senate committee on the mass media to the government's own independent studies in the 1980s, they have come to the same conclusion, that Canadian magazines face harsh economic realities. They have a very small market and very stiff U.S. competition.

We know we do not own our cultural market, that which enables our children to grow and learn for the future and remain identified strongly as Canadians.

Second, they said Canadian magazines foster in Canadians a sense of themselves in a way quite different from other media. It is true that what you see on the television screen has great impact and that an image carries 1,000 words. If you want to have that integrated into your thought process, have food for thought or sort of mull matters over in your mind, when it says: "You do not have to do it, you have a choice," and things like that such as philosophic ideas too, you have to read it and be able to re-read it.

It was interesting to note that there is no concern on the part of this government about keeping its population educated and informed through the kind of reading material that often is easier than the thick tome book or no access to a public library. They got this through their magazines.

In the pre-election period, it is very interesting with this government. In 1988, the government sort of changed its mind. I would suggest that the former communications minister Flora MacDonald had finally to admit that postal subsidies had helped to develop the publishing business and she rightly argued for the maintenance of the postal subsidy. She acknowledged that the ultimate beneficiaries of magazines and newspapers, community newspapers, trade newspapers, those newspapers which touch on ethical values, religious values, all had a good Canadian readership and were especially important to readers of small publications, readers in remote areas and readers with little access to other means of distribution.

On April 14, the minister announced: "My cabinet colleagues agreed with me that the postal subsidy is well worth preserving. Therefore, I am pleased to announce today that, for at least the next five years, the program's funding will be maintained at approximately its current level of $220 million annually."

• (1410)

But with the election won and the free trade agreement passed, the government broke its promise and axed the historic over-100-year-old subsidy by $110 million.

Add to this the drop in demand because of the government's 7 per cent goods and services tax. Just imagine the damage on an industry that had never been taxed before and which only had a 2 per cent profit margin. Magazines were exempt from federal manufacturers' sales tax, which the GST supposedly replaced. Therefore, there was no trade-off for the magazine industry, it was just a new tax. It was a fresh tax burden on an industry that only works on a 2 per cent profit margin.

Canadian magazine editor Doug Bennett says that the impact of this has been "the folding of 47 magazines". The industry has predicted that as the pre-GST subscriptions expire, the picture will get much worse.

You can add to that, as the article says so eloquently, the other threat that is posed by the GST, says Mrs. Keechy who is a director in the magazine industry, the inadvertent advantage it gives to the American magazines which dominate the Canadian market. Strictly speaking, American publishers are supposed to collect the GST from Canadian subscribers and then remit that sum to the Canadian government. In the case of large magazines that are well known, I am sure they are doing that. But for hundreds and hundreds of smaller foreign publishers, the GST is something they just ignore and government enforcement is a complete joke. The net effect is that the Canadian magazines pay the GST while many American magazines get around it and can do business much more cheaply than we can. That certainly has not helped the industry.

With the closing of post offices, with the cutting of the postal subsidy, our cultural industries have been impacted in a very negative way. The O'Leary Royal Commission on Publications observed in 1961 that periodicals can provide "the critical analysis, the informed discourse and dialogue which are indispensable in a sovereign society". Other support mechanisms were also created.

Bill C-58 amended the Income Tax Act to encourage advertisers to use Canadian media to reach the Canadian public. Its intent is to encourage advertisers to use the Canadian media to reach that Canadian public. As a result, the measure discourages foreign ownership in Canadian periodical and newspaper publishing. To be defined as Canadian, a publication must have at least 75 per cent Canadian ownership, and 80 per cent of its material must originate in Canada. That is very helpful for our artists and our creators and many other industries in Canada. Canadian publications attribute a great deal of their success to the effects of this legislation.

There have been rumours of late from American trade officials that they would like to see the removal of Bill C-58. They find it an irritant. Well, there are so many irritants going on here that we don't need the Americans to add to the irritants, so the Americans should stay at home, mind their own business, and we will do what we need to do here, which includes putting back the postal subsidy. Mr. Treasury Board, Mr. Finance, Mr. Dollar Bills; put some money back in, and take the tax off books.

My conclusion, with respect to this whole issue and situation, Mr. Speaker, is the following: When you have postal rates that have gone up—just let me put this into the hopper—for the average newspaper weighing 107 grams, the yearly average postage costs were $2,000 up to June of this year. Costs after June will jump to $10,500 from $2,000. That is this government's wonderful way of encouraging our community newspapers, our weekly

newspapers, the ethnic papers, the church papers, the trade papers, the small daily papers. Enough is enough! Put the post offices back in rural Canada. Allow the people to have equal service. There are not two sets of citizens in this country. And, for goodness sakes, reinstate their postal service.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate my colleague, the hon. member for Mount Royal, on her excellent speech. For years, she has looked after communications and cultural issues on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, and she does an outstanding job. She understands the real problem Canadians have at this important time in our history.

But I would like to raise a question. In her speech, she referred to the closing of rural post offices. Yesterday, my colleague from Papineau—Saint-Michel presented petitions here. I still have a whole packet of them—they will be presented during the week. What happened in February to the people of Sainte-Blandine in the Rimouski region, Mr. Speaker? They learned that Canada Post Corporation had decided to close their post office. We well know how Canada Post consults. I was postal critic before the last federal election and if we had not had that whole debate on free trade, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that Canadians would have taken account of the bad job this government was doing.

But let us get back to the situation in Sainte-Blandine and the whole Rimouski area, Mr. Speaker. They made representations to the Minister of State for Employment and Immigration and the Minister of State for Seniors, who is their member of Parliament.

I even have a letter here from the Archbishop of Rimouski. The hon. member opposite just accused us in the opposition of creating the myth that closing a rural postal office kills the rural way of life. It is not a myth we are creating. I would like to read a letter that the Archbishop of Rimouski wrote to the government member, the MP for Matapédia—Matane. It reads as follows: "Dear Sir, You are no doubt aware of the concern raised by the Canada Post Corporation's decision to close its facilities in three of our rural parishes. With your deep knowledge of the area, you certainly realize the implications of such a decision. Our rural communities have over the years been built around three main institutions: the church, the school and the post office. Each of them gives its identity to the community it serves. Needless to say, eliminating a post office, even if comparable services are provided, is a significant loss for the community's identity. Having a post office in each of our rural communities is an immediately visible sign of the federal government's presence."

Mr. Speaker, it is not a myth of the opposition's making. Msgr. Gilles Ouellet, Archbishop of Rimouski, says the same thing. In that same region, the television station in Matane was closed, while yesterday, the new minister of regional development in Quebec created an economic development agency.

Mr. Speaker, this government is destroying the country. I will leave my colleague time to answer how she sees this situation in which the country is being shut down, while in this important debate on national unity. We need means of communications that do not exist now. They close post offices and we cannot go on that way.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say.

[*English*]

Mrs. Finestone: Mr. Speaker, I think that the Archbishop spoke eloquently about the post offices. I know my colleague, Madam Côté, when I joined her in Rimouski to talk about the closing of Rimouski and Matane speaks very eloquently and so did the 5,000 people, who talked about the cutting of the CBC stations.

This government has done nothing but destroy the infrastructure. I was on the VIA Rail train. I saw what it meant to close down the trains too. The post office, the train, the plane, everything, the government has closed them all down. Why does it not just close down the government and let us go to the people and see if they want to be shut down?

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, if we had continued

with the previous government, the country would have been shut down by now with their free spending ways.

• (1420)

I am grateful for the speech of the hon. member for Mount Royal because she is usually so responsible and articulate in her comments, but I think she would want to give some credit to the new Minister of Communications with respect to publication mail. I think she is aware that through her efforts and those of a number of members on this side that the Minister of Communications did announce an extension to May 1, 1992, for the rate implementation for small community weekly newspapers.

In addition, they continue to have the first 2,500 copies delivered free. That is exactly what the Canadian Community Newspaper Association was asking for and the Minister of Communications and the government responded. I think it is fair to say that even the Canadian Community Newspaper Association, with whom I met several times—I know that the hon. member who just spoke has met with them as well—understood that the government cannot continue to give free postage services to all the newspapers in the country. They understand and they have asked for a transition period. The minister has responded to those requests with $3.8 million available to help offset those rates and to maintain the 1990 levels for another year.

I just wanted to point that out, but I am sure the member is aware of it.

Mrs. Finestone: First of all, I am really very pleased to respond to the hon. member's question. You may not have been in the room when I first mentioned the fact that the minister had been very open-minded, I thought, somewhat influenced, perhaps, by the 13 newspapers that are in his own riding, and that is the way it should be. I am glad to hear that he listens and that he responds.

I also got carried away and became so partisan, it is so nice to do that occasionally when you get upset.

Mr. Richardson: But unusual.

Mrs. Finestone: But unusual? Well, I do not know whether to take that as a compliment or if my leader will take that into consideration in a negative way. But be that as it may, I do really believe it is important to remove anything that is in the way to access to reading material. It is so important for a country. If we were a small country it would not matter but because of our geography, because of the distribution of our population, we really do not have much choice but to be sensitive to the reasoning behind a public policy. If a public policy no longer needs to be in place, then change it.

The hon. member mentioned that we were bad managers. I would find it very interesting, if we were such bad managers, how Canada did so well over a 20-year period that this government, when it came to office in 1984, kept the budget that had been developed by the Liberal Party. My final comment is that we have a deficit that is somewhat higher than when you took office, like double.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have this opportunity to express my views on the services provided by Canada Post in my riding. I will also let you know what I think of the remarkable progress this corporation has made since 1984.

While supporting the overall plan of Canada Post, I agree that, as a government agency, it has social responsibilities of a nature other than philanthropic, cultural or sports related. Canada Post could, for instance, offer very special rates to community newspapers delivered by mail to their suscribers so that people living is remote rural areas have access to quality information at a reasonable cost.

Of course, I was very happy to hear that the subsidy has been reinstated until 1992 to allow the Community Newspapers Association to determine with Canada Post how to ensure that they can go on mail delivering their weekly newspapers at a low cost. In my riding, in Lachute in particular, it was a question of life or death for the *Watchman*, a newspaper serving the anglophone community.

With the assistance of the *Revue de la Petite-Nation*, in the regional county municipality of Papineau, we were able to prove, through a rather elaborate process, Mr. Speaker, that the service was too slow in our area because of transfers made at the sorting stations. So, the Papineau area was particularly disadvantaged by this. It is much better than it was, but there is still room for improvement there. Unjustifiable delays can still be

experienced, Mr. Speaker, as I did myself last week. A letter took 10 days to get from Lachute to Mirabel.

Mr. Speaker, another major change took place. The sorting that used to be done in Lachute is now done in Saint-Jerome and Montreal, not without some backlash. I was told once again that this was a further step towards improving the service. This is a new policy. People expect mail to be delivered very quickly. Users are no longer concerned about where the sorting is handled. What they are concerned about is the cheques and letters they are expecting and they want to get them quickly.

Mr. Speaker, Canada Post is supposedly making profits now. It should consider reinvesting some of this in mail boxes. The green boxes are pretty ugly. As I was travelling through my riding I noticed, particularly in the Huberdeau area, in Harrington, these horrible green boxes on the side of the road. I think that, if Canada Post is serious about wanting to keep improving its image, that is definitely something that should be changed. Some changes are expected and more money should be put in there. Initially, the super boxes were unpopular, but I think that since people started using them the demand has grown.

Mr. Speaker, we have been advised that the Pointe-Calumet post office will close down. It was built in 1985. I think it is slightly premature to close it, considering it has just been built. However, I know the local people are working on it, and I personally advised Canada Post of my concern about this transfer which I don't think is necessary.

On the the other hand, in Saint-Colomban, things went according to plan; the office is now operating very well.

Before discussing the many improvements Canada Post has introduced, I would like to again state my support for the Association des éditeurs de la press hebdomadaire régional et francophone and its fight against Admail. The association claims that Canada Post is competing unfairly with Quebec's weeklies, because Canada Post has access to over 10 million addresses across Canada, has direct access to the mailboxes of private citizens, uses its own facilities for delivery and makes a substantial profit in areas where it has a monopoly.

Personally, I think the director of the federal Bureau of Competition Policy should deal with this matter once and for all and conduct an investigation to see whether this Crown corporation is unlawfully competing with regional weekly newspapers.

Perhaps we could now look at the progress made by this corporation which today has annual revenues of nearly $4 billion. Every day, about 40 million items deposited at 750,000 points of mailing are processed and then delivered to any of more than 11 million addresses in this country or sent to countries all over the world.

Contrary to what is commonly thought, Canada Post does not have a monopoly on mail delivery in Canada. Letter mail, which is only 50 per cent of its business, is the only area over which it has a monopoly, by law. Even in that market, Canada Post has to compete with fax machines which have now become a direct and very effective means of communication. You get your mail in minutes, not days. So the fax machine has become a serious competitor for Canada Post. There is also electronic information and fund transfer networks and, of course, the telephone.

Other products and services, like priority post and parcel delivery, are areas where competition by courier firms, bus or truck companies, airlines, advertising media and other businesses involved in delivery of communications is very fierce. However, that is how the free enterprise system works, and Canada Post is now part of that system. So now they have to act like a company, and not like a Crown corporation that can knock on the door of the Minister of Finance to get some money because it didn't make enough the year before. It cannot operate like that anymore. So, the company has to make its products competitive and meet the market demands.

• (1430)

Canada Post also has to fight every inch of the way to keep its share of the market and it may be that, in part, that irritates and brings opposition from the community newspapers. On the other hand, it must be said in its defence that Canada Post is a company and must act as such.

At the Ottawa headquarters, a national control centre was set up to ensure the proper operation of the entire system and monitor the daily mail flow. It is from that centre that Canada Post coordinates the activities of its

57,000 employees and 12,000 suppliers with those of the contract carriers, large volume mailers, small businesses it deals with as well as all its clients.

In that centre, screens allow the continual monitoring of air transportation and weather conditions throughout the country. In fact, all members of this House and anyone interested to see how it works should go and visit the center. It is great to see how mail flow is controlled in Canada. Other terminals are used to analyse the volume of mail entering or leaving of the system. On another wall, twelve screens provide an up-to-the-minute picture of the progress of mail through the company's network of handling plants.

The national centre is linked to nine regional control centre from coast to coast by state-of-the-art telecommunication and data processing systems. There, a Canada Post senior management team meets every morning and, there also, inquiries regarding the operation of the network are relayed instantly for the appropriate person to respond to immediately.

The history of the modern-day Canada Post Corporation started in 1981. So, when we hear the Liberals and their great philosophies, we must remember it started under them. They know very well that, were they sitting on this side of the House, they would be saying the exact same things as I do today. That is the beauty of the parliamentary system. Because they are sitting on the other side, we can do nothing right; but if they were sitting on this side, then I would be in the opposition and perhaps I would be doing the same thing. The fact remains that they started this in 1981. Because we set up the new postal corporation, it does not work since the Liberals did not do it. Anyway, things are much better when the Conservatives do it. Is that not so, Mr. Speaker?

Postal service had become less and less reliable. Strikes deprived Canadians of postal service for weeks; the deficit had grown to $600 million a year and was on its way to $1 billion. Listen, a deficit of $1 billion in 1981! Imagine how much it would cost to mail a letter today if we had done nothing. It would be frightful!

It was a completely unacceptable burden for taxpayers. I hope that those listening to us today agree with me. Many postal establishments were inefficient and much of the equipment was becoming obsolete. Obviously, with a billion-dollar deficit, how can you buy new equipment? It is impossible, is it not? You have to pay back the deficit. But successive governments had other more urgent needs to meet with their limited resources than investing in capital equipment for the Post Office.

In that context, a quarter of the Public Service suddenly became a commercial business. What a change! The new corporation had more than 63,000 full-and part-time employees, but no infrastructure like labour relations, legal services, finance, purchasing and so on—indeed, everything that a normal business or any company needs to run properly.

All those functions were performed by all kinds of other departments. The new company had an annual volume of over $1.5 billion, but—get this—no bank account! It carried on its activities all across Canada but it had no control over them. The nine years since that shaky start are divided into three phases: in the first phase, from 1981 to 1985, the corporation built up the infrastructure essential for any business. Just to let my colleague on the other side know, we were elected in 1984. Things had begun to deteriorate four years earlier, even if you would want us to believe otherwise. Canada Post was restructured according to business management principles. Of course, they had to get competent people from the private sector. Financial statements had to be prepared and all the support services a big business would need had to be put in place. New goals were defined, resources were assessed, prepared, and a five-year plan established, just to name a few innovations.

In 1985, we were in office when Canada Post management realized they were dead wrong in believing they knew how to operate a postal service. After all, that is what they had been doing for over a hundred years. They were wrong, Mr. Speaker. That year, they lost control and did not know how to react. Consequently, the second stage of the restructurization was never planned, it just happened out of necessity. Between 1986 and 1989, Canada Post did not release any public statement. They closed down their marketing service. What they wanted was to start to standardize their operations throughout the country. That is when they implemented a system-

ized process, with national standards of service they could control and measure.

To regain some of their credibility and prove their reliability, they made some fundamental changes in their system, Mr. Speaker, and I insist on the word "fundamental". First, they eliminated their first-class, second-class, and third-class mail service, as if there could be different classes of customers. They are all first-class users. A business must have only first-class products.

The corporation negotiated some flexibility in its collective agreements, to improve service efficiency. I believe that most of the people now working for the Canada Post Corporation are proud of what has been accomplished and I am not sure that, should you ask them, Mr. Speaker, they would agree to return to the old Post Office Department.

Productivity has improved greatly. The Corporation asked for guarantees of performance from its suppliers of air and road transportation. It was an obvious choice. It is not insignificant, since Canada Post is the largest buyer of transportation services in Canada. It is perfectly logical to ask for quality service. It put in place preferred rates for large volume customers who agree to prepare their mail and deliver it to the carrier. It invested in the best equipment and technological system. It consistently sought to integrate this system with the ones used by companies, since 80 per cent of the mail it processes comes from corporate customers.

Mr. Speaker, Canada Post is the first postal administration in the world to have its productivity measured by an independent auditor and to make public the results of such an exercise. The quarterly reports show a constant improvement in the performance of the corporation from an average of less than 85 per cent, according to the first reports issued back in 1987.

I regret that my colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, just the other side of the bridge from my riding— Usually, when I speak, he is in the House. I wish he were here for I could have given him the results of a mini poll carried out in Hawkesbury. People in Hawkesbury were asked: Is the mail service any better? I said it in English, because that is the way it was reported in the paper. One person answered:

[*English*]

"I am happy with the mail delivery here in Hawkesbury. I have not noticed much of a change. It is always the same. The service is good."

Another wrote: "Yes, the service has definitely improved. I use the post office quite a lot and I am pleased with the service. I think they are doing a fine job".

[*Translation*]

And I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker.

So, about three years ago, Canada Post Corporation turned a profit in accordance, of course, with its corporate plans. Any business who does not turn a profit has to close shop. It's a fact. Since becoming a business concern, the corporation must show a profit. There's no getting around it. Only the New Democrats do not understand that a business must earn money.

It was the first year in the black, and the first time that Canada Post made a profit in 30 years. With that started Phase III. The corporation was now able to show a different image to Canadians. So, in 1989, it had its first profit of $96 million dollars. The corporation had gone from a $600 million deficit, almost one billion, to a $96 million profit. They must have thought: Good, now we can buy ourselves some machinery.

• (1440)

The next year, the corporation did even better: profits of $149 million, at the same time as it improved service, let us not forget! Surveys were done. People do not complain about the service. When a change is made, it takes two or three weeks. Of course, Mr. Speaker, we are always attached to our services and reluctant to change—that is quite normal. But after three weeks or a month, people realize that it is not so bad. People go to pick up their mail at any time of the day. People work today, both partners in a couple work and it is not always convenient to go to the post office by one o'clock or between three and four— Today, they can pick up their mail much longer and take advantage of the services.

Imagine, Mr. Speaker—this must be horrible for any socialist—Canada Post Corporation paid the federal government a $60-million dividend! You, ladies and gentlemen, you taxpayers, after paying through your taxes for years to subsidize a deficit, received a $60-million dividend paid to the government! The corporation invests $400 million a year on average in equipment,

training, new technology to improve services and Canada Post has thus become a world leader in postal high technology. This is possible because the corporation is profitable; if it were not, it could not invest in new technologies.

The new postal system comes into play from the very beginning of the development of a marketing or billing concept in any of the businesses which provide Canada Post with 80 percent of the volume of mail it handles over the year.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt about it—I have encountered it myself, as all members of this House have, I am sure; I encounter it every day in my riding—there is a normal resistance to change in services from our constituents. Just a little while ago, a meeting was held in Pointe-Calumet and people went and said maybe we should have done things this way or another way. At least, Canada Post takes the time to consult the people and to listen to them. There is a 90-day period set aside for consultation. In the end, the people come to realize that the corporation's plans are not all that bad. It takes a little time, but in the end they are satisfied. And the superboxes, Mr. Speaker, they are just great!

I would like to say, in closing, that I too, as a taxpayer and a member of Parliament, am happy to see the corporation paying us dividends, allowing us thereby to improve services and, of course, to apply that money toward the reduction of the deficit and finally to increase the services provided to Canadians.

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, I found the hon. member's speech somewhat confusing, because at first she said she supported and agreed with Canada Post's corporate plan. That she started to say: You know, this doesn't work very well, and that service could be improved— Although she agreed with this plan, she was against letting Canada Post operate in areas where it would be competing with private businesses, such as regional weeklies.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member does not understand the real problem. Today, we are talking about Canada Post, but we could just as well be talking about Air Canada, the CBC, VIA Rail— It's the whole philosophy of a government that says the market is always right. It is a matter of making money, making a profit, and the government isn't interested in the citizens of this country or in providing a service for Canadians. Earlier, the hon. member mentioned auditors who were supposed to measure the performance of our postal services. We all know about the surveys at Canada Post, Mr. Speaker. I was a critic for two years.

Mr. Prud'homme: And a very good critic!

Mr. Gagliano: Every time we took a closer look at the figures, we realized it was all planned so they could say: We conducted a survey, the people agree, and now we can close the post office in their community.

Mr. Speaker, I think we should look at the real story. In 1984, when this government came to power, the first thing the Minister of Finance told Canada Post was: As of 1985, you will have to balance your books, but you can't compete with private enterprise. Now listen, it doesn't take a genius to realize that the only thing they could do was cut services.

So they went and closed a whole bunch of post offices in rural areas. They installed superboxes before they put up the green boxes, and now, of course, as the hon. member said, people prefer the superboxes. Mr. Speaker, of course they are better than the green boxes, which are a real disgrace, as the hon. member said.

However, in urban areas, people keep asking us for home delivery, not those superboxes. Mr. Speaker, I live here in Gatineau and I have a superbox. Every morning when I open my box, it's full of junk mail. That is what we have now, Mr. Speaker!

We have a mailbox for all the advertising they sent us. And what do people want? They want service. The government can talk about money and profits—of course Canada Post is making a profit. The government also says everyone is satisfied with the service, but, Mr. Speaker—and I refer now to the Rimouski area—I could show the hon. member hundreds of thousands of petitions these people are sending in. If you want to see people who are against Canada Post— Earlier I mentioned the Archbishop of Rimouski, and I could read a few more names: I have here Father Pascal Parent, the parish priest; the parish of Sainte-Blandine; the Association féminine d'éducation d'action sociale— You want to hear some more names of people who don't agree? Gilles Roy, vice-president of the Urgence rurale coalition. You want more names? Well, I will give you some more: the Ficelle organization, MPPs, Mayor Daniel

Côté, MPP Michel Tremblay, all from a rural area around Rimouski.

Thousands of people are up in arms, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member says everybody is happy with the service they are getting. Mr. Speaker, the truth is, we are not getting any service in this country. Everything has been cut.

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the archbishop of Rimouski is interested in what is going on in his community, but I am also sure that the archbishop would be the first to realize that Canada Post must ensure that the customer who wants service has to be dealt with efficiently.

They say that post offices have been shut down. Granted, some post offices have been shut down, but service was transferred to small businesses in the same community. Yes, the post office has been closed, but the service was transferred elsewere. The guy to whom you address a letter as "John Doe, St. Blandine, County of Rimouski" will get his letter, his mail.

Mr. Prud'homme: At the archbishop's palace!

Mrs. Bourgault: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if it is going to be the archbishop who will receive it, but, as the member for Saint-Denis said, Joe Blow, Sainte-Blandine, Rimouski County will get his mail.

So, when they say that post offices were closed, they are exaggerating a little. The services were transferred, and I can tell you that in several small communities, there are businesses like convenience stores that are open until 11 at night where many constituents go to get their mail and buy a few things at the same time to encourage those small shopkeepers.

Sure, before that, we used to have post offices with postmasters and all that in every community. You know, Mr. Speaker, in some municipalities, when the Liberals formed the government, post offices were built everywhere. There was one on this side of the road, and another on the other side. The postmaster on one side said hello to the one on the other side. They even asked questions of each other to know at what time they would—That really happened in a community, the name of which I have forgotten.

If it was politically rewarding, post offices were built. It was like during the Duplessis days, bridges were built where there was no water. So, let us not exaggerate. The service was upgraded. I understand people who are against it, but, once again, everyone gets his mail, though in different ways.

• (1450)

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member says that everything is fine today, I cannot help thinking about my responsabilities towards my riding. I want to tell her, for example, that in the new modern life, perhaps in the new big developments, and I say only perhaps—But she knows my riding very well, since, under the previous government, from 1984 to 1988, she was the hon. member responsible for the riding of Saint-Denis, to see who could defeat the member for Saint-Denis. But I must admit that she is an excellent friend.

It is absurd to see that in the Bois-de-Boulogne, which is very well known, in Montreal—I am not talking about the Bois-de-Boulogne in Paris, but the one in Montreal, which is a residential area—there are people in the north, the east, the west and the south; so they are completely surrounded, but there are also a few developments in some streets. For example, I am thinking of Marcellin-Wilson Street. I am thinking of a whole new estate belonging to Mr. Fiori. I am thinking of the new estate of the people she knows well, like Mr. Musto. In the heart of the city of Montreal, new streets were built to connect with others, and superboxes were installed. In the winter, there is a lot a snow and ice. Older people are now scared to go there. Well, it is the people who bought estates at $400,000 or $500,000 who get all the promotional mail that they do not want. This is the new way for Canada Post to manage a good department, always in the name of sound management! I find it is sad. I must admit—this is a rare occurence and I want to soothe my colleague, Mr. Cooper, with whom I had an exchange that I regret a bit—that there were some exaggerations. Il you tell me that everything is fine, I think that you do not believe it. I point out that the member seems to be of the same opinion. But there were some unfortunate incidents.

As the member for Saint-Denis, I simply wanted to submit a case that happened in my riding, in one of the completely or almost completely built areas where,

between two streets, they built a half-street on which people cannot even find the services that are available to their neighbours.

So, it is not a new area, a new development, a new city, or a new village. It is right in the middle of Montréal between two streets, because it was built later.

Therefore, I would hope that she joins with me to make representations to Canada Post to begin correcting what appears to me to be great anomalies.

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I did say at the outset that I do not agree completely with all the corporation's restructuring plans. Clearly, a major change cannot come about without a few ups and downs and I fully understand the problems that the residents of the area may have since there is also a problem where I myself live, that is Lachute. The postman goes only so far even if he could have gone a few steps further to deliver my mail, but the corporation decided to draw the line there. Certainly, residents have a problem. I understand very well what my friend is saying but the corporation must go through a complete restructuring process. Now that it is making money it may be able to do it.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. The parliamentary secretary on a point of order.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, earlier today I asked for unanimous consent to revert to committee reports so I could table the fourth report of the management committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

FOURTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the fourth report of the Standing Committee on House Management, which is the report that deals with the Private Members' Business of the House.

CONCURRENCE IN THIRD REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there might also be unanimous consent to concur in the third report, which we tabled on Wednesday.

The House will recall that we were also denied consent by the same member at that time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, in a spirit of cooperation, I wish to inform the parliamentary secretary that we agree.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—CANADA POST

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Pickard (p. 863).

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to have a chance to join in some debate today on this very important motion that we have before us regarding postal service in Canada, dealing with Canada Post.

I just want to read the motion into the record:

> That this House call upon the government to institute policies that would require that service to Canadians be the priority for Canada Post.

That is a very important motion for us to be debating today. As is evidenced by the debate we have had in this chamber today, there are members on all sides of this House, on this side and on the government side as well, who have some very specific and important concerns about the way Canada Post is operating.

There is, as well, a particular interest among those members who represent rural ridings about some of the problems that we have had in our dealings with Canada Post in those communities.

Before I start my comments, I would just like to say a couple of things. First, I would like to pay credit to two of my colleagues who have done a considerable amount of work in this particular area.

Our previous post office critic, the member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, did a great deal of work in this area. He gained some recognition by producing a major report for our caucus. The member for Churchill, who is our current postal critic—I thank him for providing some notes—is unable to be with us in the debate today. Given the size of his riding, he also has some particular concerns about Canada Post.

There are two other groups of people who I hope are watching and listening to the debate today. The first is ordinary Canadians. Almost all Canadians have the opportunity to interface with Canada Post and to deal with that Crown corporation. I hope Canadians are listening today to see some of the concerns being raised by members of Parliament and to see, as well, that even on the government backbenches there is concern about how the corporation is running.

There is one other group, too, that I hope is paying attention. These are the people who are watching in the control room at Canada Post headquarters right now. I hope they are watching this debate, that they are taking notes on all of the concerns that have been raised here.

I trust that as a responsible Crown corporation Canada Post will take the effort to follow up on those concerns that were raised and attempt to address them and help us to assist our constituents.

I would like to take a brief look and make some comments about what this government has allowed Canada Post to do nationally and the direction in which it is going. Then I would like to make some comments about my dealings with Canada Post in my riding and, to conclude, make some comments on some of the recommendations that the New Democratic Party caucus has made and some that I have made, to ensure that Canada Post is a successful Crown corporation.

Clearly, the record speaks for itself; the main focus of Canada Post under the Conservative government has been to close or to turn over and privatize retail postal outlets and post offices in Canada.

In fact, a lot of the information that I have been provided with comes from an organization that has arisen in the past couple of years and which deserves some credit from this House. It is an organization called Rural Dignity. It has done an outstanding job across Canada raising concerns, primarily about post offices, but as well about VIA Rail and other services as it impacts on small communities.

I did not bring it with me today—I should have—but Rural Dignity is raising funds by selling a poster depicting a rural scene. That is a plug for anyone who is interested in picking up one of those posters. I have ordered one. I think the importance and contribution that rural Canada makes is an important part of Canada and one that we have often missed in this debate in this Chamber.

• (1500)

The figures are incredible. Over 1,000 rural post offices have been closed or privatized since 1986 and some 3,000 full-and part-time jobs have been lost. Over 200 communities are now without any kind of replacement postal service. In many cases, this has meant a reduction of the federal presence in Canada.

Many in my province of British Columbia are familiar with a position called "the government agent", someone who in a smaller community is really a catch-all for provincial government services and a very important person. Often in many small communities that was what the post office was. It was the federal government agent, the place people could go to get their income tax forms, GRIP forms and other paperwork when people need it from the federal government. The closing of these post offices has meant that we have lost that.

That is not even to mention the economic impact these closures have had on many small communities. Magazines and other publications have commented on the large number of people who are now running small businesses out of their basements on the side, who quite often depend on the post office to deliver their product or service. We are seeing a great deal of that now and the loss of many of these rural post offices has really hurt them.

As well, there is the absolute lack of consultation with those communities by Canada Post. One example that struck me, which was an important one, and it goes back, if I have my timing right, to last summer to a major debate in, I believe, the Westwold area of British Columbia. Canada Post usually moves pretty fast if a

postmaster dies or retires. I hope the postmasters in my riding do not choose to pass on soon. Then you can really get the mail moving fast, because Canada Post moves like greased lightning as soon as a postmaster dies or retires. It moves in very quickly, either to close the operation down or to try and privatize it.

A revealing comment was made in a discussion I had with Canada Post officials in Vancouver—and I am not suggesting in this case that they lied to me, but it is as bad as if they had. I phoned and this person said: "Well, since we"—meaning Canada Post—"eventually won this battle with the community of Westwold"—where they chained up the Canada Post vehicle, wrote letters and raised a great deal of concern, with the help of the member for Kamloops—"since the management of our corporation did not back down and since the government did not step in to make a decision, we figure we can go ahead and do anything we want and we know we have the backing of our management". It was a very revealing comment. It says that in many cases, when these staff members are doing what they are told, which is to close or privatize a post office, they are likely to go all the way.

I know in talking to my colleague, our previous postal critic, that you win a few but you wonder just how much you have won.

In today's paper there is a report of many letters that we have received from people of Mabou, Cape Breton who feel they have won an interim victory in getting the post office to back down. I hope that is right. I hope they have won a victory over Canada Post. If they have, I think we should circulate their letters and these articles in the newspapers to everybody so that all members of Parliament, when Canada Post is moving in to close down a service, can use the experience of these courageous people in Cape Breton, who have fought and, so far, have won. I suppose we will have to wait and see just what the final outcome of this particular fight will be.

The final outcome may be the next federal election, when we get rid of the Conservatives and elect the New Democrats and bring in a postal policy that will be relevant in this country.

One of the problems that has arisen in the postal service as it is being run by Canada Post now, with the turnover to the retail postal outlets, is that they say: "We are not closing the post office, we are going to turn it over to an entrepreneur to run in their drugstore or their motel, or what have you". That has resulted in problems. A woman phoned my office this morning, knowing I would be rising in debate today on the post office, just commenting on a few things such as the lack of universal hours, something we know we need when dealing with the post office, and different advice on mailing. This woman was particularly upset. She wanted to write a letter to the Prime Minister to complain about the Prime Minister's partisan attitude while abroad. The person to whom she went to mail her letter did not know that one could still mail letters free of charge to the Prime Minister and other members of Parliament.

It is an inconsistent service that we have. The need for a professional service has been one of the most important messages that I have received from officials in Canada Post when I travelled throughout my riding. I have done that as I am sure have many other members of Parliament.

As a new member I have visited just about all of the postal outlets in Prince George—Bulkley Valley, talked to staff, management, employees and others to get a sense of where they are going and to introduce myself. It has been a learning experience because in most cases the staff in the postal outlets are dedicated people, especially in the rural communities. They are dedicated to their jobs. They want to provide good service, but they certainly wonder what the control room in head office is doing. I wonder what the control room in the cabinet offices and the Government of Canada are doing right now.

I told the letter carriers and the inside workers that I would be going on a postal walk with a letter carrier this summer and doing a bit of work inside the post office to get a better understanding of what they have to deal with. That is important, I have learned from some of my discussions with postmasters and postal employees. In particular, I discussed this with some postal workers last night, knowing I would be speaking today.

One example in Prince George is a new program Canada Post is bringing in called the "Lead Hand Program". It will essentially take out the management

and supervisory person and generally turn over the paperwork which always has to be done to the lead hand person. Such persons also have a job at the counter or the wicket. They should be spending a third or half of their day at the wicket serving customers, but they will have to sit down, fill out and complete all the paperwork.

It is my view, which I think is shared by a lot of people, that it is a deliberate move by Canada Post, especially in my case in Prince George, Station A, Fifth Avenue, to have the service deteriorate to the point where Canada Post will have to say that it has many complaints, that service has gone down hill, and that there is nothing to be done except either privatize or close the post office and let the drug store nearby serve the area.

There is an overtime ban now so that the mail which should go out that day does not always do so. It gets bumped to the next day or perhaps even to the following day. There is a good deal of concern when people do not get their mail on time. That is another reason why that would happen.

There are around a hundred grievances alone out of the Prince George area. I get anonymous letters about once a month from staff who work in that area and are concerned. Of course I pass these on to both management and union for them to pursue.

I have had my own experience in my riding with the closing of post offices in two cases. First, the community of Endako assumed it was going to happen and there was not much it could do. The second was the community of Longworth where I met with a number of residents very concerned about losing their postal service. That community does not have phones either, and in this case I offered to try at least to pass some information on to Canada Post so that it would know where Longworth was. We did not suspect that anyone from Canada Post had ever actually been to Longworth. With no telephones, we also told Canada Post that if it is going to have its community meeting, it is going to have to write a letter to tell the community when it is going to come, because Canada Post does not know that community very well. It is someone in Vancouver who is making the decision to close this outlet, because a postmaster in that particular postal service is retiring. As I said, if you are a postmaster and you die in office or you retire in office, you can be assured that Canada Post will move with lightning speed.

• (1510)

What should be done? We have to maintain Canada Post as a public Crown corporation at the very least. I have a great deal of fear, and I think a lot of Canadians do, that this government is fattening up Canada Post so it can privatize the whole operation.

Then you will see how much it costs to mail a letter from Granisle to Vancouver. You are going to be charged about $5 just to mail a letter if it is privatized under the Conservatives.

We want to make sure that we do not exclude letter carrier service from recently developed communities, in particular older areas that are being rebuilt. Canada Post moves very quickly. You get a superbox thrown up in your face as soon as a new area is developed so that it trims back the letter carrier service.

In Britain, I understand the post office has had a different history. It has provided many more services. Our Canada Post has experimented with some services with, I believe, some degree of success, and not so with others. I think it could do a great deal more in terms of not just its fax business, where you fax something and it gets mailed the next day, but in terms of becoming much more of a business-type centre, and most important, in terms of maintaining the full kind of postal service to all Canadians that we have come to expect and deserve.

Some have alleged that the profit figures for Canada Post are bogus profit figures. It we are to take at face value that they are honest figures, I think it is important for Canada Post to perhaps rebuild some of the infrastructure that it has allowed to be destroyed and to return some of the integrity to the system.

I visited a motel operation which is now the postal outlet in Topley. I do know that Canada Post pays $100 or $200 a month and then a commission on stamps and postage. But I felt bad when I was leaving their little operation. I felt I should come and buy all my stamps at this location because of the meagre amount of commission the postmaster in Topley was likely to get. It was the usual case of the postmaster retiring: "Do we give it to this other business?" "No, it is not worth my while", so someone picks it up and eventually it is going to get to

the point where as an entrepreneur they cannot continue and they are going to have to close.

Certainly a review of the return of the benefits to some of these smaller outlets is one of the important things that Canada Post should do when it is reviewing the service. How do we get Canada Post to make these changes? One of the government members made the point that it is very independent now as a Crown corporation. It takes a lot to move it.

I would say that if Canada Post is not interested in returning the kind of rural service that we need in Canada, we should fire the president of Canada Post. If need be, I think we should renationalize Canada Post and bring back the kind of post office we need in Canada.

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague, the member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley, for his address and the particular concerns that he has outlined regarding the situation with Canada Post.

As B.C. members, my colleague and I have talked about the issue of Canada Post closures.

He is also well aware of the fact that there are postal closures occurring not only in his riding but in many ridings and constituencies throughout Canada. One of the more recent closures occurred in the town of Enderby in my constituency.

I should point out that Enderby is actually one of the largest of rural postal closures to date. There have been hundreds of rural post offices closed. If the government continues to get its way, eventually all post offices will be closed and privatized. The one in Enderby is of particular interest because of the fact that it is a very large one.

I want to address my comments to my colleague to see if he would support me in my request to the government. When the initial news of this closure came down, I wrote to the post office to request whether it would consider holding a public meeting with the residents of the Enderby area in the Okanagan—Shuswap and consider the various options.

I was really surprised, quite flabbergasted by the return comments made by Mr. Doug McClelland, Manager of Media and Community Services out of Vancouver. He essentially said: "We are not interested in the views of the community; we will make the decision and then tell the community afterward what that decision has been."

It did make a decision: close the post office. It came up and held a public meeting. It was interesting that one of the suggestions that came out of the meeting, which was strongly supported by the community of Enderby as well as the retail community and the residents, was that a couple of Enderby residents would take over the retail operation of the post office in its present location and would continue the operations in the building which people have come to know and trust as the centre for postal services in Enderby. This was an option that Canada Post had not even thought about. I am hoping it is still pursuing that option because it makes sense to the city of Enderby in terms of the availability of service.

I am just asking if my colleague will support me in my request to the government that it seriously consider this request coming from me as well as from the residents of the community of Enderby.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the question or comment from the hon. member for Okanagan—Shuswap. My grandparents lived there for a while and so I know Enderby a bit.

It came as a surprise when he mentioned that Canada Post was trying to close an outlet there, a standard post office, because it is not the size of community in which you would expect Canada Post do something like that.

It seems to me it is a bit of a hidden agenda that Canada Post has. It goes through the routine, it is *pro forma*: "have a community meeting, yes, yes, we will listen to you. Say your bit and we will consult and figure out what we want to do." We know what it is going to do anyway, so it is a bit of a phoney dance we go through.

Perhaps what we have to do is try and make that phoney dance a little more real. Perhaps we should have the president of Canada Post attend these community meetings where it is closing post offices so that he would get a real example of just what these communities have to go through.

If the member is asking for support for a backup plan which the community might have for running a retail outlet in the post office building, I would endorse it. Canada Post has an obligation to run that service. It would seem to me that given the comments of the corporation in the past, this is something it would and

should consider. I would be quite surprised and disappointed if the corporation were not prepared to do that.

I would certainly support the member. I know he has done a great deal of work in his riding, in Vernon, in Enderby and in other areas on the postal service. I would support whatever efforts he has made in that area and we hope that Canada Post will listen intently to the needs of the residents of his community.

• (1520)

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, it has been an interesting debate this afternoon on the pros and cons. It is clear that the postal service in this country is changing and meeting new demands across the country and trying to stay within the bounds of regional economics rather than create enormous government debt in the post office.

It gives me pleasure to speak in the House today about the Canada Post Corporation and how it is changing to better serve Canadians to meet the challenges of the globally competitive world evolving around us.

I think the members opposite would agree that the business challenges facing Canada Post are monumental. Here is a quick overview of the corporation today and how it is adapting to meet these challenges. In terms of annual revenues, it is a $4 billion operation. With approximately 57,000 employees, it is also one of the largest employers in the country. It processes 10 billion pieces of mail a year and delivers to over 11 million addresses.

Through links with other postal administrations, it keeps Canadians in touch with every country in the world.

Over the past 10 years, this corporation has learned a lot about corporate reshaping. Its management took the government department it inherited, stripped it down to basics and rebuilt it.

This government believes Canada needs and deserves a strong postal communications system as part of its basic economic infrastructure to compete successfully domestically and globally. Equally important, we believe it must provide the Canadian public with the most reliable, cost-efficient postal communications possible.

The modern Canada Post Corporation began in 1981, when the government took some 63,000 employees—one quarter of the Canadian Public Service—and said: "Okay, post office, you are a business. Act like a commercial corporation."

The mail had become increasingly unreliable. Strikes denied Canadians their postal service for weeks at a time. Annual deficits had reached $600 million, which in today's dollars would be close to $1 billion.

Its plants were inefficient, with outdated, if not obsolete equipment. Previous governments had found more pressing needs for their limited resources than investing in capital assets for the post office.

This new Crown corporation had annual revenues of more than $1.5 billion but no bank account. It operated from one end of the country to another but no one knew where the mail was at any given time.

In order to meet the enormous task that lay ahead, Canada Post began thinking like a business. It began to emphasize a corporate culture, stressing such values as customer sensitivity, quality and reliability. These values were not easily instilled but the corporation has worked over the years to ensure that these will be values which its employees live by, day to day.

By 1986, the corporation was ready to regain credibility by providing its service reliably. It standardized operations across the country. It developed a mail processing system that had performance standards which would be monitored and measured on a real time basis.

Effectively, this made everyone accountable so that they all knew when they were doing a good job and when they were not. For the first time, it was able to thank employees for a job well done, or, conversely, talk about the need for improvement. All this was done in the name of providing better service for Canadians.

The corporation also began to demand that all suppliers and contractors meet its new business standards. The corporation now negotiates contracts with its suppliers and contractors that ensure they recognize the importance of meeting the needs and requirements of the corporation's customers.

The corporation has also hired outside auditors to measure delivery performance, the first postal administration in the world to do so. As mentioned previously by my hon. colleague, the most recent report by these auditors indicates it is now at 97 per cent efficiency.

It is no exaggeration to say that changes the corporation has undergone are staggering. It stood everything on its head, examined every process and questioned every assumption. It has had to challenge its people every day. It demanded their creativity and a complete commitment. The process was tough on everyone, from the executive offices to the plant floors. Some left, but most have soldiered on. This is a tribute to the quality of these people and they have done a fine job.

The changes have been equally tough on the unions which have had to recognize that they are in business with Canada Post. If the business fails then they both fail, but if the corporation wins as a company so does its employees and the unions who represent it. I believe union leaders must recognize that global competition applies to them too. This puts their own attitudes and productivity against those of the unions around the world.

As such, Canada Post has had to negotiate flexibility in its union contracts to increase their efficiency and re-establish management's right to manage the business. That did not come easily.

Clear evidence that the corporation's efforts were beginning to bear fruit appeared in 1988-89 when, as my hon. colleague who spoke previously mentioned, the corporation turned a profit for the first time in 30 years. This point bears repeating as taxpayers are no longer forced to pay for their postal service twice: once when they paid for their stamps and again when they paid their taxes.

This year, total mail volumes will hit some 10 billion pieces of mail. That is an increase of 38 per cent since the first full year of incorporation, and half of that was achieved in the last two years alone. Yet, Canada Post is doing all this with 6,000 fewer employees. Its mail processing efficiency also increased by approximately 6 per cent last year. That compares with the Canadian manufacturing productivity increases of less than one per cent last year.

It has been through changes such as those outlined above that Canada Post Corporation has held increases in the basic mail rate for Canadians to less than the rate of inflation since 1982-83.

Yes, Canada Post has made progress over the past 10 years, but they can feel their competitors breathing down their necks every day, not just in Canada but from around the world.

Their sales force is slugging it out with the courier businesses and the telecommunications companies. Even the basic letter mail is under threat from fax machines and new technologies such as electronic data transfer. If you have paid any bills lately using your bank machine, Mr. Speaker, you will know what I am speaking about.

To help them successfully compete, Canada Post has invested more than a billion dollars in the company in the last three years. Some of this has gone into new trucks and street letter boxes. About a quarter billion is going into new-generation sorting equipment that is faster, more accurate and more versatile, replacing equipment that is 20 years old. Some of the new equipment can process mail up to 50 per cent faster than its predecessors.

Instead of equipping the Canadian postal system with off-the-shelf technology, as occurred 20 years ago, the corporation went to the manufacturers and told them to adapt their technology to Canada Post's specifications.

For example, they built a national control centre, linked with control centres in nine divisions across the country. These control centres are equipped with the latest computer-based technology. They monitor the collection, processing and delivery networks, transportation carriers, and even the national weather office; they then can pinpoint the movement of mail anywhere in Canada, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and ensure that it moves to meet service standards.

Competition is getting tougher, not only in Canada but globally as well. Although opportunities abound out there, the business streets of the world are getting mean. All businesses have to be globally street smart if they are to prosper. As such, Canada Post has gone global in a couple of ways. The president and chief executive officer of Canada Post is also currently the chairman of the

board of the International Post Corporation, which was formed three years ago.

The corporate headquarters and operational centre for the International Post Corporation is in Brussels. It groups 23 of the world's leading postal administrations, all of whom own shares. Its primary objective is to ensure competitive service standards are met in the distribution of parcels and courier products among Europe, North America and the Pacific Rim. Even the post office can no longer be restricted by national barriers. Its competitors, the multinational courier companies, certainly are not. As such, when word about the new Canadian postal system got around to other postal administrations, they came to see how we did it. So did dozens of Canadian companies, including Canadian Airlines International, Domtar, Bell Canada, Xerox, Sears, MacLeans magazine and the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada, as well as 23 chief executive officers from major foreign companies.

In an effort to meet the growing world-wide demand for Canada Post expertise, the corporation has created a new subsidiary called Canada Post Systems Management Ltd., which has been tasked with selling its technology and management systems world-wide. I am pleased to say that it has discovered a growing market out there for the systems it put into place in Canada to get operations under control. Indeed, it has already closed a multi-million dollar deal with New Zealand Post and is implementing control systems there.

Canada Post's international reputation is such that it was recently recommended by the World Bank to Venezuela, which had approached the bank seeking assistance in upgrading its postal system. This sort of recognition by a major multinational organization like the World Bank sends a pretty clear message of the high regard in which the corporation is held internationally.

• (1530)

I should also add that proposals worth more than $40 million have been issued to postal administrations in Europe and Central America. This international consulting promises to be a profitable sideline, not only for Canada Post, but for many of their Canadian suppliers and partners as well.

I would like to present just one example of this. A few years ago, the corporation decided it needed a way to track and trace its priority courier parcels and envelopes through the postal system to ensure they did not go astray.

The corporation turned to SHL Systemhouse, a Canadian systems integrator. They delivered a track and trace system on time and on budget, a system that helps Priority Courier achieve its close to 100 per cent reliability for next day delivery.

Systemhouse then used its experience with Canada Post to bid on a trace system for the United States postal service. It won a $270 million U.S. contract, the largest ever won by the company. I am pleased that, through its involvement with Canada Post, this wholly-owned Canadian company was able to win such a lucrative and significant contract in the United States.

This is the sort of success story that could only be possible due to the success of the free trade agreement. It is an example of how the use of new technology by Canada Post and other Canadian companies is helping Canada win new business in information age markets.

Now, and most important, I would like to address how the corporation has been improving the products and services it provides to the Canadian public.

It moves letter mail, advertising mail, publications, courier documents and parcels. It moves facsimiles, electronic messages, or a combination of hard copy and electronic messages called hybrid mail.

It has restructured its products to meet customers' requirements for cost efficiency and reliability. It provides different speeds of delivery on a time-price scale, with add-on options such as insurance and tracing. Customers now have the ability to pick the speed and options needed, and pay accordingly.

The corporation's parcel services are now geared to the just-in-time delivery disciplines of its industrial customers, so it can minimize the capital that is tied up in inventory. It is also working with large volume mailers to show how to save money and ensure timely delivery by presorting their mail and by scheduling its arrival at its mail processing plants.

Canada Post has made these changes because business provides over 80 per cent of Canada Post's volumes and revenues. In meeting the needs of businesses, the corporation is able to generate the volumes needed to support its extensive operations network. This enables the corporation to provide all Canadians with a basic letter mail rate that remains the second lowest, in terms of minutes of labour required to earn the price of a stamp, in the western industrialized world. Indeed, since

incorporation 10 years go, the actual price of a stamp has decreased relative to inflation.

When Canada Post became a Crown corporation 10 years ago, it faced many problems that some people regarded as being impossible to resolve. It has not settled all of them, but it has achieved a fair measure of success. *Direct Marketing Magazine*, an American publication, recently stated: "Canada Post emerges as the model for postal services around the world. You would be astounded to see the space age technology in Ottawa which controls the flow of mail throughout Canada and beyond its borders".

Canadian Business magazine recently called the turnaround "a management miracle".

Canada Post is striving to create the best postal system in the world. Its goal is to provide Canadians and Canadian businesses with a postal system that will take it into the 21st century. In the last 10 years, it has developed into an internationally recognized leader in the communications field.

Yet, it has not done all this simply for the sake of international acclaim. It has made these changes and improvements to the Canadian postal system because it wants to provide Canadians with the best postal service in the world.

The opposition would have the government return Canada Post to the days of the pony express. I urge the members opposite to take a closer look at the new Canada Post.

What we have here is a made-in-Canada success story. Canada Post has won international acclaim and respect for what it has achieved over the past 10 years. The new Canada Post is providing Canadians with a postal service for the 21st century. Through experience gained by their involvement with Canada Post, Canadian businesses are winning lucrative contracts abroad. Yet the members opposite appear to be either unwilling or unable to recognize these accomplishments.

I would suggest the opposition stop dwelling on its outdated views of postal service in Canada and recognize what this government, fellow Canadians and the international community already know.

The members opposite cannot accept that Canadians and Canada Post can be world leaders in their field. This government has known it all along.

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, the comments made by my colleague from the government side indicate the direction the government is taking in terms of trying to put Canada Post into a more profitable situation. Quite frankly, the situation has turned around in terms of Canada Post's legacy of deficit. In fact, Canada Post made a reasonably healthy profit last year of some $149 million.

I have to ask the member whether or not the decision Canada Post has made, this decision of closing and privatizing the retail postal outlets in virtually every rural community across Canada, is really in the best interests of those communities and the people living in them. It might very well reflect a better bottom line on Canada Post's corporate balance sheet, but what has it done to the nature of those communities?

I mentioned a few moments ago in the House the situation in my riding of Okanagan—Shuswap, the town of Enderby which is losing its post office and how that has affected the nature of community life in that area. Certainly Enderby is not the only situation in my riding, nor is it the only situation in British Columbia; hundreds of communities have lost their post offices. If left unchecked, I am certain that it is the strategy of this government to close all rural and urban postal outlets and basically, sell them off to the private sector.

The real essence of the question is not whether it has improved the bottom line in Canada Post's balance sheet, but what it has done to those communities. It has irreparably damaged some of our communities. In some cases it may have been the right decision to make. I am not questioning the fact that every time a post office was closed, there was perhaps some justification.

I would suggest that Canada Post has been, shall we say, not open to suggestions for alternatives, to comments from the community. It has gone in time after time and has made the decision to close post offices without contacting or consulting the people who will be

affected. It is only afterwards that those communities have been consulted.

Now we do have an opportunity to reflect on the comments I made earlier, where there is an alternative which has been suggested. For example, in the post office in Enderby, two individual members of the community have suggested that they would like to entertain the challenge of taking on the responsibility of the postal service in the same facility it now holds, rather than closing down the facility and moving it out to the retail sector. They want to be given that chance, and the community is certainly supportive of their suggestion.

I have written a letter in support of this suggestion. I wonder if the member opposite would provide his views on whether this is a viable alternative, because it does keep the post office in the community where it has been, yet it does allow a certain amount of entrepreneurial spirit to enter. These individuals want to take up the challenge. I want to support their efforts in that regard, and I would hope the government would also support those efforts.

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, while many other service industries have left rural Canada altogether, Canada Post has introduced a business formula that allows them to remain in rural areas and usually improve service accessibility at the same time.

The facts speak for themselves. Since April 1, 1989, Canada Post has added in excess of 1.1 million hours of postal access to the rural postal retail network. During 1989–1990 alone, there was a net increase of 320 full service retail outlets in rural Canada.

Canada Post delivers mail to approximately 11 million addresses in Canada every business day. Just under half receive door-to-door delivery. The rest receive other forms of delivery, such as rural route service, post box and community mailbox service. Door-to-door delivery by letter carrier has never been the norm in Canada. In fact, never in our history has everyone received the same method of mail delivery. The diversity is the natural result of the geography and demographics of our country. By providing different types of service, we simply recognize the realities of our nation.

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

M. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to take part in the debate on the future of the Canadian postal system.

But first, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Essex—Kent, who moved this excellent motion today on the future of this country's postal system.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, I am sure you will remember that in April 1990 the consumer and corporate affairs and government operations committee of the House of Commons issued a report entitled "Moving the Mail—Canada's Postal Service in the 1990s." This was the report of our committee on what to do to improve postal service in Canada.

As an addendum to that report there is a Liberal Party minority report, and I would like to share some of it with you. The fact that I was the author of the report means that I happen to like the conclusions, obviously, but I think that once I read some of these conclusions to you you will like them too, Mr. Speaker.

The government across the way approved the corporate plan of Canada Post. The corporate plan we are operating under right now was approved by cabinet. Therefore, when the government says that it is not their fault if Canada Post privatizes the post office in my colleague's riding of Stormont—Dundas in Avonmore, Ontario, or the one in my riding, or the one in Enderby, or the one anywhere else; it is not so simply because the corporate plan was approved by the government, by cabinet. I mention this to my colleague across the way, the member for Calgary Southeast. The corporate plan that was approved calls for the privatization and/or elimination of each one of the 5,221 rural post offices in Canada over 10 years.

Apart from everything else wrong with that crazy scheme, 83 per cent of all the people who work in rural post offices in Canada are women. Ten thousand people work there. That means that once this process is over, the minister responsible for Canada Post will have been responsible, together with his colleague, for the dismissal of 8,300 women in Canada. Not a bad exercise for a

government that pretends to want to improve the lot of women in the country.

In fact that minister alone will be responsible for the largest firing of women employees of any corporation in the history of our country. That is the record of the government across the way.

That is only the first thing that is wrong with the scheme in question. What is wrong further is the way they are going about doing this. I am not one to say that there are not post offices in rural areas that should not be shut down. Perhaps there are some that should not be there any longer. I think all parties have agreed with that. I can remember instances where a rural community has gradually lost its residents, and there are only a few dozen of them left, or something like that, and a full-time post office is no longer necessary. Maybe there is some merit in reviewing the situation in those cases.

But that is not what is happening. What Canada Post does is close down post offices based on what it calls—and watch this for "newspeak" —natural opportunity. Natural opportunity works this way: If the postmaster dies or retires—I suppose growing old is natural and dying is similarly natural—that constitutes a natural opportunity. When a natural opportunity occurs—and these are not my words, they are words in the corporate plan of Canada Post—the government or rather Canada Post may shut down the post office. Of course it shuts down every single one of them. That is just coincidence, mind you, but they may shut down the post office.

What happens then? You could have a community with only 10 people left in it but if the postmaster is not retiring the post office is not shut down. There could be a community of 1,000 people with a post office that is used extensively by a whole group of businesses and they will shut it down anyway just because the postmaster retired.

Mr. Speaker, if you are having a hard time understanding the logic of this, so am I, and so are the majority of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

But the Conservatives across the floor feel that it is absolutely logical. I see that members opposite agree with this government policy of closing rural post offices.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell you that several post offices have closed in my constituency, again according to this Canada Post criterion.

[*English*]

Recently Canada Post shut down the post office in Dalkeith, Ontario in my constituency. There was no natural opportunity in that case. Do you know what Canada Post did? They naturalized an opportunity. There was not one, they just made one up. They are very creative people at Canada Post. The postmistress had not reached the age of retirement. What did they do? They went to see the postmistress and said: "Postmistress, you have been around here a long time. How would you like to retire prematurely for a bonus, a golden handshake?". The postmistress said: "Yes, you are right. I would like to stay at home", and so on. They offered her a sum and the postmistress accepted. I do not blame the postmistress. Of course, she has every right to retire. That is her business.

My criticism is with Canada Post inventing a natural opportunity when it did not have one in order to shut down the post offices faster. Canada Post got greedy with this scheme. They had naturalized this opportunity, as I said previously. Not content with that, after they had done this a few times, they got a little greedier again. They said to themselves: "Selves, we can do better than that".

The following is what they came up with. They decided that some 294 postmasters in Canada had been there for different periods of time, and in some cases for years, but they had never been named official postmasters. When is a postmaster an official postmaster as opposed to a postmaster who is not an official postmaster? I am glad you asked, Mr. Speaker. When the post office says there is a difference. That is the way it works.

They have identified some people as being term employees. In some cases they just had not got around to calling them anything else. Let me describe an instance. The post office in Glen Robertson, Ontario, obviously in Glengarry, had a postmistress who was probably at the ripe old age of 35 or so, if that. She had not quite reached retirement age yet, so there was no occasion to buy her off to make the post office shut down early. They said: "Postmistress, you have been with us six years. Six years working in the same place is temporary". The postmis-

tress shook her head and said: "Six years is temporary?" How many people do you know that work six years in the same place and are still called temporary?

Canada Post said: "Oh, yes, but we never decided that you were permanent. Therefore, because we failed to decide that you were permanent, that means you are not. And if you are not, you are temporary, and if you are temporary, that means we can fire you at will". That is really naturalizing an opportunity.

This all makes sense if you work for Canada Post. For most of us, this would be hard to understand. I guess for Canada Post you can do almost anything. There is a certain element of "newspeak" in all of this, this kind of Orwellian mentality of Canada Post.

Canada Post wrote to me recently. As a matter of fact I got the letter today, and I will share it with you, Mr. Speaker. It is on the closing of the Glen Robertson post office in Glengarry. Here is what Canada Post says:

> I am writing in response to your letter of April 5 to the Honourable Harvie Andre, Minister responsible for Canada Post, which was forwarded to the Corporation, regarding postal services in Glen Robertson.

Translation: The minister did not want to reply to your letter so he asked me to do it for him.

• (1550)

Next paragraph:

> As you know, Canada Post is using the resources and expertise of local business in rural and urban areas in order to make postal products and services more accessible.

Translation: Canada Post is shutting down post offices and allowing private businesses to sell stamps on the pretext that it is better.

Next sentence:

> Retail postal outlets offer more convenient locations—

Translation: "A more convenient location" is driving 10 miles to pick up your mail.

Let me continue.

> —more convenient hours, often including evenings and weekends, and an expanded range of products and services.

"Expanded range of products and services"? That means that you do not have to walk inside the post office and open your box to get the mail, you can stand outside in the rain and blizzard and try with your key to unlock the mechanism to get your mail. That is an "expanded service".

Now, let me continue with "newspeak" from Canada Post.

> Providing postal services in partnership with other businesses is not a new concept—

That means they have done this kind of thing before.

> —the post office has been doing so since it was first established; in fact, 68 per cent of our postal outlets operate under contract.

They are trying to tell us here that contract employees working for Canada Post is the same situation as is giving stamps to a store to sell.

> Our future as a viable business depends on our ability to co-operate with other businesses in serving the Canadian public.

Translation: Canada Post from now on is no longer a service, but it is deemed to be a business and the government is going to privatize the whole thing eventually.

It gets better, Mr. Speaker, as you go along, I want you to know. I continue.

> Some communities are also seeing increased participation from local businesses in the provision of postal service when natural occasions for change arise, such as the resignation, retirement, or promotion of the postmaster.

They forgot about death here. They just forgot about that one.

This means that if the postmaster dies or is promoted or is sent someplace else, Canada Post then has the justification to shut down the post office. Let me continue.

> I would like to emphasize that the hiring of a temporary postmaster in a community to provide a continuation of postal service should not be interpreted as an intention to maintain indefinitely the type of service already in place.

That really means that even if your postmaster has been there for a decade, if Canada Post did not call him permanent that means he is temporary and it can fire him or her at any time.

Next sentence:

> Indeed, no promise of permanent employment is ever given to any term employees.

That means that a term employee is different than a permanent one if Canada Post has failed to indicate otherwise.

Now, we have two pages of that kind of rhetoric from Canada Post. I would like to know how much it cost those people to provide those kinds of excuses, to invent the kinds of words they use on the people of Canada and the constituents of my riding.

A few weeks ago, some wizard at Canada Post decided that it was time to remove the Queen's picture from the post office at Vankleek Hill. Out went a memo to Vankleek Hill, Ontario, to Hawkesbury, Ontario, to L'Orignal, Ontario and other communities, directing the postmaster to remove the Queen's picture. The postmaster removes the picture in front of a group of constituents, who are all irate, wondering what on earth is going on here, who concocted this scheme? The postmaster says: "Well, they are directives from head office." The constituents phoned me and asked me who gave this kind of an order.

We could debate the rest of the day whether our head of state is the head of state we should have, but that is not the point. The point is that the day we decide to change our parliamentary institution—because our parliamentary institution is composed of the Queen, the Senate and the House of Commons in Parliament assembled— I would like to think that it is the elected people of Canada who will make that decision, not some flunkey at the post office who is going to decide who the head of my country and your country is.

That took a few days and finally the pictures went back up in the post office. How much did that cost? How much nonsense went on there to make that kind of a ridiculous decision which had to be reversed?

What is even more interesting is the justification.

Canada Post has these people who are supposed to be media experts. Their job is to tell the right thing. Whenever a media contact phones them and asks them the tough questions that the press asks, this person is supposed to answer the right thing.

One of these people is called Laszlo Szabo. I never met Laszlo Szabo, but it does not matter. Mr. Szabo was contacted by one of the local newspapers in my riding, *The Hawkesbury Express*, and asked: "Mr. Szabo, why are you doing this? Why are you removing the Queen's picture from the Vankleek Hill post office?"

Here is his answer. I paraphrase here, but it is quite close to what was said. He said: "As we move from a medieval institution to a modern business, we must modernize and therefore remove the Queen's picture". This is from an expert who is always supposed to say the right thing.

Imagine, if this person had been a dumb ordinary mortal like everyone else, what he would have come up with for an excuse. My colleague from Prince Edward—Hastings quite appropriately said: "What if this person had been loose-lipped?"

He could not have possibly done much worse than he did.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the point that I want to emphasize this afternoon for my colleagues is that one must not listen to the rhetoric of Canada Post and then claim that this is the truth. The people who live in rural areas in my riding, in the riding of Argenteuil—Papineau, and elsewhere, know the truth. Mr. Speaker, they know what is a post office in a rural area; they know what it means to see a building where it says—or used to say—"Canada", with the Canadian flag and armories, the only building in the community where the presence of the federal government could be felt. They also know that all this is about to change. Why? The word "Canada" has completely disappeared from the logo of Canada Post. Now, it says: "Post—Mail—Post", or something like that.

The Canadian flag has been removed, because the post office has been privatized and the postal services are now provided in a drugstore or just about anywhere else. The postmaster is also gone.

[*English*]

The other thing we have to remember about postmasters and the whole institution of the postmaster is that they do not just sell stamps. They provide forms for senior citizens' pensions. They sign their names on passports. They swear in people on these kinds of documents, and they have all kinds of other functions in the community.

The postal institution is such that in rural Canada it is a form of a hub in our community. It is important for us to keep our post office.

I say to the government across the way: Put an end now to the plan of privatizing post offices. Let us keep the post offices in the community or at the very least let us give a right of veto to the communities to keep the post offices when they want them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being four o'clock p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 81(17) proceedings on the motion have expired.

[*Translation*]

Therefore, this House stands adjourned until Monday next at 11 o'clock a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 4 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 3, 1991

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby) moved that Bill C-202, an act respecting a national day of remembrance and action on violence against women, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to rise and speak to my private member's bill which would establish a national day of remembrance and action on violence against women, and which has received all party support in this House of Commons.

This bill is being co-sponsored by the Minister responsible for the Status of Women and also by my colleague, the member for Halifax.

An official day of remembrance and action on violence against women to be commemorated every December 6 is an appropriate, meaningful and positive memorial to the 14 young women who were so tragically killed in Montreal on December 6, 1989.

I am pleased to have the support also of Suzanne Edwards, the mother of one of the victims of the massacre, who herself is now very active on the issue of gun control. She serves as an inspiration to all Canadians to first mourn and then to work for change in our society.

The man who murdered the 14 young women separated the women from the men in the classroom and systematically shot the women. He believed that because they were engineering students they were feminists, and he saw them as women who had stepped outside of their rightful place. He put an end to young promising lives, lives filled with hard work, joy and plans for the future. He did not see these young women as human beings. All he saw was that they were women and that they had stepped out of what he considered to be their traditional role.

Unfortunately, there are people in Canada who share that outlook on life. There are people who see rape victims not as people who are suffering from a trauma, but as women who "deserved it". There are people who think that wife beating is something to laugh at or nothing to be concerned about. Some believe that the woman deserved it, like 25 per cent of the children who lived at a shelter and said it was appropriate for a man to hit a woman if the house were messy.

There is a deep and serious problem in our society, one that I do think Canadians are slowly starting to come to terms with. Women are now reporting violent crimes to police more often than they did in the past. Some people in our society think violence is increasing, but I do not think so. I remember 20 years ago when a badly beaten woman appeared on my doorstep with two very small children, looking for a safe haven. At that time there were no shelters for battered women. Our society did not acknowledge wife battering as a problem. The police did not charge husbands with any crime. Before that, wife beating was a perfectly legal activity; women could not get a divorce on the grounds of assault or because their husbands had beaten them to a pulp. That was not considered a good enough reason. It was a private shame to be hidden, lied about and suffered in silence.

• (1110)

These attitudes still run through our society as an undercurrent in the 1990s but committed groups of people have set up shelters. They are talking about the issues. They are making educational videos and anti-violence television commercials. They are protesting against unfair court decisions.

This bill is designed to help that work by focusing attention on the facts of violence against women. I hope that the media will participate by having special issues of newspapers and magazines or TV and radio programs on violence against women at least on that day.

The more we talk about it, learn the facts and teach our children and society that violence against women is wrong and never justifiable, the more progress we will make as a society toward a fair and equitable community in Canada.

The national day of remembrance and action could be a day on which people are encouraged to donate time or money to shelters for battered women and to rape relief centres, and to talk about the attitudes and circumstances that allow violence against women to continue.

We should be aware of violence against women every day of the year, but at least we can start with one day.

One hundred women a year are killed as a result of domestic violence and a woman is raped every 17 minutes in Canada. This horrible situation warrants at least one day of prevention and education.

One in 10 women is or has been battered by the man with whom she lives or did live. Every 17 minutes a sexual assault is committed in Canada and 90 per cent of the victims are female.

Between 63 and 83 per cent of female victims are assaulted by someone they know and trust. Incidence of assault is far greater for aboriginal women and disabled women. Forty-eight per cent of Canadians reported that they personally knew of situations in which women were physically assaulted.

A Canada-wide survey in 1985 found that fewer than 40 per cent of female sexual assault victims and less than half of wife assault victims had made a police report. Studies show that women's reluctance to report violent attacks against them is related to the fear of retaliation that would result in further violence or death. It is also related to a lack of confidence in the police and the courts, and to feelings of shame and embarrassment. The more we talk about violence and its causes, the more confidence it will give women who have been assaulted to report it to the police and to take action.

The physical effects of this violence include broken bones, internal injuries, bruises, black eyes, burns, bites, lacerations, knife wounds, gun wounds and death. The psychological effects are low self-esteem, constant fear for her own safety and the safety of her children, loss of control and isolation.

Women who have been sexually assaulted are approximately five times more likely to have a nervous breakdown, six times more likely to attempt suicide and eight times as likely to commit suicide or die prematurely. Physical and sexual abuse may lead to drug and alcohol abuse.

The sheer volume of female victimization makes it unlikely that these incidents are independent of our system of values and attitudes or that the perpetrators are all aberrant or insane individuals. Perpetrators overwhelmingly hold views about sex roles of male authority and female compliance, and believe they have the right to control persons with less status than themselves. Our society is not telling them that they are wrong.

We live in a society which has tolerated incest, sexual assault and wife beating for centuries.

It is a problem of global proportions. Sexual assault and wife beating have been used to control the behaviour and the sexuality of women not only by the men who resort to violence, but by the society which ignores it.

Rape victims are still raked over the coals not only by the courts but often by the families and by their own friends: "What were you wearing? Why were you out so late? Why did you trust him? Could you not see it coming? But he is your husband, you owe it to him." It is as if human rights are suspended if a person is wearing a particular piece of clothing.

Nowhere in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms have I seen a clause that says one's right to security of the person is suspended based on the article of clothing one is wearing. This argument seeks to make women responsible for the violent acts of others. Sexual assault is not about sex; it is not about sexual desirability; it is about power. It is about a man believing he has the right to force something on a woman against her will. It has happened to women of all ages, from babies of three

weeks of age to 96 year-old women. Women with little or no power are especially targeted. Disabled women and aboriginal women, the women whom our society allows to be discriminated against, are at a special risk of violence.

It happens in war time, it happens in peace time. People have said there is a war being waged against women all the time. Racism, discrimination against the disabled and all forms of discrimination and oppression merge with the sickness of sexism to intensify the hatred and violence against disadvantaged women.

Women in all strata of society are abused. Why should we be afraid on our own streets, the streets for which we pay taxes? Why should we be afraid in our own homes? We are most likely to be assaulted in our own homes by someone whom we know and trust.

Studies of male college students in Canada and the U.S. show that one third of these students said they would rape a woman if they thought they could get away with it. In the U.S., 15 per cent of college women had been raped within the legal definition of rape.

Research shows that the public perceives physical and sexual assault against women to take place mainly among the poor and among those with little formal education, and committed by deviant individuals. Unless grievous bodily injury results, these injuries are not regarded as causing long term harm to the victim. Many of these victims are seen to be the authors of their own attack because they are seen as too provocative, too sexy, too angry or too imprudent.

We lack an understanding of the social and economic circumstances and of the threats of more violence or death that keep battered women from leaving abusive situations. Most people do not realize that many of the women killed are murdered by former husbands and lovers after the women have left the abusive situation. All of our society must take responsibility to help women in crisis.

Some people even believe violence against women is natural because men tend to be stronger than women. I think this takes a very dim view of men. If one in ten women is battered, then nine out of ten men do not batter.

Most men are responsible and caring. Violence against women is a learned and an unnatural behaviour. It is based upon the premise that men should be able to control the lives of the women with whom they are intimate. An example of this is Jean-Guy Tremblay who tried to force Chantal Daigle to bear his child and was violent and abusive toward her. It is worth noting that this man continued his violent behaviour toward other women who came into his life after Chantal Daigle refused to see him any longer.

• (1120)

Men who are violent most often do not stop simply at physical abuse. They may burn or destroy a favourite picture or possession, kill the woman's pets, or threaten violence toward her children. Battered women may live with psychological terror, never knowing when the next outbreak will be, or for what inane reason.

The man often makes her quit her job or gets her fired by harassing her at work. He isolates her from her workplace, her family and her friends. He tries to have complete control over her life and thoughts.

Similarly, sexual assault is a matter of control.

The woman's will is overrun, what she wants does not count and she is humiliated and violated in a way that is unmatched by any other experience.

People have talked about having their homes, their territory, robbed and the violation that they feel as a person when this happens. Can you imagine what it is like when it is your own body rather than your home and your possessions?

The lack of understanding many Canadians have about this issue makes me want to weep. But instead of, or maybe in addition to, weeping, I want to do something concrete about it.

My bill is non-partisan, one of the very few bills of this nature ever to reach the House of Commons. We have left the days when politicians simply joked about this issue. Today, most of us can co-operate on an issue as serious as this.

All of society pays for violence against women. We pay in health bills, in the court system and in penal institutions. Studies show that 80 per cent of women in Canadian jails are victims of sexual and physical abuse. Half of young offenders were exposed to domestic violence.

With few economic options, women who leave abusive situations often end up on social assistance.

How long are we going to put up with the violent abuse of our mothers, sisters, and daughters? It is wrong. It must change. The time for change is long past due. We

must join together, men and women, to prevent this violence.

As the Church Council on Justice and Corrections and the Canadian Council on Social Development have stated in their document "Family Violence in a Patriarchal Culture", family violence does not happen in a vacuum. Social circumstances support it and allow it to continue.

I urge men to participate in social change by speaking out when they hear others make derogatory comments about women, comments which rob women of their dignity and their humanity.

We can all help our neighbour who is being abused. We can give our time and money to groups and organizations which help survivors of violence. We can educate our society. We can make change.

We can press for policies that give women economic options so that they can achieve meaningful equality. Once all of society accepts women and men as equal human beings, that the place of women and men is where they want to be and not some role simply designated to them at birth, that is when violence against women will no longer be tolerated and may no longer occur.

Judy Chicago, a well known feminist artist, expressed her vision of a future without violence, a world in which both female and male are valued and respected. She said:

> And then all that has divided us will merge
>
> And then compassion will be wedded to power
>
> And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind
>
> And then both men and women will be gentle
>
> And then both women and men will be strong
>
> And then no person will be subject to another's will.

I want to thank the House for its support of this bill. I want to thank Suzanne Edward, the mother of Anne Marie Edward who was killed in the massacre, and I want to thank women's organizations and groups in every region of this country which have supported this effort.

Together I know that we can make a difference. We can do no less.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Duplessis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for External Relations and Minister of State (Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say I support this bill designate a national day of remembrance and action on violence against women, to be held on December 6 of each year, the anniversary of the slaughter of 14 young women at the University of Montreal in 1989.

Members of all parties have acknowledged the significance of this tragic event in the lives of Canada's men and women. Every year on December 6, we will think back to that sad day in our history and we will remember the victims. Those who experienced the events of that day will relive the shock, horror and anger that they felt. We will remember the candlelight vigil in the snow for 14 young women who were killed simply because they were women. We will remember the grief and sympathy we felt for their families and friends.

This bill guarantees that future generations will also remember. It ensures that the memory of 14 brave women will always remain with us. In fact, their spirit lives on, if we consider what has been done since the tragedy at the *École polytechnique* to eliminate violence against women. Everywhere in Canada, the initial shock was followed by an increased awareness of the constant threat of violence against women in our society.

People are now determined to act. The loss of these young women has made people realize there is a need for accelerating and co-ordinating efforts to eliminate violence against women.

As we become more aware of the extent of the problem, we realize this is not an easy task. Violence against women is deeply rooted in a social process that stresses the traditional roles of men and women, the so-called stereotypes. These stereotypes can become apparent in many ways, ranging from sexual harassment to mental cruelty, from sexual assault to murder.

Attempts to deal with the problem of violence against women must consider the social, economic and political structures that today confine women in a position of inequality. At the same time, we must keep looking for ways to increase the opportunities and choices open to women.

I think that if we want to deal with or try to deal with the problem of violence against women, we must base our efforts on four principles.

First, we must take a co-ordinated, many-facetted approach. This approach is reflected in the $136 million initiative on family violence announced by this government in February. It establishes a partnership between six federal departments and agencies with common concerns in this area.

But there is more. No single government can deal effectively with the problem of violence against women without the co-operation of other levels of government, without the interest and expertise of other parties, including those who work directly with the victims as well as the researchers, women's groups, service clubs, educators, unions and professional associations. Creating and strengthening alliances between these parties is one of the objectives of the family violence initiative.

The provinces and territories play a key role in our efforts to combat violence against women. Last year, federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for the status of women issued a declaration on violence against women at Lake Louise in Alberta. At their annual meeting, to be held two weeks from now in Newfoundland, the ministers will discuss the strategies designed by their respective governments following this declaration. They will seek ways to integrate and co-ordinate their activities and those of municipalities, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

The second principle is the need for examining the underlying causes of violence against women. Causes are deeply rooted and the solutions are complex. Yet, little research was done on the underlying causes of violence against women. Before we can find effective long term solutions, we must determine the underlying cause of violent behaviour.

• (1130)

Professional organizations such as the Canadian Association of university teachers (CAUT) are among those which have been spearheading the action. Our government is presently working with CAUT to set up centres of excellence to promote research on the underlying causes of violence against women.

Better data and better research will help develop effective solutions relating to prevention, which I consider as the third component in this approach.

While it is important to help those who are presently victims of violence, more needs to be done yet to protect would-be victims. More needs to be done to fight the widespread attitudes that perpetuate violence against women. More needs to be done in the way of channeling our innovative imagination and our resources towards durable long term solutions.

One thing we could do to start with is change attitudes in our families and schools. In a number of schools, the approach used to tackle the problem of violence against women is to teach children some conflict resolution skills as an alternative to violence. Also, the Canadian Teachers' Federation has launched the "Thumb" project with the financial assistance of the Family Violence Prevention Division of Health and Welfare Canada to encourage discussion in the classroom as well as activities aimed at preventing violence.

Fourth, we must consider the challenge of preventing violence against women in the broader context of a program to empower women.

As long as women remain afraid of violence, they cannot become fully equal. As long as there are women beaten up by their spouses, women sexually assaulted on dates and women harassed at the workplace, women will be deprived of the fundamental right to personal safety.

Mr. Speaker, our government is trying to free women from violence and the fear of violence. Last month, in the Speech from the Throne, this government announced the appointment of a blue ribbon panel of Canadian men and women to inquire into the various dimensions of the problem of violence against women and suggest innovative solutions.

This announcement provides an opportunity to put in place an innovative, responsive and flexible system to try and find solutions. The Minister responsible for the Status of Women, the hon. Mary Collins, asked women's organizations across the country as well as the provinces and territories to make suggestions on what the mandate and membership of this committee should be.

The committee will also benefit from the invaluable recommendations contained in the soon to be tabled report from the sub-committee on the Status of Women. As you will know, the sub-committee has heard, over the

past six months, the testimonies of about 35 groups representing a wide cross-section of Canadian men and women concerned about violence against women.

Mr. Speaker, this government is determined to act on this. Things will not change overnight, not even within a week or a year. While I fully support this bill, I have to say, that I hope this national day of remembrance can be taken off our calendars in the future and that the day will come when there is no need for a day dedicated to action on violence against women. I am convinced that, with the help and cooperation of the thousands of Canadian men and women who have voiced their determination to eradicate this plague from our society, some day this problem will disappear.

[*English*]

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure I stand today to support this private member's bill initiated by the member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

I want to take a moment to pay a tribute to the member for New Westminster—Burnaby and say that in our time here in this Chamber, over the last two and a half years, in spite of political differences and differences in political philosophy, I can truly say that one of the people who has taught me that sisterhood is powerful is the member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

I give this bill very strong support. To say that it is an idea whose time has come is to understate the case. None of us who lived through that terrible night, December 6, 1989, will ever forget the horror of the deaths of those young women in the prime of life, cut down because they were women. None of us will forget the shock we felt at the fact that this kind of senseless atrocity could take place in a country which, in spite of all its difficulties, we all felt somehow was better than that. None of us will every forget the numbness and then the pain that followed when we realized that this terrible incident had, indeed, taken place and that those young lives had been snuffed out.

One of the things we can do to put some meaning into that senseless atrocity is to support this bill. I am delighted that we have put down the cudgels of partisanship on this matter and that all parties are supporting this bill, and its quick passage.

I spoke some weeks ago with Madam Susanne Edward, mentioned by my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby. She spoke of the necessity to give meaning to what had happened, to give meaning to those lives being cut off in their prime. Nothing could be more essential to this meaning than bringing the issue of violence against women into the national spotlight.

We all lived through the horror of December 6, 1989, but horror is a daily occurrence for literally thousands of Canadian women. Every day begins with the anticipation of an attack, the fear of an attack, the worry that an attack may take place, and often that attack will come from the person closest to her.

We have talked a lot about the causes and the reasons for the increasing violence against women in our own society and in western society in general. The hon. parliamentary secretary, and I compliment her as well on her speech on this bill, talked about the fact that we do not have the empirical data, the research that we need to tell us what the reasons and the causes are for this horror that takes place.

What we do have is something that is actually also rooted in women's experience, and it is what we call anecdotal evidence, of women talking to each other in their homes, in women's centres, in classrooms. Not that this is not valid evidence, but we need hard scientific proof to show us what the different causes are. We all know, through this anecdotal evidence, that a cause of some of the violence against women is alcoholism. We all know that a cause is bad economic circumstances. We all know that a cause is the cycle of violence. In other words, someone who was abused as a child or saw his mother being abused or saw women being abused has a very strong chance of growing up to be an abuser himself.

These are not the only causes. There are other causes that we know little or nothing about. We also do not know the intertwining linkages of these causes, the tinderbox effect which sets it off.

Just this past weekend, yesterday as a matter of fact, I was in my apartment in Halifax.

• (1140)

My telephone rang. It was a woman who had been a client of mine. She had experienced an outbreak of violence by her partner on Saturday night. She was upset, she was still in a certain amount of pain—both physical pain and emotional pain—and most particularly, she was ashamed.

I became angry on the telephone, trying very carefully to make her understand that I was not angry with her but angry at the situation where the victim bears the shame for someone else's act.

All women are aware of this whole aura of "victimology" that violence against women has set up, whether that violence is abusive in the non-sexual sense or abusive in the sexual sense. We are all aware that the general accepted theory in our society for hundreds of years has been that if a woman is assaulted, somehow it is her fault.

This has become so ingrained in our society that women themselves believe it. It was that belief that I could hear in her voice that set off a chain reaction in me, and I got a little bit preachy, I am afraid, and said: "Look, stop thinking that it is your fault. It is not your fault. It does not matter what you did, no one has the right to hit you".

No matter how many times we say that, no matter how many times counsellors in transition houses and social workers and doctors and all of the various professionals and experts who work in this field say that, deep down in every abused woman's heart and mind is the belief that: "Yes, it is my fault".

Again, we have to get at the root causes that take a woman's self-image and drive it down to the level where she can be convinced to believe that canard.

Another of the reasons that I support this bill so strongly is that it is another spotlight on the question of violence bringing the issue into the public forum of discussion. As a result of this, people will finally be made to understand that this is not something that happens to some fringe group, that it is not something that happens to some under-class of society, that violence against women takes place at every level, in every economic bracket, in every social strata, in every educational strata in our country. No woman is free from fear of violence in Canada, and if she thinks she is I can only say she is misguided. Every woman sitting in this House today knows that and knows it viscerally.

I am happy to say that I think a great many of the men sitting in this House at least acknowledge it intellectually.

There is a continuum of violence against women. It begins in some cases with sexual harassment, with demeaning cracks, with jokes that we are supposed to accept and take in good spirit, and runs the gamut to actual physical beating and death. We have seen too much of this in this country. We have sacrificed hundreds of women as we refused to face this question head on and deal with it.

I hope and I pray, along with all of my female colleagues in this House and my male colleagues as well, that taking this day, December 6, and making it a day of remembrance but even more a day of action will start the kind of action that we need, that we must have in this country to ensure that women, and most particularly our daughters, will be able to walk out of their homes and into their classrooms and into their jobs without fear.

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to support the motion of the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

No member of this House will ever forget the day we received the tragic news from *École Polytechnique*. None of us will ever forget the wave of grief and anger that swept the country when we learned that a lone gunman had brutally taken the lives of 14 young women engineering students.

All members of this House were united in expressing our profound sense of loss and horror and in extending our condolences to the families and loved ones of those women whose lives, which had shown such promise, were exterminated without any provocation by a young man insanely jealous of the achievement of women in a non-traditional field.

December 6, 1989, is a day that many Canadians, and particularly women in Canada, will recall vividly for all their lives. It was one of those searing events when a story we hear on the news manages to hit home with a sense of personal loss and tragedy.

For all Canadians, women and men, who had believed that we lived in a progressive society, a society of

compassion and the pursuit of equality, the event has been a reminder of how far we have yet to go.

For women across Canada who saw, in the brutal slaying, an extreme example of the terror and violence inflicted on women every day, often in more subtle ways but sometimes with blood and death, the event has left deep wounds.

For those who lived through the terror, for those who knew the young women personally, the event has also left deep wounds. This legislation is about healing those wounds.

We cannot bring back to life those 14 young women, but we can ensure that their deaths will not be forgotten. In our remembrance we can ensure that their loss will continue to call us to action. Our remembrance will rally us to renew our efforts to eradicate violence against women in this country. We will vow to rededicate our efforts to ensure that violence against women will not be tolerated.

Let no one forget that the capacity for such brutal misogyny exists in our society. Let no one forget that acts of violence, less sensational, less publicized, but every bit as pernicious, occur every day in our streets and even in our homes.

In the same year that these 14 lost their lives, another 100 women in Canada were murdered by their partners. These deaths are part of a much larger phenomenon that covers a range of violence: murder, physical assault, sexual assault, psychological abuse and emotional abuse. These are all examples of violence against women and we are just beginning to acknowledge the enormous scope of this violence in our society.

We know, from a 1981 Winnipeg study, that more than 6 in 10 female victims will be assaulted by someone they know. We know from *Battered but not Beaten—Preventing Wife Abuse in Canada*, a 1987 publication of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, that at least one woman in 10 is battered by her male partner.

These tragic statistics are available to us, but one of the most serious problems when dealing with violence against women is that there is so much we do not know. Much of the violence goes unrecorded, much of the data is incomplete. Some victims fear the consequences of continuing to live in their homes after reporting a family member who has abused them. Some victims think they would do best to forget. They try to bury the violence deep in their thoughts and deny its existence. They do not fully understand the deep-seated trauma that such violence inflicts and that will, in all likelihood, stay with them the rest of their lives.

By recognizing December 6 as a national day of remembrance and action on violence against women, Parliament will send a signal to those women. As members of this House, we will be telling them that we know such violence takes place, that we know of their trauma and that they are not alone in their suffering. We will be inviting them to join us as we move forward together to eradicate violence against women from Canadian society.

We will be sending a signal to all Canadians through our solidarity of purpose in ensuring that violence against women shall not be ignored. We will be helping to create a social environment in which attitudes toward women which promote such violence must wither and die.

The idea of designating the date of the *École Polytechnique* disaster as a day of remembrance and action has wide support. It is being supported by members from all sides of the House and it responds to recommendations that have come from women's groups across the country, as well as from the many individuals who were touched by the tragedy.

The National Council of Women of Canada and a number of other national women's groups recommended December 6 be proclaimed a national day of mourning.

• (1150)

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women proposed that the day be set aside as a day of recognition of women victims at the hands of male violence.

I commend the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby for tabling a bill that is not content to let December 6 be solely a day of remembrance. It will also be a day of constructive action. Already we have seen many examples of how the tragedy has galvanized Canadians to act.

At universities and colleges across Canada students and faculty are speaking out against practices that contribute to the sexist environment in which violence against women festers. We are seeing the establishment

of sexual harassment policies and committees, as well as status of women offices and women's centres.

The federal government has shown leadership and vision through its commitment to Canada's first national inquiry into violence against women and its $136 million renewal of the family violence initiative.

The tragedy of December 6 has also led to action by fostering a renewed commitment to opening career opportunities to women, particularly with respect to science and engineering.

The Canadian Federation of University Women, the Canadian Council of Engineers Memorial Foundation, Société Alfred Dallaire, and École Polytechnique are among the organizations, institutions and corporations that have established scholarships in memory of the victims.

Many of these scholarships are designed to encourage women to pursue careers in engineering, the discipline studied by 12 of the *École Polytechnique* victims. These scholarships will help to break down the barriers that have prevented women from assuming full equality in our society.

When we break down the stereotypes and open non-traditional careers to women, we undermine the attitudes of sexism that can give rise to violence.

Our efforts to eradicate violence against women cannot be separated from our concern for economic equality of women. The two are bound together.

When we provide women with economic freedom through employment equity and measures to integrate work and family responsibilities, we provide women with the freedom to leave abusive situations. We again contribute to breaking down the stereotypes.

At the same time, we will never fully succeed in removing the obstacles to full equality so long as violence against women continues to plague our society.

When the basic right to security of the person is denied, no one can participate as an equal. Violence and the fear of violence are depriving women in Canada and around the world of their ability to achieve equality.

No one can doubt the persistence of violence against women, but at the same time no one should doubt our determination to eliminate it.

By setting aside December 6, we will have occasion each year in Canada to pause and consider what we have done to eradicate this evil, and what remains to be done.

We will have occasion to mourn those whom we have lost to violence, and honour those who show their determination to work toward equality for women.

One example of that determination came to light this past year when one of the prestigious Canada Scholarships was awarded to Nathalie Provost.

Nathalie was among the women wounded by the gunman at *École Polytechnique*. At the Canada Scholarship Assembly at *École Polytechnique*, she declared: "He did not win."

Determined words. They are words that speak on behalf of the women engineering students at *École Polytechnique*. A year after the tragedy, a record 222 women, a quarter of the class, enrolled as first-year engineering students.

The words "he did not win" are a call to action as much as they are a declaration of how women have overcome the Montreal tragedy. They are words that speak for women everywhere, women who face the threat of violence in their lives, on the streets and even in their homes every day of the year.

It is a fitting memorial, a day to assess and remember and look at the issue of violence against women. It is a particularly fitting memorial because these young women were the victims of a young man, himself a twisted product of a violent father whose attitudes affected his son.

Such sick attitudes and actions should not be tolerated in our society. Their consequences are terrible.

As members of Parliament, it is our duty to ensure that the declaration of Nathalie Provost rings true for all women.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I think you would find the House disposed to complete this matter and put it to a vote.

Mr. Bill Domm (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to say that I fully support the bill. We are looking forward to its passage with the agreement of all parties in the House of Commons.

We need to see more of this in Private Members' Business. We need to see more opportunities where members of Parliament from all political parties can stand in their places and speak their minds on matters of interest and concern to them. It serves as part of the policy of trying to reform Parliament so that it becomes more creditable with the Canadian people.

I am pleased to put my support behind this bill. I hope it can be used as an example of what members of Parliament can do if they decide to work together as backbenchers, not always looking to government or party position on private members' initiative.

[*Translation*]

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I don't want to prolong the debate unnecessarily, because this is a very important bill.

[*English*]

In addition to what the member for Peterborough said, it is very important to point out that the concerns raised by this Private Member's Business are shared by many in the House of Commons as well as by women. I think there will be unanimous support from all parties and from both genders in supporting this initiative.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

[*English*]

Ms. Black: Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a quick moment to thank all of the members in the House of Commons, regardless of their political affiliation, for the support that they have shown me in this Private Member's Bill. I would particularly mention the minister responsible for the status of women and my colleague from Halifax, but more than that there has been support in all political parties for this private member's bill. I want to thank all members who spoke today and those who have not had an opportunity to speak for their support as well.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Would the House agree to let the Chair call it twelve o'clock, so that we can proceed with Government Orders?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

AIRPORT TRANSFER (MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS) ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C–15, an act to provide for certain matters respecting official languages, employees' pensions, and labour relations in connection with the transfer of certain airports, as reported (without amendment) from a legislative committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): On a point of order, the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

• (1200)

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order concerning some difficulty on my part, and I believe the Official Opposition as well, of adapting to the new rules. The new rules that this House approved required any motions to have been in by 2 p.m. on Friday. Unfortunately, we got our amendments in at 2.15 p.m. They are fairly similar to the motions that were placed before the committee itself and rejected by the committee so, therefore, there is another aspect of it. But I am wondering, in the interests of trying to make a bill better, whether there would be a disposition in the House to allow us to waive that particular rule and have the motions tabled.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, there are obvious precedent setting and other consequences to such a request. It might be appropriate to have discussions between House leaders to reach a conclusion to it, but certainly on the spur of the moment it would not be a wise precedent, particularly given the two sides to the issue. It is not

simply a timing issue, but there is also a substantive issue buried there.

If he and his party want to pursue it with the House leaders, as we move through the debate, I think that might be appropriate. But at this point it would not be appropriate to simply, on the spur of the moment, give that kind of permission.

Mr. Angus: I appreciate the comments of the chief government whip. However, there is another reality. There are no motions before us at report stage, so my understanding is that all we can do is pass judgment on the bill and then move on to third reading immediately. The only way we could do it is if there would be agreement at some point. I agree that reverting back to report stage should be done by the House leaders, assuming that we don't complete third reading today.

Mr. Hawkes: One of our long-established traditions in the House is the tradition of unanimous consent for the House to do what the House chooses to do, and that would be available to us today. It would take that kind of consent at this moment to do what the hon. member is suggesting. It will take that kind of consent if, in fact, there is an agreement reached to seek it.

By refusing unanimous consent at this point we are essentially in the same position in terms of what he would like to do as I described earlier.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The Chair is somewhat at a loss, since there is no minister of the Crown present. Do I hear a response from the government Whip?

[*English*]

Mr. Hawkes: There are some cabinet meetings going on and with the transition at 12 o'clock, they have gone by their intended termination time, and I think we will have a minister in the House in the not too distant future. If we would care to just simply suspend for a moment or two, we will be able to meet that technical requirement.

Mr. Boudria: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, since we do have a moment because no minister is here.

I want to take the opportunity to raise this matter with the government whip. If there is an agreement to recognize amendments, as was suggested a few moments ago, I want to indicate to the House and to the government whip that my colleagues would also like to move amendments as well. Perhaps in a discussion among House leaders there would be consideration to that particular proposal as well as the acceptance of amendments coming from our colleagues in the New Democratic Party. I just wanted to take this opportunity to so inform the government whip.

No, I am not admitting that we have missed on something. It is nothing of the sort. It is simply that if this courtesy is extended to one opposition party, I cannot see why the other opposition party could not similarly avail itself of the same opportunity. That is basically the request I am not formulating, not in anticipation of receiving an answer right now, but one in the future.

With that, I see a minister coming into the House and the government has just resolved the embarrassment that it had put itself in.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, it would indeed, be a surprise if we moved into a negotiating session that there were not comments and requests to come from all corners of the House. Indeed, we might expect that to be part of the conversation as well.

[*Translation*]

Hon. John McDermid (for the Minister of Transport) moved that the report stage of the bill be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

[*English*]

Mr. McDermid (for the Minister of Transport) moved that the bill be read a third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I had assumed that the government was going to lead off as usual, so I would like to give the normal courtesy.

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today for third reading of Bill C-15, an act to provide for certain matter respecting official languages, employees'

pensions and labour relations in connection with the transfer of certain airports.

Bill C–15 will allow the government to proceed with negotiations that are under way, to effect those transfers and fulfil the objectives of the government's policy in this matter, keeping in mind that this bill deals exclusively with employee related matters.

As all members are aware, the government's objectives from the beginning were to allow the airports to better serve local community interests, to enhance regional economic development potential, and to permit the national airport system to operate in a more cost–effective and commercial manner.

This policy aims to enhance the efficient commercial operation of federal airports through a more locally responsive management structure.

This government's vision is that this new structure will allow airports to respond quickly to changing needs and market forces with innovative ideas.

The local airport authorities, or LAAs will benefit from increased flexibility that will enable them to take advantage of the entrepreneurial opportunities that present themselves. They will be in a positive position to directly contribute to regional development initiatives.

The government set out very clear principles for these transfers in the original policy statement and the supplementary principles which set out the conditions under which airports would be transferred to local authorities.

It might be worth repeating that under the government's principles, permanent employees must be offered work by the local airport authorities in a job with pay and benefits comparable to what they received while employed by Transport Canada. Airport employees will be properly looked after.

Airport staff are dedicated and skilled professionals. This bill, along with the principles of the transfer process, will ensure that they are treated fairly and equally.

These local airport authorities will be non–profit organizations. Current and forecast net revenue generated by the airport must be guaranteed to the government, along with a share of the increased revenue produced by the local airport authority.

• (1210)

Passage of this bill should greatly contribute to allaying any concerns that affected airport site employees may have by dealing with their major questions concerning pensions, benefits, and collective agreements.

This airport transfer legislation would also ensure that the LAAs continue to provide bilingual services to the public at former federal airports.

Negotiations are well advanced with local airport authorities in Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Montreal. The signature of former transfers in these communities could take place as early as this fall. This House may already be aware that serious interest in airport transfers is also evident in such communities as Moncton, Quebec City, St. Foy, Windsor, Thunder Bay, Winnipeg, and Kamloops.

In summary, this bill, which will allow the government to proceed with the transfer of airports to locally established airport authorities, will allow Transport Canada to be in an even better position to focus its energies and resources on the vital aspects of transportation in Canada.

In closing, I just want to thank all hon. members for their interest in this bill and in this process.

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to address this legislation before the House at third reading. It is the bill which will transfer the authority of airports in Canada to the local community groups that have shown interest in developing programs and business plans to take over the operation of airports throughout these communities.

Let me say at the outset that the comments I intend to make today are much the same as the comments I made when we went through committee and second reading in the House. We on this side agree in principle on the initiative of transferring the authority for the management of airports in Canada to local and community groups.

During the implementation of this program, though, we have some very vital concerns with respect to how this transfer of authority will take place, and those are the areas I wish to address today. I hope our colleagues on the other side of the House will take some interest in these remarks because it will mean a smooth and easy

transition from Department of Transport administration to that of local airport authorities.

What we will see here in the transition period is a similarity in Canada developing with what we already have seen in the United States where most of the airports are already operated by what is termed the local authority or a local management group. They have a far-reaching input into the affairs of airport management in their country, and we would hope it would be something analogous to what we will have here in Canada.

I cannot emphasize strongly enough that unlike the government's ill-conceived policy of deregulation in the transport industry the concept of local airport authority means better service to the communities we represent, and not less. Mainly for this reason we support in principle the idea and the thought of local airport authorities.

Local airport authorities are proceeding across Canada. Already, as we have heard, large communities are preparing to implement this policy. During the debate, as we crossed Canada on the Open Skies inquiry into getting better service between the United States and Canada, we heard very many vigorous approaches from people who had done a great deal to put themselves in place for the eventual taking over of the airports in their communities.

We were impressed with were the representations made by the airport authorities of the communities of Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver. I am told, but I am not sure at this stage, that there is an airport authority or steering group in the process of trying to bring local management in at Dorval airport.

It was interesting to hear these representations because the provincial governments in these three areas, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver, were playing a very strong role in financing the local airports' initiatives. They are playing a strong role in fostering the idea that the area of responsibility should be at the local level.

Our cause for concern is simply—and I hope that this government would address this issue—the local airport authority act is dealing with every major airport in Canada and with smaller airports throughout the communities, but it is not addressing itself to the city of Toronto. One asks oneself: if local airport authorities are good for the rest of Canada, why have we got a different plan for Lester B. Pearson Airport in Toronto?

Toronto is becoming the hub of Canada. It is not the hub of Ontario; it is the hub of Canada. This is the paradox and the dilemma we on this side find ourselves in. If government members are proposing local airport authorities, why are they not proposing the same administration for Lester B. Pearson Airport as they are for other regions in Canada? Why are they so intent on local airport authorities, with which we agree in principle, but not intent on establishing a local airport authority for Lester B. Pearson in Toronto?

As we know, the Lester B. Pearson Airport in Toronto has already proceeded on a mode of privatization. They have already privatized Terminal 3, Trillium Airport. They are in the process of asking for requests for the privatization of Terminal 2, which is the terminal Air Canada mainly uses. Since most of the international lines have moved out of Terminal 1, there is a refurbishing of that terminal and there will be a proposal to ask for its privatization.

Any of us who have travelled through Terminal 2 in the recent past since the refurbishing program has started know full well that Terminal 2 is becoming one of the fine airports not only in Canada but in North America. With limited resources—I think the spending estimates are somewhere around $57 million—they have done some magnificent work in Terminal 2. They have opened up the sides to let the people look at the aircraft and loading zones, improved the loading zones, increased the ability to walk that long corridor with raised stairways and stairwells and assisted the handicapped in that airport. It is much easier to use that facility now than what we have experienced in the past.

What I am saying is that an expenditure of $57 million is a lot of money. When we start talking about airports, $57 million does not go that far when we consider that Trillium cost somewhere in the neighbourhood of $500 million to build.

What I am trying to say is: Why would we want to privatize a very functional airport such as Terminal 2 and lose control of those very important areas that bring some form of regulation back to the airline industry? I am talking particularly of the gates and the slots, the two most important elements in the administration of an airline carrier within an airport proper. We all know that at times when we land on an Air Canada flight at Pearson Airport, and we are waiting to get into a slot and a gate at Terminal 2, we can look over at Trillium,

Terminal 3, and find empty slots. The airline we may be using cannot get into that gate because it is not part of its system.

• (1220)

What I am saying is: Why should we be on a program to privatize Terminal 2 and take it out of public control or of local airport authorities whose main interest is supplying a good basis of airline traffic and control in the country?

I have nothing against private enterprise, but we know it has to pay $500 million or $600 million to recapture their investment in airline travel. I think the privatization concept, especially now with what Air Canada has done in Terminal 2, is something that I would wish and advise this government to reconsider. It should think of the consequences of totally privatizing the most important airport in Canada, while on the other hand we are asking to bring all other airports in Canada under local authority.

It is a paradox. It does not make sense. Why do we not just try to use one system throughout the country? The best system we see is a local airport authority. We on this side of the House think that Pearson International Airport with Terminals 1 and 2 should be considered for the local airport authority program—I see my colleague from Hamilton nodding her head—as well as what will happen under a local airport authority in Hamilton, to enhance the service to the travelling public.

I am sure this is not of prime consideration when privatization will cost upward of $1 billion for Terminals 1 and 2. We know that money, although the facilities at Terminals 1 and 2 are already very adequate, will just add to the cost to the air travelling public in Canada. It is something now that we should be looking at to try to defray the cost and keep the costs in line rather than let them expand.

I hope in the debate today as we discuss this bill that we get some response from our friends across to give us their idea of why on the one hand Terminals 1 and 2 in Toronto are not subject to the local airport authority as are all other airports in Canada.

As we talk about Pearson International Airport, we all know that the airlines in the United States have gone into what is called the hub and spoke operation, where they develop hubs throughout certain sections of the country. Then all the spokes of all the smaller airlines feed into this hub.

One of the unfortunate occurrences that we have seen in air travel in Canada is that when the hub does not operate the spoke cannot operate. If we continue to want to privatize Lester B. Pearson Airport in Toronto and for some reason that hub does not work, it affects all air travel. All the spokes across this country coming into Toronto Pearson are then inoperative because of the events and the weather that could affect the operation of that main hub in the Canadian air system.

I often think of an analogy when we talk about hub and spoke. When we were kids we had bicycles, and the most important part of that bicycle was the rear hub. If that did not operate, you had tremendous problems. All the spokes that would lead out into this wheel would cause tire repairs. You just could not operate your bicycle.

When we take that analogy into consideration, if that hub at Lester B. Pearson is not going to be operative, the spokes are going to be inoperative. That is not good for the air travellers in Canada.

I would like to suggest—and I hope I get some comments from our friends on the other side in the interests of air travellers, air cargo, special services and all other incidental items that are involved in the vital transportation industry in Canada—that we retain some degree of control.

When I say "we", I mean Canadians through the ability of local airport authorities should maintain some degree of control through Terminals 1 and 2 in Toronto. We could ensure that not only those who are using that facility but all other travellers from across Canada will have public input into the continued operation of that important hub at Lester B. Pearson Airport.

I would like to be parochial for a moment. In my own riding of Thunder Bay—Nipigon, a committee has already been in place for well over 18 months and is preparing with great enthusiasm and great energy to meet the challenge of what local airports can bring and mean to our community.

The steering committee is a very competent group of people who have been gathered together and who welcome the chance to meet the needs of the community and run an airport authority in very cost efficient manner which because of bigness in our transportation system in this country leaves somewhat to be desired.

In establishing local airport authorities in general, efforts must be made to convince municipalities that this is not just another attempt by the government to divest itself of yet another financial burden. It was our concern in committee, it is our concern at second reading, and it is our concern today that as we transfer the authority to local airports we must ensure to every community in this country that the financial burden, if any, placed upon the operation of those airports will not result in the municipal taxpayer in every area of this country from being burdened with the operation of air services. That is not the intent. Members on this side of House would have nothing to do nor would we agree in any way with participating in this bill if it meant that the financial burdens of operating an airport would finally find their way into the local or municipal level. That is not the intent.

We on this side will always be on guard to make sure that the municipal taxpayer in Canada will not be forced or obligated to pay for air services in their own communities. It has always been a federal responsibility. It should continue to be a federal responsibility. What we are saying is that with the local airport authority we think and we trust that it will be an enterprise that can be self-paying.

Let me say, again with emphasis, that it is not our intention on this side of the House to place the financial burden of these airports on municipalities. It is an opportunity for municipalities to decentralize from Ottawa and other regional transportation offices so that the control of the airports themselves will become part of the local concern.

We must bear in mind that the intent of the legislation is to make airport management more responsive to the needs of any given community in Canada. At the same time it is imperative that Transport Canada remains responsible for all air side operations of the airport. Another cause of concern on this side of the House as we went through committee hearings was that an airport has two components: it has an air side and it has a ground side.

The air side is not in any part negotiable in this agreement. The air side is responsible for the safety of air traffic in Canada, and I am talking about air traffic controllers and the training of air traffic controllers, their work schedules, the climate control and the atmospheric control. All those areas and all those government agencies are responsible for ensuring good, safe quality of air transportation in Canada. It is not part of this legislation and it shall remain intact for the safety of all air travellers in Canada.

We have a record in Canada with respect to air safety that is the envy of every country in the world. It is not our position on this side of the House that any of those safety features which respect air side be part of this. It should remain under the management and under the control of Transport Canada.

The ground side is the other aspect of air passenger services. Ground side operations, which is what we are referring to in this legislation, is the part we consider could be better administered by local airport authorities in the communities in which we reside.

It must be understood that the way in which a new system will operate is to afford the local authority the flexibility to manage according to local needs as far as the terminal and ground side facilities are concerned. As I said previously, ground side services only. The operation of the airport proper, the operation of the concessions, the operations of the grounds surrounding the runways and the use of those grounds to the best advantage of the community are all ground side services. Up to this point in time maybe the community has not had a fair chance to direct its best ability toward running that operation. That is where the local group will place its emphasis.

• (1230)

Consequently, given the sensible rationale approach to airport management, local authorities will be able to effect the changes the community needs, effect the changes the community deserves, and effect the changes on a very cost efficient basic.

I am speaking of improving services. When we talk of local airport authorities, I am speaking of improving the services these local airports already enjoying, not denying them any services; attracting more passengers to the air industry; attracting more industry that is responsive to the needs of the air industry; attracting more jobs

within the airport community than we heretofore have had; meeting all the needs of a region that an airport service requires; and operating these airports on a very cost effective basis.

Anyone should be able to see that these goals can best be met at the local level. I want to say at this time that in saying they can best be met at the local level, I am in no way insinuating or impugning any degree of not running these airports to the best of their ability by the present method of operation. They have done the best they can with the finances that they have had available to them and, as I say, the best they can not being part of the community. Being part of the community means they can offer better service.

As an example, if I can talk again about the community I represent and the airport, I think I can speak with a little authority on this because in one of my previous careers I spent several years working on airport property. There are several areas I have noticed that were perhaps not cost efficient and not properly administered mainly because of the absence of direct responsibility at that particular level.

Every major decision in the area that I represent was made 450–500 miles away from us. The decision affecting obligations in Ontario was made not in the province of Ontario but in another province. Perhaps these people who were making the decisions were not fully aware of the needs of Thunder Bay or north western Ontario; not only unaware of the needs, but these divisions operating under certain financial constraints which left the community, a smaller community like Thunder Bay, perhaps wanting because there were more important needs in other perhaps larger areas.

Let me perhaps give one example that I noticed when I was working at an airport. We are not talking a great deal of money. There was in the budgetary allotments for a period of time a request for security fencing around certain areas of the airport proper. I know this was on the expenditure side for several years and had been approved and taken out, approved and taken out. Then one day in the middle of winter, in fact it was toward the end of February, a construction firm moves into the local airport and starts to build the security fence around certain sections of the airport proper.

Building the fence is not an onerous job, but building a fence in the middle of February in Thunder Bay is not reasonable. We have a frost layer of approximately four feet. When they brought these huge machines in to dig holes to put the posts in, to dig through four feet of frost was next to impossible. The machines were there for about 30 days trying to get enough post holes dug through the frost layer in order to lay the fence.

After 30 days they gave up. They moved all of their equipment out of the community. To this day that fence has never been built. All I am saying is that if we had a proper airport authority on the site, first off we would not attempt to build a security fence and dig holes in the ground in the middle of February. We would do it on a more cost efficient basis and bring in contractors. Perhaps local contractors would be given the opportunity to come in and build that fence during the time it is conducive to do building of that type in the climate in which we live.

Another example that always caused me some concern in airports, not only in Thunder Bay but airports right across the country, was the methodology used in granting concessions on airport property.

I think we all know, those of us who live in smaller communities with airports, that the facilities provided at smaller airports are very, very important to the travelling public. During this period of time we have seen several concessions, especially the food concession, being administered and tendered out, and companies not from the community being involved in providing the service.

What eventually happens is that these companies find out that perhaps in smaller communities they do not have the volume of business they anticipated, that because of the fees charged for operating on airport property they are not doing as well as they expected. Then, several things happen: the service that is supposed to be provided starts to diminish, the facilities are not kept open during the time the travelling public requires those facilities, and the quality expected of an airport facility is not there. This is a trend that happens over a period of time.

What I have noticed is that when local concerns go into business enterprises at airports, they offer a good service and their reputation is involved. Just by way of example, the food service at the airport near where I live has had excellent service for the last 10 years, having taken over from a national company that could no longer provide the degree and the quality of service the people in our community expected. By bringing in a local

restaurateur to supply those services, we have had magnificent service in that airport for the last 10 years. I hope that in whatever expansion programs are going ahead in our area, he will be given an extra added responsibility to continue the fine service that he has provided over the years.

Those are just a couple of examples where local airport authorities can make a real contribution to the services that are needed by the travelling public in Canada.

While we on this side of the House affirm our support for the policy in principle, we are concerned that the aims of the policy do not meet the obligations in a very sensible and fair manner.

We on this side of the House feel that the objectives of local airport authorities should be three-fold. I am hoping that we will monitor, and I am sure we will monitor, the transfer of local airport authorities, considering that their primary objectives would be, first, to serve the local community interests, second, to enhance economic development and, third, to operate airports in a cost-effective manner.

When we talk about serving local community interests, we can look at different airports in this country that provide air services, usually Toronto because it is a hub. All of us have gone to smaller airports and have seen the competitive airlines leaving the airport basically at the same time, within 10 or 15 minutes of each other, both leaving at seven o'clock in the morning or 7.15 in the morning, both leaving for the same destination and both travelling with less than a full load—sometimes less than 50 per cent, 60 per cent or 70 per cent of a load.

If we are really and truly interested in this country in cost saving and efficiency of fuel and in having our airports operate in an environment that allows them to produce a profit, perhaps the local airport authority could get involved in managing and assisting in the scheduling and providing of air services so that we would not see congestion at particular periods of time at airports, and then an absence of anybody at all waiting for the next aeroplane to arrive. This is clearly an area where the authority, operating on a local level, can serve a community.

I should also mention that I am very proud of a facility which happens to be in our airport, and is there because of the great generosity of a local family. The facility is for a search and rescue group which covers all of northern Ontario and parts of northern Manitoba searching for missing aircraft. With the combination of the tremendous volunteer involvement of a friend of mine, John Illingworth, who was the instrument that provided the leadership in this area, and the contribution of this very fine family in providing an airport facility which they were not using at that time, we have been able to establish one of the finest search and rescue units in all of Canada. This is something we are very proud of.

• (1240)

That is the type of local initiative which is needed and perhaps will be increased as each airport in this country becomes governed by people with a local concern.

Let me address the enhancement of economic development. As we travel with the transport committee, and through our responsibilities as critics, visiting most airports in the country, one of the things that comes to mind very clearly is that airports are surrounded by huge tracts of land. What we see in this land that is available for development is an almost instant industrial site that has all the services—water and sewage, and fire treatment facilities—that every industrial site in this country requires. With each local authority which takes over in its community, we have immediately another industrial site available for the community to develop. On these industrial sites I would envisage all services of an industrial nature that are required to be in the approximate vicinity of the airport proper.

The cargo industry, which is developing and increasing throughout the country, indicates that cargo facilities would be very important additions to airport properties. The packaging business, getting packages from point A to point B overnight, should be on airport properties. If an airport serves a large regional community, storage areas for goods before they are transferred either to the job site, a mining site, a forestry site, or any other economic area that requires that service would be useful.

These facilities are not now available at small airports throughout the country, but I am confident that if local authorities were to assess the needs of regional enterprise, they would begin to establish such facilities at all local airports.

This would also afford the opportunity to provide specialty services such as fire fighting, picture-taking facilities for designating areas for mining exploration, topography and cartography. Those facilities could be made available through the combined efforts of the authority and the local community.

Private recreational facilities which are growing by leaps and bounds in Canada can be further enhanced by local authorities in this country.

All of these ventures and initiatives taken by local authorities will enhance the cost-effectiveness of airports and perhaps create viable enterprise, the proceeds of which can be applied for the further benefit of the air-travelling public in Canada.

This legislation has only the bare bones of a policy which will become widespread throughout the country. It is so important that each community begins with good direction and guidance. Local airport management is in its infancy in Canada and this is a logical point to ensure that the policy gets off on the right foot, that mistakes are prevented, and that sound management principles are effected so that the community will benefit.

One of the very important considerations in this legislation is the fair treatment of personnel when authority is transferred from the Ministry of Transport to the local airport authority.

In my opinion, this bill does not go far enough in ensuring that Transport Canada employees will be totally protected during this transfer process.

I was surprised during the committee hearings, when we discussed this matter with the unions representing the employees working for Transport Canada, that there was no provision in their labour legislation that dealt with successor rights. Legislation like that should have a successor right provision in Canada, inasmuch as in the last four or five years we have seen a great change-over of Canadian ownership and businesses to private concerns. Without successor rights for the employees, it seems that there is some uncertainty with respect to employees' benefit packages and all of the obligations for which Transport Canada is responsible that have been negotiated over the years.

Successor rights in labour legislation simply mean that if someone takes over the operation of a business, leases a business or by any other means starts to run an enterprise that up to that time has been run by someone else, then every union agreement that was entered into by the previous owner, lessor, or whatever the case may be must be maintained by the business enterprise taking over the venture.

Without that in the legislation, I can see why the employees in these areas across Canada would have some degree of concern.

Successor rights provisions provide for the same union representing the same employees from the previous employer to the future employer. It says in the successor rights provisions that during the transfer of ownership there will be no raiding of employees by another union. That is forbidden in the successor rights provisions.

These provisions guaranteed the very same terms of employment, working conditions, grievance procedures, wage package and benefits for employees under a local airport authority that they experienced while working for Transport Canada.

We are going to be looking very closely at the progress of this government program. Inasmuch as it is selling off many of the Canadian assets, during the transition period we are going to recommend to the government that successor rights be included as a very important addition to the legislation that governs federal employees in federal ministries.

In the transition of authority from the Minister of Transport and the Department of Transport to the local airport authorities, even if successor rights are not in the contract or in the labour legislation, all successor rights provisions under the Canada Labour Code should be adhered to.

In this government's headlong rush to deregulate, privatize and sell off every institution we have in Canada, individuals have the right to be protected. There is no better way to protect those rights than invoking the successor rights provisions we have in other labour legislation in this country.

Another crucial area that we are concerned about as we start to transfer authority is the matter of safety and security from federal standards in our airports to local airport authority standards.

I have already gone through the process of stating the differences between air and terminal security. On the air side, there will be a continuation. On the terminal side, there will be additions to the ground security areas and the baggage claiming areas. We hope that we will be able to implement through local airport authorities security measures ensuring that every piece of luggage be subject to an X-ray and not only carry-on luggage, and that the owner of that luggage is responsible to fly with it.

• (1250)

Those are some of the safety items we can implement through the local level that up until this point we have not been able to implement because of some divisions across the country with respect to how we analyse the luggage that goes on to our aircraft.

With respect to carry-on luggage, it is getting to be a terrible consideration in Canada because of the spoke and hub concept. We in smaller communities are not getting on to DC-9s or 727s or 747s anymore. We are getting on 30 passenger aircraft and 40 passenger aircraft which do not allow the passenger to carry on the amount of luggage as do the larger aircraft. We have to come to grips in Canada with this program of carry-on luggage, especially at small airports.

I am sure that local airport authorities can come to grips with this issue and implement procedures which will be beneficial to all Canadian travellers.

I can see that my time is up. If I had had more time, I would have liked to discuss some of the recommendations we had put forward, some of the changes we had hoped for in the previous bill.

Let me close with a proposed amendment to the bill before the House. I move, seconded by the member for Kingston and the Islands:

> That the motion be amended by deleting the words "be now read a third time and do pass" and by substituting therefor the following:
>
> "be not read a third time, but be referred to the Standing Committee on Transport with instructions that the committee consider amending the bill in clause 2
>
> (a) by striking out lines 21 and 22 at page 1 and substituting the following therefor:
>
> "body to which the minister is to transfer an airport by lease as a desig-"
>
> (b) by striking out lines 2 and 3 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:
>
> "ister is to transfer an airport by lease to a designated airport author-"

I thank the Chair for the opportunity to make those remarks with respect to the transition of responsibility to local airport authorities in Canada.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The Chair will take under advisement the admissibility of the motion moved by the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

[*English*]

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, looking at the clock, I am wondering whether there might be a disposition to call it one o'clock, that way I could start fresh at three.

An hon. member: We go right through.

Mr. Angus: My apologies for once again forgetting about the new rules and the new hours.

I am pleased to participate in the third reading debate of Bill C-15. I want to say at the outset that I do not support the concept of local airport authorities. I was surprised; I thought the Liberal Party did not support the concept of local airport authorities. From the speech by my neighbour to the north, it seems that has changed.

I want to explain why I do not support the concept. In part it is because of the work of the special committee on transport when we were examining the whole question of Open Skies.

Mr. Keyes (Hamilton West): I think just to clarify the confusion being put forward by my colleague from the NDP Party, the previous speaker from Thunder Bay—Nipigon did say that we, as a party on this side of the House, support in principle the airport authority and the idea of an airport authority. But those initiatives, and this is the point of order, and the transfer of the administration and management of airports to local authorities, meet certain criteria and certain conditions that we are very concerned about on this side of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I think this is a matter of opinion. I give the floor now to the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the intervention of the member from one of the Hamilton ridings. One only has to look at the full text of the speech to see the amount of time spent glowing over the concept to appreciate what was being said.

Let me come back to the point I was making, why I oppose local airport authorities. One of the obstacles in the way of an agreement between Canada and the United States in a new bilateral air arrangement is the fact that the federal government of the United States no longer has control over its airports. They have local airport authorities. They have state authorities. They have airports that are run by airlines.

The federal government of the United States cannot go in and implement a bilateral agreement without first having to seek the approval of each and every one of those local airport authorities. Their system is fragmented.

Second, my preference as a Canadian is to have a national system owned and operated by the people of Canada. This system has been in place for years, ever since C. D. Howe started Trans-Canada Airlines and set up the airports across this country. If we allow the airports to run their own show, then no one can be assured of consistency of service from one end of this country, from coast to coast to coast, because each airport authority will do its own thing.

Nor can we be assured, and certainly this bill does not speak to it, that each and every airport authority will be selected in the same manner. During the legislative committee meetings, and we heard from a number of the local airport authorities which are up and running and ready to use this act, we heard some excellent examples of how they selected their people. It was not a bunch of boys in the back room who got together and said: "Let's take over the local airport", but it was municipal chambers of commerce, municipal councils, who together developed a process for selecting the members of the local airport authority.

In the area around Montreal, individual members of council from the participating municipalities all sent representatives. Others draw from a cross-section of the community but they do it in a public way, unlike the city of Thunder Bay, where a group of individuals decided on their own that they wanted to take over the local airport. There is no consistency and no protection for the public that have to use those facilities. That is where I am coming from in terms of the concept of local airport authorities.

Specifically, the purpose of the bill is to protect the collective bargaining rights, language rights and pension rights of federal public sector workers currently employed by Transport Canada during the transfer of airports from Transport Canada to local airport authorities. While we agree with the principle that the workers must be protected, we do not believe that this bill really does that. Certainly there is a lack of clarity in the bill, and in light of current worker-management relations, it does not provide the protection it purports to provide.

The union representing the workers, the Union of Transport Canada Employees, has cited several problems with this bill. Let me be specific. Workers or their representatives have not been a part of the process of negotiation and consultation that has gone on between Transport Canada and various local airport authorities. They are being presented with a take it or leave it option. This is not a good basis upon which to build good worker-employer relations. Second, the procedural and substantive rights of workers with regard to their existing pensions under the Public Service Superannuation Act and the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act are not clear under this bill. It is being left up to Treasury Board to make regulations. Again, there has been no consultation on the development of these regulations with the workers involved.

• (1300)

Most importantly, the bill contemplates removing the workers from these plans. In the case of other privatizations of work places, workers have remained in these plans. This bill needs to incorporate the desires of workers to continue under these plans because it should be noted that the local airport authority in British Columbia is having difficulty finding an insurance company to take on the disability insurance plan currently provided workers. They have been told that it would be too expensive to continue this type of coverage. What are they to do? Third, the continuation of the bargaining agent is also a matter of great concern. The bill provides for the continuation of the terms and conditions of an existing collective agreement at the time of transfer. However, past experience with other privatizations is that the determination of the appropriate bargaining

agent is a very long and disruptive process. This bill should incorporate provisions so that the existing bargaining agent remains in place for the period of one full collective agreement after the transfer in order to ensure the protection of workers' rights and the orderly determination of a bargaining agent.

The bill also fails in clause 4 to make clear that all services to the travelling public will continue to be provided in both official languages. Let me repeat that. The bill fails, in clause 4, to make clear that all services to the travelling public will continue to be provided in both official languages. We need to see in this bill provisions ensuring that third parties under contract to the local airport authority be required to provide their services under the linguistic terms currently set out in the Official Languages Act and any regulations made under that act.

The exclusion of those parts of the Official Languages Act dealing with services to the public and language of work are a serious undermining of the quasi-constitutional status of the Official Languages Act. According to the Official Languages Commissioner, any dismemberment of quasi-constitutional legislation can only be perceived as an erosion that is incompatible with the importance of its guarantees to Canada and Canadians. The commissioner recommended that all provisions of the Official Languages Act be incorporated by the local airport authorities.

That is something we attempted to do in committee. Both myself and the Liberal transport critic had identical motions which would have put back into the act certain sections, including Part V of the Official Languages Act, that would have provided protection for both language groups the ability to work in the language of their choice, the requirement to serve their customers in the language of the customer's choice.

The government said no. It said no to the English speaking minority in Montreal. It said no to the French speaking minority of Ottawa or any other community outside of Quebec that has a reasonably sized French speaking population. But the government has failed to protect the minority rights of the English speaking workers at the Montreal airport.

We made an attempt to change that. The two Liberal members on the committee, the critic, the associate critic, the member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon and I all voted to put that clause back into the act. One of the amendments I had wanted to have debated today and would have argued to you that even though it had been defeated in committee it was of paramount importance for the matter to be seized again and debated here in this House.

Perhaps there will still be an opportunity should we, through our House leaders, reach some kind of agreement to revert to report stage at a later part today.

I want to say it is a fundamental issue that if we are going to take a federal service, a federal airport and turn it over to a local airport authority, then along with that transfer should be the transfer of obligations under the Official Languages Act. We should not have two different classes of airports in this country. What is next? Our train stations or perhaps, part of the House of Commons. Maybe we will have an English speaking wing, or a French speaking wing and we carve them out.

No, Mr. Speaker. I think the government has made a fundamental error in this particular bill, in the need to provide legislative protection for workers, at what will still be federal airports. They will have a local management, but they will still be federal airports and there is no reason on earth that I can find, that is acceptable to me, why they should be exempted.

This bill may not be the privatization of airports, but it is the privatization of the workplace. The government has a responsibility to ensure the rights of its workers are protected before, during and after the transfer. This bill gives only more uncertainty. If the purpose is to stabilize worker-management relations, then the workers must be consulted and their concerns heeded before this legislation is implemented. Given this government's current disdain for its own workers, how can it be trusted to act in their best interests when negotiating with local airport authorities? Clear legislation is needed, setting out the obligations of the government, the obligations of the local airport authority and the rights of workers.

Other instances of privatizing the workplace, for example, security services at airports, have been of questionable benefit. Let us not forget that one of the airports we are talking about devolving to a local airport authority is the Edmonton International Airport, which has just come through a strike by their security guards searching for a decent contract. What did this airport do? They laid off the workers while they were on strike. Is that the kind of labour-management relations we expect to see, by passing this kind of legislation and this kind of privatization of the workplace?

There have been ongoing discussions between the minister and his staff and my caucus colleague, the critic for labour, who has been handling this bill. There were some agreements. There was some willingness on the part of the government to, in fact, accept a provision for retroactive payment for employees who have left the Public Service.

In fact, the former Minister of Transport, Mr. Lewis, wrote back, as follows, with a suggested amendment.

> That Bill C-85 be amended by adding, immediately after line 26 on page 5, the following:
>
> 8. Where the Minister has sold, leased or otherwise transferred an airport to a designated airport authority and, after the transfer date, a collective agreement or arbitral award under the Public Service Staff Relations Act provides for a retroactive increase in remuneration to a day before that date for employees in a bargaining unit in which designated employees for the airport were employed immediately before that date, the provisions of the collective agreement or arbitral award respecting retroactive increases in remuneration shall apply to those designated employees in respect of the retroactive period before that date.

The former minister was prepared to see this particular change made in the legislation. I understand that the government has other items it needs to incorporate into this legislation to ensure that this bill is workable, matters relating to taxation for one.

I would encourage the government to give serious consideration to reopening this bill today for clause by clause review at report stage. Both the Liberals and myself have given the Table the amendments so it will have had an opportunity to review them if this House decides, through unanimous consent, to revert.

I would like to spend the last couple of minutes going back over the philosophy of devolving to local airport authorities. It is not in the best interests of Canadians. There is a carrot out there that these local airport authorities believe, and I do not doubt their belief, that they can manage that building and those grounds in a way that is different from the way the local airport manager, under the policies of Transport Canada, can do.

• (1310)

I would suggest that if there are problems with the policies of Transport Canada, let us change those policies to provide the local manager with much more flexibility to use the capital funds available to enhance the operation, but let us not fool ourselves. In a lot of cases any wealth that is created at an airport will not necessarily be new wealth. It might be redirected wealth.

For example, in the city of Thunder Bay the proposal there, as I understand it, is that they are looking at more retail opportunities within the airport itself. Is that going to take away retail opportunities in the downtown core? Is that just going to rob Peter to pay Paul, with none of us really benefiting? If it is just aimed at the travelling public, then perhaps it might work from that point of view.

Will they be in competition with the city of Thunder Bay in terms of industrial land? Will they be taking needed revenue away from some of our light industrial areas and having them located at the airport and not contribute in the same way? We have to be careful that when we embrace these concepts we fully understand the impact on our communities.

Are people going to be happy finding different levels of services from airport to airport to airport? Some would say that is the case today and I would agree. However I think in the case of the Thunder Bay airport, which incidentally is in my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan, we work very closely with Transport Canada—we being the municipal politicians, myself, the Chamber of Commerce—to bring about improvements. We have a program under way this summer to do a temporary upgrade in the building.

We have on stream, on track, on time a major replacement of the airport terminal building, in time for the 1995 World Nordic Games, a commitment made by the former Minister of Transport to the people of Thunder Bay. We did not need a local airport authority to do that. We just needed a willingness to work toward an end.

One of the ironies is that the group that now wants to be this local airport authority were the backers of the previous government who made promise after promise after promise for a new terminal or for expansion that they never carried through with.

I know I have a few seconds left. I urge the government to reconsider the concept not to go forward with the devolution of airports to local airport authorities, but to enhance the operations, enhance the flexibility of the airport managers, some whom I have met. They are excellent representatives of the Crown and do a fantastic job, whether it is Thunder Bay, Toronto or elsewhere, in providing services to people because that is what it is all about.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I am intervening in this debate because this bill has serious implications for our official language policy in Canada. When our airports were owned and operated by the Government of Canada, they were fully subject to the provisions of the Official Languages Act.

That meant that all our airports under the ownership and control of the government had to respect the two official languages in Canada, had to provide services in the two official languages of Canada and had to respect employees who worked in those airports who were of one or the other official languages.

With this bill and the privatization of certain of our airports, the government is allowing these privatized airports to escape certain provisions of the Official Languages Act. For example, under the bill only Parts IV, VIII, IX and X of the Official Languages Act, 1988, will apply to privatized airports but not Parts V, VI and VII.

When Air Canada was privatized by this government a short while ago, the bill was changed or amended so that all provisions of the Official Languages Act would apply to the privatized Air Canada. So there seem to be some anomalies here. While the government agreed to the application of all provisions of the Official Languages Act to Air Canada for some reason or other, it is hesitant to go that distance in this bill dealing with the privatization of airports.

We are in a debate and we are hopeful that the arguments of opposition members and some others, one would hope some others on the government side, would convince the government that it should do the same for airports as it did for Air Canada.

The Commissioner of Official Languages, whose job it is to look out for the language rights of minorities in this country, appeared before the appropriate committee in the last session of Parliament when this bill's predecessor was going through the various stages. The Commissioner of Official Languages objected to those provisions in this bill which exempted the privatized airports from various sections of the Official Languages Act.

The commissioner said: "I therefore strongly recommend to the committee that section 4 of Bill C-85" which was what it was called at that time, "be amended to ensure that, as in the case of the decisions taken in the privatization of Air Canada, all the provisions of the Official Languages Act continue to apply to the designated airport authorities. Any weakening of this policy would seem to us to be unacceptable and an unjustified step backwards."

That is what was said by the Commissioner of Official Languages.

He was even concerned about those clauses that pretend to give service to the public in both official languages. He said, with respect to section 4: "I refer here to services provided by third parties under contract, specifically the various tenants and concessionaires in airport terminals concerning whom we have received more than 200 complaints in the past three years." He goes on to say that this section 4(2) is ambiguous and it does not clearly set out that service to the public must be provided, not only by the airport authorities, but by the concessionaires operating in those airports.

He said: "I therefore strongly recommend that the wording of subsection 4(2) be revised to ensure that third parties under contract are required to provide their services under the linguistic terms currently required by the Official Languages Act and the regulations made under it."

That is what was said by the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Strange as it may seem, those who manage the Montreal International Airport have approached myself and other members of Parliament objecting to the application of all the provisions of the Official Languages Act to the Montreal International Airport. The reasons given by the authorities in Montreal are that if the Montreal airport and other airports that are privatized must comply with all the provisions of the Official Languages Act, they will not be competitive with the airports in Boston and New York, or Terminal 3 in Toronto.

Let me deal first with Boston and New York. Of course the American airports have not provided bilingual services in English and French for any period of their history, as far as I know. However, that has not prevented us in Canada from providing services in both those languages because we have populations which speak those two languages. We have pilots who speak those two languages. We have employees working in the airport who speak those two languages. We have always thought, and so did the Conservative government in 1988 when it passed the new Official Languages act, that services to the public should be provided in two official languages.

• (1320)

It also thought that in federal institutions there should be equitable participation by both official language groups and that there should be fairness and justice with respect to the employees and their language of work in both official languages.

I find the argument of the authorities in Montreal rather strange because I was in this Parliament a few years ago when there was an attempt to make sure that air traffic control services in this country be in the two official languages. That received strong support from Montreal.

The people there who were air traffic controllers whose mother tongue was French and pilots who were French-speaking felt that air traffic control in this country should be in two official languages. We fought for that and put it into effect.

Despite the fears that were raised by certain opponents at the time, we have had bilingual air traffic control in several airports for many years now, and there has been no danger or great concern. It has worked very well.

Consequently, therefore, I cannot see why we, in order to compete with Boston and New York, should lessen our commitment to official languages. As a matter of fact, it seems to me that if Montreal was to operate totally in the two official languages, it would be more competitive because it would attract travellers, workers and employees who were competent in both languages. However, in Boston you are not assured that they can speak your language at all.

This is something that has to be examined more closely. For this reason, I am pleased that my colleague from Thunder Bay moved that this bill go back to committee so we can examine some of these issues.

I am not convinced that applying the provisions of the Official Languages Act, as we have for years to all our airports, will hurt our competitiveness with the airports in Boston and New York.

With respect to Terminal 3, the manager of the Montreal airport says this would also make the Montreal airport non-competitive with respect to Terminal 3 which he says is not subject to all the provisions of the Official Languages Act.

Terminal 3, which is a new terminal and was only opened recently, was built as a privatized airport from the beginning. It was never under government authority as were the other airports and it was built on a contract with a certain private firm. It is principally served by Canadian Airlines International.

I have looked at the contract between the Government of Canada and the Terminal 3 developers. It seems to me from reading the contract that Terminal 3 is subject to the Official Languages Act, but this requires some serious legal analysis.

This is another reason for this bill to go back to committee. If the government in the contract with the Terminal 3 developers did relax the provisions of the Official Languages Act with respect to airports even before this bill was passed, then I would say the government is speaking with a forked tongue.

On one hand, it is supporting an official languages policy such as it set out in the Official Languages Act of 1988 and on the other hand, it is already privatizing or

setting up privatized airports which do not respect all the provisions of that law.

Either the Official Languages Act of 1988 means something or it means nothing. When the government put that bill before Parliament in the early months of 1988, the Prime Minister stood in his place and said that this policy was so important for Canada that if he had his way, Parliament would sit all night in order to have it passed.

We did pass the bill. It was passed with the support of the Liberal and the New Democratic Party opposition but the opposition came not from the opposition parties but from certain members of the government's own party who, at that time, were known as the dinosaurs. They sort of opposed the bill, held it up and so on, but the opposition did not come from the opposition parties.

Despite the words of the Prime Minister in 1988 when the bill was passed that it was so important to pass that revised bill on official languages, we still do not have the regulations for that bill. It is more than two years since the bill was passed. The government has presented to committee the draft regulations with respect to service to the public, but it has not yet presented the regulations which are required for the language of work or equitable participation or promotion or advancement of the official languages in Canada. One wonders about the commitment of the government to official languages.

The reason for the Official Languages Act and for an official languages policy is that we have in this country large numbers of people who speak both official languages. About one-third of the population of the country is French speaking. The other two-thirds are English speaking but come from many backgrounds.

There are some who would suggest that all of Quebec should perhaps be French speaking: we would allow those airports and those institutions to be unilingual French and in the other nine provinces everything would more or less operate in English.

That sort of suggestion forgets that there are almost one million Canadians who speak French, living outside the province of Quebec. Almost one million francophone Canadians are living outside Quebec who speak French and want to be served in their language and want to work in their language, where they are in sufficient numbers.

We are not talking about one employee in Vancouver in some particular office. We are talking about large numbers of employees and particularly when they are dealing with the travelling public. Very often businessmen from Montreal go to Winnipeg for conferences. They go to Halifax to deal with governmental matters and so on. That is the nature of our country.

When the government introduced and passed the Official Languages Act in 1988 it was committed to that policy. It was a good law. It had to be completed by regulations, but it was a good law. Now we are bit concerned that the government is backing off from that.

We say that this bill is defective in that it does not apply all the provisions of the Official Languages Act to the airports the government is attempting to privatize under this bill. We are asking the question: Why is it members of the government agreed to apply all the sections of the Official Languages Act to Air Canada when they privatized Air Canada, and rightly so? They should have done that. As I said, Air Canada is our major airline and it is dealing with the travelling public, both English and French speaking Canadians. If Air Canada is to follow all the provisions of the Official Languages Act, surely the airports where these Air Canada planes land, take off and work should also follow all the provisions of the Official Languages Act.

I fully support the amendment presented by my colleague from Thunder Bay, that this bill be sent back to committee where we can once again examine certain provisions, certain sections of it, and especially those sections that relate to official languages.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Before resuming debate, I declare that the motion moved by the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon is in order. Therefore debate is on the amendment.

• (1330)

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I rise to join the debate today, both on the amendment—

Mr. Keyes: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Is it not the trend or the custom of the House of Commons to recognize two speakers from the Official Opposition before moving to the third party?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I ask for the co-operation of the member for Edmonton East.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, while confessing my rookie status and thus my lack of familiarity with all of the precedents and usages of this House, I must say at the outset that I know of no Standing Order providing for such. I know of no Speaker's ruling providing for such.

However, in the interest of amicability and goodwill in the House, in the interest of that non-partisan tradition that we are striving so mightily to create here, I will yield the floor to the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I realize there is no Standing Order of the House that says the Chair should recognize one member rather than another. The Chair must recognize the first person it sees, but there are some conventions. There is a certain practice in these matters.

We all know that the Official Opposition has 81 members and is therefore entitled to be heard more often than a third party that has only 42 members. In this particular case, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member for Edmonton East has the floor because he was recognized. But I would urge the Chair to give a little more consideration to the way the parties are represented in this House, when recognizing speakers in future. This is important to us.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, an experienced member of this House, has made a very good point. However, the Chair recognized the hon. member for Edmonton East. In the circumstances, I would ask all members to cooperate. First, I will again recognize the hon. member for Edmonton East, and subsequently, I promise to follow the convention of respecting the ratio of members in this House.

The hon. member for Edmonton East, and then the hon. member for Hamilton West.

[*English*]

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, might I preface my remarks on the bill and the amendment by noting, for the benefit of the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, that our caucus is in fact composed of 44 members, not 42. There may be two who you would wish expelled, but that is not yet the case.

I would like in rising to speak on the amendment, and of course therefore on the bill as well, to note that I think there is considerable merit in the amendment. When the vote comes it is my intention to vote for it, as I believe is the case for all members of the caucus of which I am a member.

I cannot be quite so charitable in the instance of the bill itself. There are flaws with the bill, especially given that, ostensibly at least, the purpose of the bill is to protect the collective bargaining rights, the language rights, the pension rights—the workers' rights—of federal public sector workers currently employed by Transport Canada during the transfer of airports from the authority of Transport Canada to the so-called local airport authorities, the LAAs.

There are elements in this bill which make it very unlikely that that goal will be properly and fully effected. I would like to deal just briefly with two of those elements.

The first has to do with, generally, the rights of workers at what are now federal government airports. I should note that given this government's current disdain for its own workers, it is somewhat problematic that we accept the assertion that it can be trusted to act in their best interests when negotiating with local airport authorities. Clear legislation is needed setting out the obligations of the government, the obligations of the local airport authorities and the rights of the workers employed by either or both.

This was brought home forcefully to me in the past six months in consequence of the situation faced by the passenger screening guards at the Edmonton International Airport. The service provided by these guards was contracted out quite some significant time ago.

Whereas at one time they were like all other employees at the Edmonton International Airport, employees of Transport Canada, in consequence of the government's ongoing program of contracting out, deregulation and privatization—you know the litany, Mr.

Speaker—they ceased being Transport Canada employees some time ago. They remained, for the time being, members of the Union of Canadian Transport Employees, that union which represented them when they were Transport Canada employees. However, other than that, their formal ties as employees of Transport Canada were severed and they became employees of another company.

The company at the time was Canadian Protection Services. The contractual arrangement was one that saw Air Canada, as the lead airline using the Edmonton International Airport, contract for passenger screening, which is to say security services, with the private sector company, Canadian Protection Services. This was, I suppose, to start at least an agreeable contract for the signing parties, they being Air Canada on behalf of all airlines using the airport and Canadian Protection Services.

It was most clearly not terribly acceptable to the passenger screening guards, 66 of whom were employed at the airport by Canadian Protection Services, that is CPS, and all of whom were most desirous of improving the conditions of their work and the wages for which they worked.

Bargaining with CPS for a first collective agreement began in the spring of 1990, more than a year ago. At that time the union, the Union of Canadian Transport Employees, wished to have addressed several questions including the annual 200 per cent turnover rate among the employees retained as passenger screening guards by CPS at the Edmonton International Airport.

Number two was the fact that these employees were the only ones in the entire airport required to pay for their own parking, at a rate of $20 a month. Another was they were required to place $150 deposit on their uniforms. Of course, of key importance were the seriously low rates of pay. The union had hoped to raise the current levels of pay in the $6 to $6.49 an hour range to about $8 an hour, hardly a princely sum.

Unfortunately no agreement with CPS was reached. In November of last year the parties went to conciliation. This too proved fruitless. This left the employees in a no-win situation. They could strike but, if they struck, that would immediately create a situation in which their employer, CPS, was in violation of its contract with Air Canada. That being the case, the provision in that contract that allowed Air Canada then to cancel it would kick in, or they could simply knuckle under, as indeed CPS had to knuckle under, because CPS was not getting the money from Air Canada and the other airlines using the airport to pay the passenger screening guards a reasonable amount. In that sense, CPS too was also locked into a no-win situation.

The predictable happened. In March of this year the 66 passenger screening guards went on strike. After two weeks, Air Canada determined that in consequence of the strike CPS was no longer able to live up to its contract to supply passenger screening services at the airport and, accordingly, Air Canada cancelled that contract. This meant, of course, that in the twinkling of an eye those 66 passenger screening guards were not on strike; they were unemployed.

Air Canada quickly reached an agreement with another security company, Aeroguard, which itself is a union company.

• (1340)

Its employees are represented by the United Food and Commercial Workers. This company, Aeroguard, resumed passenger screening services at the airport.

Many of the 66 passenger screening guards who had previously worked for CPS in that capacity at the airport now signed on with Aeroguard. Several did not.

The point here is that in the context of a contracted out privatized service, the protections of the Canada Labour Act which otherwise would have been completely available for those passenger screening guards were not there.

They were treated with contempt by Air Canada and the other contracting airlines at that airport. There is nothing that they or anyone else could do about it.

I wrote two letters, on March 7 and on March 21, to the then Minister of Transport, now the Solicitor General. I noted in the second:

> For exercising their right to strike, these 66 workers have now lost their jobs. This is grotesquely unfair. If, as ought to be the case, these workers were employed by Transport Canada and thus afforded the coverage of the Canada Labour Code directly, such jack-boot union busting, strike breaking would be illegal. And that's as it should be.

I received a reply from the current Minister of Transport dated May 13 of this year. He writes in part: "Security screening guards are employed by private industry." True. "They are not contracted to or through the federal government and cannot be considered as contracted out employees." True. "Nor, in this instance,

are they employed for the purpose of government agencies." True.

"Security guards are, like many Canadians, performing important jobs as employees of private industry in accordance with government regulations." Again, true.

"I must stress that they are not in any way denied rights or benefits to which they are entitled as a result of their status." Absolutely true, and that is precisely the problem. Their status is such that they are now denied the coverage of the Canada Labour Code.

I greatly fear that in the legislation we have before us today, we are setting the stage for hosts of other federal employees now employed at Canada's airports to join these unhappy passenger screening guards in that non-status situation.

For that reason, I find the bill inadequate. I would hope that when the amendment of the hon. member is passed by this House, as I hope, and the bill is therefore referred back to committee, these matters too will be addressed in committee at that time.

I say "these matters" because there is a second matter I would like to raise. It has to do with official languages.

I have, on numerous occasions in my home riding of Edmonton East and around Alberta, defended the Official Languages Act. I have defended the French language in Alberta. I have especially defended its general use in federal institutions in Alberta.

I believe that every Canadian has the right to deal with her or his federal government in the official language of their choice, regardless of where they are in this country. I will not abandon that position. I will continue to defend it in Edmonton, in Alberta and everywhere else in Canada where I can be allowed the privilege of raising my voice.

It is in this instance that I note with some dismay that portion of the bill which would exempt from the operations of the Official Languages Act the LAA airport in Montreal.

The bill would specifically omit that airport from the operations of Part V and Part VI of the Official Languages Act which provides, among other things, in Section 34 that:

> English and French are the languages of work in all federal institutions, and officers and employees of all federal institutions have the right to use either official language in accordance with this Part.

Which in section 36(2) reads:

> Every federal institution has the duty to ensure that, within the National Capital Region and in any part or region of Canada, or any place outside Canada, that is prescribed for the purpose of paragraph 35(1)(a), such measures are taken—to establish and maintain work environments of the institution that are conducive to the effective use of both official languages and accommodate the use of either official language by its officers and employees.

The effects of one of the main elements in this bill will be to remove that protection from the workers at the Montreal airport. This means that there is nothing to prevent the emergence at the Montreal airport, or at least those Montreal airports operated by what will be its local airport authority, of a strictly francophone language regime.

That is bad for two reasons. It is bad for the employees who work there, who require English as their first language to do their work. However, in some cases, more importantly, it is bad for the anglophone language minority in Montreal which may depend on the provision of anglophone services at its airports for their use of those airports. Again, this is not unreasonable. It is a keystone element of the Canadian Confederation that any citizen of this country may be able to deal with her or his government and its agencies and institutions in the official language of their choice.

To the degree that this bill detracts from that fundamental Canadian right, indeed detracts from that constitutional provision, the bill is flawed. Therefore, it is a second reason why I cannot, in conscience, fully and enthusiastically endorse this bill as it now stands.

Therefore, I would recommend to all members of this House, in the interest of equity and in the interest of prudence and, to hearken back to my first point, most of all in the interest of fairness for the workers at these airports, that this bill be referred back to the committee and that the hon. member's amendment be adopted.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I consider it a privilege to have the opportunity to rise on third reading debate of Bill C-15, the Airport Transfer Act, which was Bill C-85 in its previous incarnation before the government decided to prorogue, a government action which we, on this side of the House and

probably most Canadians, are still puzzled about and are asking ourselves why.

The bill concentrates on some technical matters related to the transference of what are currently Transport Canada operated facilities and will become local airport authorities under negotiations with Transport Canada. There are currently four major airports entering final negotiations with the federal government. They are Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Montreal.

There are a number of other airports which are interested in becoming local authorities. This means that the control and direction of the facilities will be shared at the local level between business, local officials and public representation.

Bill C-15 falls short, however, in attempting to deal with the maintenance of certain aspects of the day-to-day operation of federally regulated institutions—namely the official language protection for services and workers, job security, pension benefits and labour relations. It is enough to send shivers down anyone's spine.

On the first point, I support the comments made by my colleague, the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, that the protection for both official languages in terms of services provided to the public and for job opportunities is, at best, weak. I am surprised that this government, which attempted to put a new face on the Official Languages Act, should now weaken its support with this bill.

The point is that the responsibility for these airports is federal until such time as it should be contracted away. All aspects pertaining to the Official Languages Act with respect to certain services are protected and should remain so once the facilities transfer over to local control.

In the case of Air Canada, for example, I am sure most Canadians would recognize the duality of Air Canada in its operations. It has a bilingual staff and there is equal opportunity for both language groups to advance within the corporation.

• (1350)

Once Air Canada was sold off, the government ensured that all aspects of the Official Languages Act remained intact.

In the case of these federally regulated facilities, regulated by the Canadian government, the same protection must apply. Services must be offered to all travelling Canadians in both official languages. In the same spirit, equal opportunity to both languages groups must be granted in hiring and advancement policies.

The second point of the bill essentially deals with labour relations. The bill as it stands does not satisfy this side of the House. At committee stage we tried to move several amendments which we thought would improve the bill, but were of course voted down by the Conservative majority on the committee.

Under this bill, job security for airport employees is not guaranteed. Airport managers will have full control over the work force of the airport and if management were to decide that 20 employees should be laid off to meet costs, a six month notice is all that would be required. That is shameful. Perhaps that may appear to be generous by others on the other side of this House, but the point is that it will severely undermine the collective bargaining process.

Airport employees at Transport Canada facilities have worked long and hard for their rights, which include job protection, among other things, and they should be protected under this privatization drive by the government and not sacrificed.

I heard the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport declare just this very morning that one of the blessings of this bill is that it will allow the local authorities to function on a non-profit basis. What that means is that yes, 20 or so employees who have worked for years to obtain their rights may be laid off in six months in order to meet costs, but the facilities must be self-supporting and the authorities will have to do what they must to operate on a non-profit basis.

An important point which I would like to take note of in relation to the non-profit basis of these authorities is that our party strongly opposes local taxes in municipalities considering these transfers being raised in order to finance the debt load of a local airport authority.

At this point I would also like to clarify a point that was made a little earlier in this debate with regard to Hamilton airport. Hamilton, interestingly enough, has witnessed a move not to a local airport authority but it is the creation of a regional airport management board. That is a wonderful blend of the private sector and government accountability. It is not becoming an independent authority. It still has the arrangement of a lease

agreement between the management group at Hamilton airport and Transport Canada.

The regional airport management board at Hamilton is now in the process of selecting five community representatives. Six members of that management board will be selected from the regional council. There is that wonderful blend between business and what it has to offer and the government accountability.

We in Hamilton have to be cognizant of, and this relates back to taxes, the fact that Hamilton airport does receive $700,000 in subsidy money from the federal government every year. If we decided to move to a local airport authority, where is $700,000 going to originate from? We can guess that it will be saddled right back with the taxpayer.

I mentioned in this House last week that Transport Canada lacks a master plan for air traffic in southern Ontario. It also lacks a master plan for the entire country's air traffic system which consists of our airports.

While the government negotiates a variety of contracts with various Canadian cities in order for them to move to local airport authorities, there are a host of other airports which will remain in the hands of Transport Canada.

Communication is essential for the over all system to work. The lack of an over all vision in transportation has created what I like to refer to as a helter-skelter approach to air transportation in this country.

Just this very morning I drove to Pearson International Airport and boarded the Air Canada flight at seven o'clock and picked up the local Toronto newspaper. In the editorial was an example of why there should be some kind of an over all vision for transportation in this country.

We on this side of the House are appalled by the inconsistency of government action. Here in part is what the editorial had to say.

"It all began when Ottawa gave Terminal 3's private owners 'sole and absolute discretion' over cab licences at the new facility where—" —as we are all familiar—"one airline promises travellers 'the Dawn of Civilized Air Travel.' "

"Realizing its error in creating two different taxi systems at Canada's biggest airport, Ottawa bought back the licence rights for an undisclosed amount. To recoup its loss, the government hiked annual fees for Pearson taxis to $4,250 from $1,000; limo rates have gone to $6,000 from $1,000."

The ministers office still regards the payment to Terminal 3's owners as some kind of a state secret. We find that quite incredible. This piecemeal approach does little to address many issues of—you can put it under this title—"protection". We are talking about protection for the safety and security of the air travelling public. We are talking about protection for existing employees at our airports, protection for the physically challenged, protection of the Official Languages Act and protection against local taxes being increased to finance the debt load of a local authority.

These conditions can and would be addressed if, as so eloquently enunciated by my colleague from Thunder Bay—Nipigon, we consider his amendments to Bill C-15, put forward in this House, such as the amendment to return this debate to a committee where we can address these outstanding issues. These issues are of a vital concern, not only to this party, but to the New Democratic Party. It will stand today and say: "Yes, we oppose this legislation." What it is not saying is that this is an idea that can be flushed out and it can be done in a non-partisan way in a committee where it belongs. Let us take it back to committee, have another look at it, bring it back to the House and let us accomplish something here today.

Today we have established many reasons and conditions for the granting of our support to this bill. Especially, we focus and highlight official languages and job security. Those two are paramount.

I cannot understand why this government would transfer airports without justly guaranteeing full job security and fully protecting the linguistic rights of the employees at different airports in this country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being two o'clock p.m., the House will now proceed to Statements by Members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT WEEK

Mr. Gabriel Desjardins (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, this week will be our twentieth National Environment Week, in as many years. Why not decide this week to act now?

I want to invite all municipalities in my riding and all my constituents to take an active part in National Environment Week. Plant a tree, sow flower seeds, hang flower pots from your balcony, clean up the yard, tune up your car's engine and especially, Mr. Speaker, think in terms of recycling and reducing the quantity of garbage we produce: those are a few of the things we can do to help the environment.

Mr. Speaker, cleaning up our environment is good for us and our quality of life, but it is even better for future generations to whom we want to leave a healthier environment and a better world.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, as we begin Environment Week, Canadians across the country are questioning this government's commitment to a sustainable future.

Canadians are thinking globally and acting locally to protect our planet and are yearning for leadership from government.

Sadly, it is all too clear that the green plan is a whitewash and that no leadership is forthcoming from this government.

This past weekend, I proposed the creation of a biosphere reserve in the Gulf Islands of my constituency as a positive step toward preserving this pristine region and as a tool for economic development. This proposal meets community concerns, will prevent the further erosion of a delicate ecosystem and will lead to economic growth.

I challenge the government to show that it means what it says, to act to protect unique and threatened areas of Canada's coast, to establish a Gulf Islands' biosphere reserve for the benefit and interest of all Canadians.

I challenge the minister and this government to take some initiative, learn from the environmental activists they applaud and to act to fast-track environmental concerns for a change.

My constituents want to see jobs and a better environment. Now is the time for action.

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a society composed of people from many different ethnic, regional, linguistic, religious and racial backgrounds. It is a nation whose very identity is defined by its diversity. Canada must not forget that the debate on national unity is not only one between English and French nor only one between Quebec and the rest of Canada, but is one for all Canadians. It is a quest for a national identity that includes Canadians of all backgrounds.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, as you know, we can only build a strong united country if we do it together, a country that acknowledges that every person, whatever his ethnic origin, race or sex, is entitled to a good quality of life.

* * *

[*English*]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, the throne speech made reference to changes the government is considering to give more independence and freedom to members of Parliament.

While this is being planned, I would like to let the government know what changes the member for Halton—Peel would like to see. The member would like to have more free votes in the House of Commons so the views of his constituents could be well represented. The member would like to have parliamentary committees empowered so that the government is under some obligation to act on all-party committee reports and recommendations.

The member for Halton—Peel would like to see more checks and balances with respect to cabinet appointments. They should be reviewed by members of Parliament sitting on committees. This member wants parliamentary reform with new mechanisms for public involvement and participation. This member never again wants his vote in the House of Commons wiped out, annulled by the vote of unelected and unaccountable senators.

The people want change. The government has indicated it is ready to listen and act. Freer MPs, Mr. Speaker, will make for freer Canadians.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, as soon as the new gun control bill was tabled in Parliament, the gun lobbies started their usual propaganda that the new bill will not reduce violent crime, but only interfere with legitimate gun owners.

This is total nonsense and it is the nonsense that has been repeated by the gun lobby every time we attempt to tighten our gun laws. As a matter of fact, each time we tightened our gun laws, the rate of crime with guns declined. Countries with stricter gun control have lower rates of crime with guns. In the United States, 70 per cent of homicides are committed with guns.

In Canada, due to stricter laws, only 30 per cent of homicides are committed with guns.

In the United States, the homicide rate is 10 per 100,000; in Canada, it is 2.2 per 100,000. While this bill on gun control is not perfect, there is no doubt that it will make it more difficult for irresponsible and dangerous persons to obtain and use guns.

This bill should be supported and, if possible, strengthened.

* * *

[*Translation*]

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, after statements by some federal members of the Liberal party and members of the Bloc québécois, especially those from large urban areas who know nothing about regional development programs in Quebec's resource regions, I have a few comments to make.

Today, these opposition members are upset by the federal government's decision and especially by the effective work being done by the minister and member for Roberval, the hon. Benoît Bouchard, They should read the article by Gilles Normand, published in *La Presse* on May 31. Mr. Bouchard simply implemented an administrative change which does not in any way affect funding procedures, but will make it easier for companies to have access to the program, and Quebecers will benefit, all of which will be done in co-operation with the Government of Quebec.

I would urge those federal members to come to Abitibi—Témiscamingue today and tell residents that federal participation and co-operation with their communities has been cut off. Mr. Speaker, they will get a warm welcome!

* * *

[*English*]

CHINA

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, in China it is almost June 4. Two years ago began one of the most horrific incidents of bloody, violent massacres by a government against its own people.

The scene was Beijing's Tiananmen Square, and overnight the Chinese government chose to end a peaceful youth protest by opening tank and machine gun fire upon the crowd of pro-democracy demonstrators.

What were the youth asking? Freedom from totalitarianism through political reform, more opportunity and personal dignity. In return, they were murdered. Some survivors of that horrible night have subsequently been executed, incarcerated or, at the very minimum, stripped of basic human rights and dignity.

The repression continues. On the second anniversary of this massacre, I encourage the Secretary of State for External Affairs to take a look today at Canada's policy on China. Let us not follow the lead of the United States' by giving China most-favoured nation status.

The Canadian government has not followed through on its initial bold policy, and has changed little in Canada's relationship with the Government of China since the Tiananmen Square incident.

We must reaffirm our own commitment to democracy and freedom by standing with the Chinese people as they aspire to a way of life that Canadians take for granted.

* * *

CHILDREN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Walter Van De Walle (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, environmental degradation is killing children. According to the 1990 United Nations state of the environment report on children and the environment, every year 14 million children under the age of five die in the developing countries as a result of unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation, environmental pollution, common diseases and malnutrition. A further 3 million are seriously disabled.

In the industrialized countries, the main environmental source of death and disability among children is exposure to various forms of pollution and hazardous chemicals in the environment. Even the unborn are affected by chemicals in the air and toxic substances taken in through the mother's body.

As adults working together with the government and industry, we have both an opportunity and a responsibility to take advantage of current knowledge, technology and resources to improve the well-being of the world's children and the planet itself before it is too late.

Planet earth must be made a safe home for future generations.

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Ethnocultural Council met with members of Parliament to discuss their concerns for the future of Canada and the right of ethnocultural minorities to be directly represented in the process of constitutional reform.

National unity requires an affirmation that all Canadians from diverse backgrounds are equal in a multicultural, multiracial Canada.

New Democrats support the CEC in its request for a representative constituent assembly and the addition of a strong Canada clause to our Constitution.

We also must actively counteract racism in Canada. Public education on the values of immigration and more positive media race relations are a first step. Employment equity must be mandatory. We need increased funding, especially in western Canada for English language programs. There must be amnesty for refugee claimants who have waited years in the backlog.

The many issues raised today prove once again how essential advocacy groups like CEC are to make our democracy work for all Canadians.

* * *

• (1410)

PLEASANT VIEW JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, students at Pleasant View Junior High School in Don Valley North, North York, are taking an impressive leadership role in ensuring that citizens today and tomorrow will have a healthy planet. This Thursday, June 6, they will be having a conference to spread their message to their elected representatives and children and parents in the Pleasant View family of schools.

Since 1989 they have a long list of projects they have accomplished, including recycling in various ways and composting of waste. The one thing I particularly like is an environmental assessment of every student's home, followed by a letter to Mom and Dad advocating a family meeting. This meeting resulted in a family action plan to improve relations with the planet.

They are also looking internationally. They have bought 25 acres of rain forest through the World Wildlife Fund and have purchased shares in the World Wildlife Fund's endowment program.

Congratulations on your leadership, Pleasant View students. Together we can have a green world.

* * *

NATIONAL PEOPLE FIRST

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Last week was National Access Awareness Week, a time when this government should have been sending out positive

messages of support to the disabled community. Actions, however, always speak louder than words.

The National People First project is a voice for developmentally handicapped people in this country. It is a self-help organization dedicated to the empowerment of developmentally handicapped persons to protect themselves against abuse and to assert their rights in the event that they have been abused.

National People First was funded by the Department of National Health and Welfare for six years, from 1984 to 1990. This funding has not been renewed for 1991 and the future of this movement looks bleak.

I call on the Minister of National Health and Welfare to live up to this government's commitment to support abuse prevention programs. I urge this government to allocate funds to this unique and invaluable organization so that the progress it has made will not be tragically lost.

* * *

FRASER RIVER

Mr. Dave Worthy (Cariboo—Chilcotin): Mr. Speaker, as one of the many British Columbians who live and work in the Fraser River watershed, I would like to commend the government for its $100 million commitment toward the cleanup of the Fraser. The Fraser is so much more than just a large river. It has become a barometer reflecting the state of British Columbia's environmental health.

This program, announced over the weekend, will be directed toward such high priorities as restored salmon populations, protection and restoration of fish and wildlife habitat, as well as monitoring and improvement of water quality.

The Fraser River is important to many British Columbians and they will recognize the significance of this initiative. But these same people are equally important to the health of the Fraser for it is their ideas and help that will ensure the effective and successful implementation of this plan to restore the Fraser River to its former greatness.

1991 CITATION FOR CITIZENSHIP AWARDS

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, to be a citizen of Canada, whether by birth or by choice, involves the unwritten responsibility to contribute to the betterment of this country. Our society values freedom and participation and respects those who are willing to accept the responsibility of contributing.

Today, the 1991 Citation for Citizenship awards are being presented to 21 individuals and four organizations whose contributions to Canada merit national recognition. These people have given their time and energy to making Canada a better place in which to live. From health care to human rights, from education to multiculturalism, every aspect of our society has been touched in some way by these dedicated Canadians.

I am sure that I can speak for all members in this House when I express our congratulations to the people and organizations honoured today. A citation for citizenship is a symbol of the gratitude that we feel toward these people and others like them all across Canada.

* * *

THUNDER BAY—ATIKOKAN

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, this was one of those "good news, bad news" weekends in north-western Ontario. First, the good news: Thanks to the efforts of the Ontario NDP government in securing a strictly commercial solution to the shut down of Atikokan Forest Products sawmill, we were able to announce the mill's reopening and, in fact, some workers started today and the rest of the 160 will be due next week.

Thanks, Ontario.

In Thunder Bay, the news was not as good. Abitibi Price arbitrarily closed its Thunder Bay paper mill for two years, putting 400 people out of work directly, with considerably more out of work indirectly. Both the Sapawe sawmill and the Thunder Bay paper mill suffer from the same federal government policies, softwood lumber tax, high Canadian dollar and high interest rates.

The federal Conservative government did not help Atikokan during its crisis. Will it help Thunder Bay? It better help.

* * *

RAOUL WALLENBERG

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I remind all Canadians that the search for Raoul Wallenberg, one of Canada's two honorary citizens, goes on. This Swedish diplomat who disappeared in Hungary in 1945 saved as many as 20,000 Jews from Nazi death camps. Even though the Russians reported he died in 1947, Montreal lawyer Irwin Cotler of the International Commission searching for Wallenberg and members of the Wallenberg family itself still say there is no proof that he is dead.

Now highly supportive evidence says the Soviets offered to exchange Wallenberg for a Soviet spy jailed in Sweden in 1968, two decades after claiming he was dead. This only adds to reports of Wallenberg sightings in Soviet prisons in the 1980s and so we certainly hope that *glasnost* prevails as the search for clues in KGB files continues.

Luckily heroic efforts like Raoul Wallenberg's are remembered in the hearts of many for generations. I call on the Secretary of State for External Affairs to strongly urge Soviet co-operation in the search for Canada's honorary citizen whom we all admire.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

TAXATION

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we are delighted to see the Prime Minister is back in the House. Canadians will now be able to rest easier, and let's hope he will stay in the country from now on.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. On Thursday of last week, the Minister of National Revenue said that the government has gone "too far", that Canadians are over-taxed and that the federal government should do something about it. On Friday, the Minister of Finance said Canadians are not over-taxed and so the government is not planning to do anything about it.

I ask the Prime Minister which minister is speaking for Canada on this issue, the Minister of National Revenue, who is right, or the Minister of Finance, who is wrong?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I guess I should start off by saying that nobody likes to pay taxes, but we must have taxes in this country to pay for the services that we all enjoy from being Canadians and living in this great country of ours.

If you compare Canada's taxes with those in the OECD, we are on average with them. Canada's tax burden today is about the same as it was in the early 1980s when the hon. Leader of the Opposition was the Minister of Finance. The tax burden is *vis-à-vis* the same for the taxpayers of this country. Personal and corporate income taxes are higher in Canada than on the OECD-wide basis. We will concede to that, but I can tell him that social security contributions by Canadians are less than half as burdensome in Canada than in other countries in the OECD.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, the third Minister of Finance, or whatever he is, likes to compare Canada with other industrialized countries.

Today a study by Global Economics shows that taxes on individuals are higher in Canada than in any G-7 country. More than $1,500 in new taxex have been slapped on Canadian families since this government took office. The study concluded that today the system is more complicated than ever and less fair than ever.

When will the Prime Minister take the advice of his Minister of National Revenue and do something about it?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is right when he talks about personal income taxes.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. McDermid: They are higher in Canada than in other countries in the OECD. Let us just take a look at some of the other things that are lower in Canada than the other countries, which he fails to talk about. Social security contributions are less than half of what they are in the OECD and sales tax is considerably lower in

Canada than in other countries in the OECD. Taxes have to be paid to pay the bills.

• (1420)

The hon. member may remember very well, because he was one of the ministers of finance who rang up huge deficits. We now have to pay the bills for those deficits and we have to do it through taxes. That is the only way we will be able to do it, plus cost cutting in the federal government, which we have done a very good job at.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, for the minister's information, I had the privilege of bringing down two budgets during the only period in the past 20 years, excluding inflation, when there was no increase in government spending and when in fact, we managed to reduce the deficit.

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. Canadian families are not the only ones to suffer as a result of this government's unfair and complex tax policies. Today we heard that public and private libraries will have to reduce their purchases of books, periodicals and newspapers by about 10 per cent annually, because of the GST.

I therefore want to ask the Prime Minister: Doesn't he realize that Canadians must read books, periodicals and newspapers to be competitive and aware of what goes on in the world? Why promote ignorance by taxing knowledge?

[*English*]

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that that is not the case. Maybe I should explain the situation with libraries. Libraries pay GST, but they get rebates. If the library is owned by a municipality, it gets a 57 per cent rebate; if by a university, 67 per cent; and by schools, 68 per cent which, by the way, keeps them at exactly the same tax level they were under the manufacturers' sales tax. There is absolutely no change in tax levels for libraries, so the Leader of the Opposition is absolutely wrong.

[*Translation*]

TRADE

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister and concerns Canada-Mexico free trade.

Last Thursday, his minister for International Trade said, and I quote: "Canadian companies shouldn't even try to compete in the same areas as low-wage countries".

Mr. Speaker, how can we do otherwise, when all this government's policies are leading us straight towards a Third World economy: crushing interest rates and taxes and a high dollar, plus cuts in research and development? That is the kind of economic policy that will strangle us.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is this: What specific measures does the government intend to introduce and when, to prepare us for free trade with Mexico, something his government wants so desperately?

[*English*]

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, we should probably put this in perspective. Our free trade agreement with the United States involves some $257 billion to $260 billion. We are talking about two-way trade with Mexico of $3 billion or $4 billion now. Most of the trade coming into Canada from Mexico today is tariff free.

What is happening is that Mexico is opening up its borders and it is giving Canadian businesses new opportunities to get into Mexico to sell their goods and services there. That is what we are interested in, creating more jobs in Canada through sales to other countries, and Mexico is no exception.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, this government is as thick as a brick. What the Minister for International Trade said was very clearly that we should not try to compete with Mexico in areas where Mexico produces products. Well, Mr. Speaker, from cars to computers, Mexico is already exporting fully integrated modern technology, and at the same time this government is allowing our manufacturing base to die.

The issue very clearly is not whether our modern economy can compete with Mexico's Third World economy, as the minister said last week.

The real question, and I put it to the Prime Minister is that, given the suicidal bent of his government's policies, which country, Canada or Mexico, is ultimately going to be the Third World economy?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): The hon. member should know full well the results of the free trade agreement, and what has happened since it has come in, that are positive for Canada.

Pre-free trade in investment alone, there was an out-flow of $2.5 billion in 1988. In 1990, there was an in-flow of investment in Canada of $4.3 billion, which means increased investment in this country, increased employment, modernization of industrial plants, better productivity and more jobs in the long run for Canadians. That is what it is all about.

* * *

TAXATION

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Last week we learned from the Minister of National Revenue—not that most of us had to learn it—that Canadians were unfairly taxed. Not only are they unfairly taxed, Canadians are over-taxed. When the Liberals were in power, of course, taxes on working Canadians increased and on corporations went down.

A new study indicates today that in fact this government has continued that system of taxation, and there is no question that the tax system is a mess. The tax system is unfair. The government in 1987, under the Minister of Finance, said it had three principles for taxpayers: equity, efficiency and simplicity. We do not have any of them.

Will the Prime Minister consider implementing a fair tax commission so that we can get public input and the experts' input and get a fair tax system in Canada.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the leader of the socialist party of Canada that if she took a look at the countries that we trade with and that we deal with, she would see there is a socialist government in France and its tax burden is 44 per cent. Canada's is 34 per cent.

There is a socialist government in Sweden. Its tax burden on its citizens is 55 per cent; Canada's is 34 per cent. We can compare it with other countries. Germany is 37 per cent; I will remind the hon. member that Canada's is 34 per cent. The United Kingdom is 37 per cent; Canada's is 34 per cent. The only two that are lower are the United States at 29.8 per cent, and Japan at 31.3 per cent.

Canadians are paying taxes, yes; fairly, fairly.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, for the Prime Minister.

Clearly, the Minister of National Revenue is saying the system is not fair and that Canadians are over-taxed. Canadians knew that. It is clear that the per capita Canada personal income tax rate is the highest of all G-7 countries.

The Prime Minister talks about competitiveness. Again, in 1987 this government said that the tax system should have a broader base and lower rates and that it should minimize the preferences to high income individuals and profitable corporations.

When is the government going to take its own advice from 1987, the advice of the Minister of National Revenue in 1991, bring in a fair tax system, and implement a fair tax commission?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): As the hon. member might know, in 1987 tax reform was brought about here in Canada by the Minister of Finance to improve the tax system, and has in fact made it more fair. Let me just point out that in corporate taxes alone, it is a much fairer, much simpler system and corporations today are paying $1 billion more in taxes than they were before tax reform because a lot of the write-offs have been taken out of there.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): A supplementary for the Prime Minister, on the question of competitiveness.

[*Translation*]

This government's financial and economic policies are responsible for the declining competitive position of

Canadian businesses, according to a report by a committee of the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology.

The same report recommended creating a financial institution for businesses involved in technology. The government has had this report for more than three months.

Is the government prepared to act and implement some of the recommendations of this report on competitiveness?

• (1430)

[*English*]

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, the work of the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology has made a significant contribution to the whole concept of what is needed to make the country competitive.

We have the NABST reports and it is significant that if you look in the Speech from the Throne, the whole concept of an agenda for prosperity and consultation with Canadians is based, to a large extent, upon what NABST said, not only about the cost of capital, but about other things as well.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister will now know that the government has provided several different versions of what happened in the Al-Mashat case.

On May 15 the Prime Minister told the House that he first became aware of this matter on April 30. We now know that senior officials in his office were informed on April 8, three weeks before the Prime Minister says he found out.

Is the Prime Minister in a position to revise his original version of what happened, or is he really trying to have Canadians believe that senior officials—

Mr. Speaker: There is a very fine line that has to be kept in mind in questions on this matter, especially now that it is in committee. I would ask hon. members not to put in preambles or at the end of preambles, suggestions of dishonesty, impropriety or imputation of motives.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago when the matter was raised, I provided the House with the information which is on the record. It will be sustained by evidence before the committee, which I understand began hearings last week.

I understand as well, that the committee is scheduled to take evidence this evening and tomorrow. Among those appearing before the committee will be the Clerk of the Privy Council and my chief of staff, who will deal with these matters, I am sure, to the satisfaction of my hon. friend.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the committee will not be in a position to question the Prime Minister.

I would like to put a supplementary to the Prime Minister. Public documents indicate that on April 8 his legislative assistant and his deputy press secretary were informed of this matter.

On May 15 the Prime Minister said in this House that he did not find out until April 30. That is some three weeks.

I put the question again to the Prime Minister. Is he saying to Canadians—

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment. The hon. member can ask the Prime Minister whether he did or whether he did not know something. But that question is clearly designed to put in doubt the honesty of the Prime Minister. If it was put in plain language it would not be allowed. It ought not to be allowed if it is put in very careful language, if that is what the imputation is.

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister will now have had the opportunity to review the record again. The record that was made public last week, indicates that senior officials in his office were informed on April 8.

In view of the release of this new information, does the Prime Minister still maintain that he was first informed of this matter three weeks after senior officials in his office were told?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to add to what I have already indicated to the House. I have told my hon. friend that will be totally sustained by evidence before the committee.

Mr. Simmons: Or they will be fired, right?

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Mr. Mulroney: Senior officials will be there this evening and tomorrow. My hon. friend can, I am sure, ask them any and all questions in regard to any concerns he may or may not have. I am sure he will be well satisfied with the responses.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Prime Minister.

Last Thursday the minister of external affairs stated in a public document that ministers, "—are constitutionally responsible to the House of Commons for their actions and the actions of their officials". She also said that officials include staff and political appointees, as well as bureaucrats.

The question is simple. Will the Prime Minister agree that his minister's statement is a correct summary of the principle of ministerial responsibility and will he further agree that the principle applies equally to him as the highest minister in Canada?

Mr. Speaker: I have some difficulty with the question. It may be asking for an opinion, but the right hon. Prime Minister might want to deal with it.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have no problem in responding to my hon. friend.

Members from all sides of the House requested, given the nature of this matter, that a parliamentary inquiry be convened. That presupposes presumably that my hon. friend will want to participate in that parliamentary inquiry, adduce evidence in a conventional manner and on the basis of that evidence, and only on the basis of it, make his own value judgment. Then he may or may not want to put questions like that.

Why does he not wait until the parliamentary inquiry that he sought does its work?

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I was talking about ministerial responsibility and had not mentioned anything about any particular committee of this House. In any event, my supplementary is this.

In version B of the Al-Mashat saga we learn that Mr. Paul Tellier, Clerk of the Privy Council, sent a memo to the Prime Minister on April 30 indicating that ministers Valcourt and McDougall would respond to questions that Mr. Al-Mashat "was processed under normal standards and was not accorded preferential treatment". We know that this was false because he was fast-tracked in 28 days.

My question is again simple. Will the Prime Minister assume responsibility for this blatant falsehood and what is he prepared to do about his ministers being—

Mr. Speaker: Just a minute. That is as much an accusation as it is a question and the matter is in front of committee.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I must respond on behalf of Mr. Tellier, given the very malicious slur on his reputation by the hon. member. Mr. Tellier will be before the committee tomorrow, I believe, and will provide, I am sure, answers that are full and honest, that inspired the confidence of the Leader of the Opposition when Mr. Tellier was his deputy minister in Indian Affairs in much the same way that he inspires the full confidence of me as Prime Minister of Canada.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister of health. I understand that the minister has invited the provincial ministers of health to a meeting in Toronto on June 19.

Can the minister say whether all provinces will be attending and most importantly, will he reassure this House that the meeting is not linked to the current round of constitutional bargaining and that the federal jurisdiction in maintaining national medicare standards will not be on the table and will not be bargained away?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I will not deal with the hypothesis that the member has raised. First of all, I just want to say that I am not the one who makes the decision if the provinces will attend. They will do that themselves.

Second, I think my friend knows, because I told him personally, that I believe it is time for the federal minister of health to meet with the ministers from the provinces. At that time we will see exactly the concerns that the provinces have in terms of health. I do not want to presume what they will bring forward. Personally, I

believe the meeting will be the time to do that. I believe that all the provinces will agree.

Will they be there? You should ask that question of the provinces.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the same minister. In his letter of Friday to the provincial ministers, the minister speaks of the need to discuss cost containment on the one hand and service expansion on the other.

How can the minister speak of service expansion when he has cut billions of dollars to medicare programs? Can the minister assure this House that as a cost containment measure, he will insist that no province violates the Canada Health Act by introducing user fees, a move that is now being initiated by the Liberal government of Quebec?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the member should wait first of all to see what the province of Quebec will do.

• (1440)

The legislation is not passed yet. We will see.

Second, there is nothing wrong in looking at with the provinces the problem of the cost of services in Canada. All provinces agree that the costs are increasing. Usually we do not have all the same resources that the NDP have, but normally the provinces will say to my friend that they want to look at the way they could manage those services, keeping in mind—and I already committed myself—that the principles of accessibility and universality of the Canada Health Act are not at stake. He should know that because I already said that.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and it concerns the dockside monitoring program being imposed on fishermen in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

I have sent the minister a report which demonstrates that the user fee portion of this program is without legislative basis and, as such, these fees are illegal. In light of this information, will the minister today rescind these dockside fees and reimburse those fishermen who have been illegally and improperly forced to pay them.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, we all know that lawyers have differing opinions. If that was not the case, I suppose we would never have court cases occurring at all.

The legal advice given to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is that the system in place is certainly not illegal or *ultra vires*. Apparently the hon. gentleman refers to another lawyer who believes that it is. However, I am acting in accordance with the legal advice given to me by the solicitors for the government.

With respect to this system, it is not a system imposed on fishermen, Mr. Speaker. It is a system that fishermen and fish processors and others who want an orderly fishery, a fishery where the rules are observed and obeyed, want instituted. This is a method of paying for that system which is for the benefit of all fishermen and women and processors in the industry generally and, therefore, the costs of it had to be met by the industry generally.

I am certainly prepared, of course, to keep revising it so as it is competitive and efficient as possible and as fair as possible.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): My supplementary is for the same minister. I find it surprising to say the least that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans would not have secured a legal opinion before imposing a program that is so clearly out of his authority.

Will the minister undertake today to, first, make public his department's legal analysis of this issue and, second, rescind these offensive fees and reimburse the fishermen affected if, as I fully expect, the analysis confirms their illegality?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, naturally the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans received legal advise in this matter before the program was instituted and acted in accordance with the same.

That is not to say that the solicitors acting for the government are perfect. They have in fact from time to time been found to be incorrect in their opinions, or courts have held differently than the opinions which the government received. If that were not the case, we would

not have some of the embarrassments that governments, no matter what their political stripe are, receive from time to time when judges have a different view than government lawyers.

I notice from the opinion that was done that the hon. member refers to that the author of that opinion said this: "It is my view that a court could very well find that the imposition of fees" and so on. Well, a court might very well find anything. I have been terribly surprised by what courts could very well find in the past and, doubtless, I will be very surprised by what they find in the future.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of the Environment, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

We learned today from the National Aeronautics Space Agency that the ozone layer in southern Canada has thinned by 5 per cent. The medical profession is of the view that every percentage decrease in the ozone layer leads to an increase of 3 to 4 per cent in the incidence of skin cancer. Therefore, this becomes a matter of urgent public concern.

Will the minister indicate in the House whether he is willing to commit himself today to the deadline of 1995 for the date when chlorofluorocarbons and similar chemical substances will be fully phased out in Canada?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have this opportunity to say, first of all, that this government is, and has been for many years, very concerned with the issue of CFC emissions and their impact on the ozone layer, as the hon. member has just expressed.

I am very proud of the fact that this government has displayed a greater amount of leadership on this issues than many other countries in the world. In fact, as you know, the Montreal protocol talks in terms of the total elimination of the manufacture and import of CFCs by the year 2000. I am delighted that this government has already made a commitment to do that by the year 1997.

We have shown leadership in the past and we will continue to do so now and in the future. I am also pleased to say that almost 85 per cent, I believe, of the use of CFCs will be prohibited in this country by the year 1995.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the concept of leadership is only in the mind of the parliamentary secretary and his government.

Australia, Norway, Sweden and Germany have committed themselves to 1995. The question is this. Because the health of the public, and particularly of our younger people, is at stake as a result of the thinning of the ozone layer, will this government reconsider its deadline and move it from 1997 to 1995?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the sincerity with which the member approaches the issue of the environment. I am reminded that this member was a Minister of the Environment in a former government.

I am very proud of the fact that we have made tremendous accomplishments since we came to power because that administration was not doing so in the years up to 1984.

As I explained before, this is very much a moving issue. The government believes that any new targets that are put in place will have to be done in co-operation with other governments throughout the world. In the meantime, we are a leader despite what the hon. member has just said.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

On May 16, the Federal Court of Canada ruled that the Alcan project in northern British Columbia should be submitted to a full environmental assessment review. This is Environment Week. Will the government announce a full environmental assessment of this project?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted the hon. gentleman has given me a chance to recommend to members of the House that they look at the details of the

program just announced for the Fraser River on Saturday by the Minister of the Environment and I, where $100 million is going to be spent on the Fraser River to ensure that over the next 20 years salmon stocks are doubled in their size and that the environmental and pollution problems of the whole Fraser River system are dealt with in a more than adequate manner.

With respect to the particular question he has asked about, that matter is under review by the three or four departments intimately concerned and an announcement will be made within a reasonable time as to what action we propose to take.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that the plans for the Fraser River are incomplete without the full environmental assessment of the Alcan project.

Alcan has said that it is business as usual and that construction on the project is continuing. In order to avoid a Rafferty situation, will the minister issue an order today to Alcan to immediately halt construction? Will the minister see that the Government of British Columbia also participates in a full environmental assessment review?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, the matter that the hon. gentleman refers to certainly had an environmental review before any permission was given for Alcan to proceed with construction at all.

The question is whether or not it should have the kind of an environmental review that is dictated by the EARP process. That is the question that is now before the government as a result of the decision referred to the British Columbia courts. It is being given serious consideration and a decision will certainly be announced within a reasonable period of time as to whether or not we wish to go forward with that kind of a formal review. There certainly has been a great deal of review of this situation before.

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister, in the absence of the Minister of Finance, if he is a aware of this. In a press conference held in Montreal last Friday, the Quebec Manufacturers' Association has joined forces with the CNTU and the FTQ to denounce the federal government monetary policy, including the negative impact of the Free Trade Agreement. Is the government prepared today to consider the important demands of these three major organizations to allow the manufacturing industry to survive in Quebec and throughout Canada?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member that, commenting before a committee of this House, on a proposal made by the hon. member's party to change the monetary policy, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association cautioned the Canadian people against reverting to the previous Liberal policy which gave us the extremely high interest rates that caused major problems in Canada and that we are only starting to recover from.

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. After opening our borders under the Free Trade Agreement, why is the government monetary policy to maintain the Canadian dollar too high relative to the American dollar, which reduces our access to the American market? Can you explain that to the Canadian people?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, the economic situation, especially the recession, of course has not been very favourable to implementing the Free Trade Agreement to the fullest. Nonetheless, I think that we should be happy that a country like ours, which depends more than any other on its exports not for little extras but to maintain its standard of living, has gained access to the American market. The economic situation may not be as great as it has been, but let me remind the

hon. member the figures that were quoted in this House last week to illustrate the progress we have made in our trade relations with the United States since the Free Trade Agreement was signed.

* * *

[*English*]

PORT OF HALIFAX

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, another week has passed and there is still no help from this government for the port of Halifax.

I appeal to the Prime Minister. Why will he not go after his Minister of Transport and make him make good on his promise of last week when he said he would do everything in his power for the port of Halifax and act to change the unfair tax structure?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, incredibly the Minister of Transport is away on government business. I will certainly take the representation of my hon. colleague and relay it to the Minister of Transport who, no doubt, in his usual efficient fashion will be right back as soon as he is able.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I am really delighted to see that this government has such an interest in the ports on the east coast, particularly the port of Halifax. There is nobody on the government side who can give me an answer.

Freight rates have become a rallying cry in eastern Canada, a cry for thousands of Nova Scotians concerned over our historic port.

Why will this government not do something about unfair competition, particularly Canadian Pacific's Delaware and Hartford Railroad in the U.S., which is the main competition against CN's link from Halifax to Montreal. Doesn't anybody over there know?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I do not think there has been anything but acknowledgement of how important the port of Halifax is to Canada's future.

As the hon. member said, it was just last week—I think Thursday—that she raised the question. She is saying: "How come in the last three days there has not been something done about it?"

The fact of the matter is the Minister of Transport is seized with the problem. The hon. member has made a representation. She did ask for information and I indicated I would pass on that representation to the Minister of Transport. You can be sure that as was attempted by the current Deputy Prime Minister when he was Minister of Transport, we will continue to make every effort, in spite of some opposition from the hon. member's party, to get a level playing field of the type we sought but which was resisted by the Liberal Party when we tried to do it.

* * *

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister of Finance. When the GST was being drafted, the government said it would be a flexible living tax which adapts itself to changing conditions.

There are real concerns right now as to how the tax applies to the sale of used cars. GST is applicable to the sale of used cars on dealers' lots but not on cars sold privately and that appears to be a real disadvantage for used car dealers.

Can the minister clarify for the House and for consumers exactly how the GST applies to the sale of used cars? Are dealers being put at a competitive disadvantage and, if so, what is the government going to do about it?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, unlike the provincial sales tax in Ontario where they tax the car every time it is sold, the federal sales tax only applies to the mark-up between the price that the used car dealer paid and the price he sells it for. GST is paid only on the service of the used car dealer.

It is interesting to note that before the goods and services tax, about 75 per cent of all used cars were sold privately. That has not changed dramatically since GST has come in.

* * *

EDUCATION

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of immigration. As he knows, the meeting this morning with the Canadian Ethnocultural Council confirmed many concerns of

ethnic minorities. Some of these involved immigration, of course.

Since racism is on the increase and this often results in the scapegoating of immigrants, what plans does the minister have for comprehensive public education programs on the benefits of immigration that will help people be more accepting and counteract their fears and prejudices?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises a point that the Ethnocultural Council raised with me earlier today. The hon. member will remember that my predecessor brought in the five-year plan for immigration. Given the importance that this government attaches to public education on the question of immigration, it has been fully integrated into the plan. We are in the process of consulting with organizations across Canada, with provinces and with people to put in place this education campaign which the hon. member refers to. Over $8 million will be spent to try to raise the level of awareness to the benefits of immigration.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, another problem is that many immigrants simply are not getting adequate language training which is essential if they are going to adjust and contribute to Canada. This is largely because federal funds simply are not adequate. For example, Vancouver City College, in my riding, laid off 80 experienced language training teachers recently while they have a waiting list for 4,000 people. This is because they simply do not have funds.

Will the minister be increasing the amount of funding for language training? Will he find a fairer funding mechanism so that in particular western Canada will get their fair share of funds, and will he also look into this specific problem that I mentioned in Vancouver?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, recognizing the importance of language training and of integration of immigrants in our communities in Canada, the government has increased, as she may recall, the envelope to immigration by $315 million over the life of that plan.

She asks how that money will be divided up. It will be divided in accordance with the needs in the country and the region of B.C. I know will get increased funding for language training. As for the particular case of her own riding, I will look into it and get back to her.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC'S REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

He must know that during his absence, members of his government made a number of statements and acted in a way calculated to provoke Quebec. The National Assembly went so far as to pass a resolution with 85 in favour and 3 against, condemning the government for its action with respect to education, and it wanted to table another resolution to condemn the government again.

Meanwhile, always in the absence of the Prime Minister, the Minister of National Health and Welfare appropriated the right to intervene unilaterally in the field of regional economic development, thus denying Quebec the right to be master of its own development.

My question for the Prime Minister is this: Since he is back, will he stop all this foolishness, rap the knuckles of his Minister of National Health and Welfare and finally show Quebec some respect?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I will ignore the hon. member's comments. Everybody knows that if he were given the same treatment, he wouldn't last very long in this House.

That being said, I repeat what I said last week, which is that the federal government—and the hon. member for Shefford ought to know, since his party was once on this side of the House—and the provinces have always shared jurisdiction over regional development. Agreements were signed with the Government of Quebec in 1985 and 1988.

We operate within the framework of these agreements, and the responsibility I was given by the Prime Minister for regional development means that I must have the appropriate administrative structure. I can only confirm what I said last week, what I have repeated time and time again and what the people of Gaspe, for instance, were very relieved to hear, and that is that as long as the federal government has a responsibility for regional development, it will continue to shoulder its

share of those responsibilities, for the benefit of Quebec and Quebecers.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

• (1500)

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order I would like to formally designate tomorrow an allotted day for Supply.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 36(8) of the Standing Orders, I have the honour to table in both official languages, the government's response to 47 petitions presented during the Second Session.

* * *

[*Translation*]

POSTAL SERVICES REVIEW ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-217, an Act to provide for the review of postal rates and services and to implement certain Acts in consequence thereof.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to give the public the assurance that it plays a role in setting postal rates and establishing postal services. I may add, Mr. Speaker, that we had a similar system before, which was abolished by the government opposite.

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

[*English*]

NATIONAL CAPITAL ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-218, an act to amend the National Capital Act (description of National Capital Region).

He said: Mr. Speaker the purpose of this bill is to amend the territory of the National Capital Region easterly from Ottawa to a distance approximately as far as it extends west of Ottawa, namely to the region of Plantagenet, Ontario. This bill comes with the support of all municipalities in the area and the author of it locally was the mayor of Rockland, Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde.

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

* * *

HOLIDAYS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-219, an act to amend the Holidays Act (Canada Day).

He said: The purpose of this bill is to repeat a section of the Holidays Act which states that when July 1 is a Sunday, July 2 is the legal holiday. What happens now is that some federal civil servants, namely post office employees, if they regularly work on July 1, are not eligible for overtime while those who work on Monday, July 2, are. It is clearly not the intent of the Holidays Act and this bill is a technical amendment, the purpose of which is to restore Canada Day for post office employees.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-220, an act to amend the Criminal Code (abortion).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill is a conscience clause. It would make it a criminal offence for anyone to reprimand or to dismiss an employee of a hospital or a physician who refused to participate in an abortion if that is against their will. The purpose of this bill is to protect the conscience of individuals working in hospitals who do not want to participate in this kind of a procedure.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-221, an act to amend the Criminal Code (destruction of the foetus).

He said: The purpose of this bill is to make it an offence to destroy the foetus, save and except when the mother's life is threatened.

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

* * *

CANADA HEALTH ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-222, an act to amend the Canada Health Act (abortion).

• (1510)

He said: The purpose of this bill is to ensure that government funds are not expended for the procurement of abortions, save and except when the mother's life is in danger.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-223, an act to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda—age group).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to provide for a Criminal Code amendment respecting propaganda that advocates the physical destruction of persons as an identifiable group, particularly children.

This is the private member's bill that I proposed in the past to do away with a product known as *Garbage Pail Kids*, a most offensive product.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-224, an act to amend the Criminal Code (peeping Toms).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the present definition of a peeping Tom in the Criminal Code is someone who prowls in the dark upon someone else's property.

The purpose of this amendment is to make it unlawful to similarly prowl in the daylight. It has been brought to my attention by constituents, particularly women, that they were unable to have charges laid against peeping Toms when these individuals took part in those kind of unwanted activities in the daytime.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

BEVERAGE CONTAINERS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-225, an Act respecting beverage containers.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the bill I wish to introduce today is the same bill I introduced during this Parliament's last session.

[*English*]

The purpose of the bill is to require that all beverages sold in Canada, including alcoholic beverages, be sold in bottles upon which a deposit would be chargeable. The bill sets out the rate of deposit.

The bill would require that the deposit be charged by retailers upon sale and be refunded to a person returning the beverage container. It is clearly designed to clean up our environment and, accordingly, I hope it will commend itself to all environmentally minded members of this House.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

RURAL CANADA

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and privilege to present a petition to this House signed by several hundred people from 47 different communities in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick.

These people are protesting the systematic destruction of the infrastructure of rural Canada including cutbacks to VIA Rail, the abandonment of railways, neglect of the fisheries, forestry and agriculture, and the erosion of the postal system.

Therefore, these people call on the government to reverse these cutbacks, particularly to reverse its policy of closing rural post offices.

VIOLENT CRIMES

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting to the House today a number of petitions signed by some 4,000 people mainly from the area of Windsor, Ontario.

In these petitions the petitioners call upon Parliament to pass legislation establishing mandatory minimum sentences for all violent crimes which would apply uniformly to all regions of Canada.

These petitions have been duly certified by the clerk and meet the requirements for tabling in this House, pursuant to our Standing Orders.

RAIN FORESTS

Mr. René Soetens (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my pleasure to present this petition on behalf of over 100 very young constituents of my riding.

As most members of this House are aware, the world's rain forests are used to regulate climate, control floods and conserve soil. Of course, over half of the world's known species of plant and animal life also live within the rain forests as do some 200 million native people.

Therefore, the petitioners request that no Canadian foreign aid be dispersed to projects which destroy rain forests and that the Canadian executive directors of multilateral development banks vote against projects which destroy rain forests.

Further, be it resolved that Canada ban the import of tropical timber which is logged in primary tropical rain forests.

I humbly submit this petition on their behalf.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, my petition, which has been certified by the clerk to be in compliance with the standing orders, is on behalf a number of my constituents in Ottawa South who are expressing their concerns about the recent cuts to the budgets of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

In particular, my petitioners call upon Parliament to ensure that the CBC be strengthened rather than weakened to serve as a primary instrument of Canadian cultural sovereignty, providing high quality service to all Canadians.

I am proud to present this petition on their behalf.

PARENTAL LEAVE

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I too have the honour to present a petition signed by Canadians living in Parkdale—High Park.

The petitioners humbly sheweth that whereas Bill C-21 has reduced adoptive parental leave from 15 weeks to 10 weeks, it has at the same time increased biological parental leave to 25 weeks: 15 weeks maternity and 10 weeks parental leave.

Bill C-21 is a discriminatory step backward from previous legislation in 1983 when the House of Commons amended the UIC Act explicitly to end discrimination of adoptive parents and recognize the need of adoptive parents.

The petitioners call upon this government to review Bill C-21 with regard to adoptive parental leave, considering the literature that deals with the adoptive process, the bonding process, the needs and rights of adoptive parents, proper terminology in adoption and discussion

with adoptive parents and to change Bill C-21 so that all parents, whether biological or adoptive, receive the same paid leave of 25 weeks to spend time with their new children.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I have before me a petition certified by the clerk of petitions and signed by residents of Kenora, Keewatin, Upsala, Thunder Bay and Graham, Ontario.

All of the petitioners have lost their rail passenger services. They call upon Parliament to support the NDP plan to restore the VIA Rail service cut on January 15, 1990, to maintain and where appropriate upgrade remote services on which many Canadians rely, to provide a legislative mandate for VIA Rail and to make available to VIA the resources which it needs to become a modern, passenger rail system in a class with those throughout the rest of the western world.

In addition, the petitioners say they want to put Canada back on track.

CANADIAN FLAG

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition today signed by numerous residents of Kingston and the Islands who object to the fact that Canada has no law that makes it an offence to destroy or desecrate the Canadian flag.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to pass such a law.

• (1520)

TAXATION

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today signed primarily by residents from the Prince George, Vanderhoof and the Fort St. James area of my riding.

The petitioners call on the government to reform the taxation system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations. Certainly with the publication of the report on the weekend showing that Tory times are taxing times, I heartily endorse this petition.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition on behalf of a number of western Canadians who indicate that they support the New Democratic Party plan to restore VIA Rail service which was cut on January 15, 1990.

The petitioners want to maintain and where appropriate upgrade the remote services on which many Canadians rely. They want to provide a legislative mandate for VIA Rail and make available to VIA the resources which it needs to become a modern passenger rail system in a class with those throughout the rest of the western world.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

AIRPORT TRANSFER (MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS) ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Corbeil that Bill C-15, an act to provide for certain matters respecting official languages, employees' pensions and labour relationships in connection with the transfer of certain airports, as reported without amendment by a legislative committee, be read the third time and passed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, we are at the—

[*English*]

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, just prior to the start of Question Period, if I am not mistaken, one of the hon. members from Hamilton had finished his speech. Some of us had certainly hoped to be able to ask questions of this member. He does not seem to be here at the moment, but—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. As the hon. member for Hamilton West is not in the house there will be no question or comment period. We will resume debate with the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, on that same point, I take it that members of the House accept that we all have duties in committees and the member for Hamilton West is possibly preoccupied with his duties on committees. We sometimes fail to make that point in debate.

We are dealing with third reading of Bill C-15 and, more specifically, with an amendment put to the House by my colleague for Thunder Bay—Nipigon, Mr. Joe Comuzzi. The amendment in question is rather complicated so I will just address the amendment, as we should all do, and try to be relevant to the subject matter before us.

The purpose of the amendment is to delete from Bill C-15 any words which give the idea or the impression that the government intends to sell these airports either to meet with a hidden agenda of privatizing just about everything it can get its hands on, or to eventually privatize a national service that is and has been traditionally very useful and appreciated by Canadians.

In the bill we will find the word "sell" for example in the interpretation and application on page 1:

> (2) For the purpose of this Act, the Governor in Council may, by order,
>
> (a) designate any corporation or other body to which the Minister is to sell, lease or otherwise transfer an airport—

If one looks on the next page, page 2, the word "sell" appears again:

> —the minister is to sell, lease or otherwise transfer an airport to a designated airport authority as the transfer date for that airport.

All through that bill there are the words "sell" or "sold". Section 4, page 2 says: "Where the minister has sold, leased or otherwise transferred an airport—"

We want to clarify the bill. This is the purpose of the amendment. The Liberal caucus opposes the privatization by sale of Canadian airports. However, and we made this clear in debate, we support the initiatives to transfer the administration and management of airports to local authorities under certain conditions. In no way will we support a bill that sells airports. I think we made that point clear in committee. We asked the minister if he had a hidden agenda and if he had any intentions of selling these airports. He did not answer the questions.

An hon. member: No.

Mr. Gauthier: I hear a member on the government side say "no". If that is the case then take the word "sell" out of the bill. It is very simple. Take the word "sell" out of the bill and you will have a clear and concise bill.

Is the government trying to deceive Canadians once more with its obsession with privatization?

I would maintain that to keep the word "sell" in that bill is two faced and less than honest. If it has no intentions to do it then it should be taken out. It seems quite simple. I would hope that government members who are here today supporting the contention that the government does not intend to sell these airports would have the honesty to stand up in their places and vote for this amendment because that is all the amendment does. It takes the word "sell" from the main body of the bill and would therefore make it totally acceptable.

I have other comments on section 4 but I will wait until we get back to the main motion.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, what we have in front of us this afternoon is a bill which has some very serious dangers behind it, dangers which concern us as a party. It is clear to us that the question of transfer of airports to local authorities has not been thought through. It is clear that the tough questions about the national responsibility which has existed in the past for air transportation in this country and for facilities associated with air transportation have not been confronted by this government.

It seems to us that this is once more a question of an ideological commitment to doing away with as much community ownership as possible; control by society of elements which should be important parts of our communities' infrastructure.

Despite that sense of concern, that sense of real uncertainty about whether this government has thought this issue through, we are pleased to see a bill which does

try to lay out ways in which the workers involved in such transfers will be protected.

• (1530)

One of the things which is most devastating is to see privatizations take place and shutdowns occur and to see not the people who are responsible for those decisions taking the brunt of the difficulties of adjustment but the workers who have had no say in the decision themselves.

We have seen that with so many things which this government has done. We have seen it with free trade in which the great adjustment problems that the workers in this country have experienced in the context of free trade have not been dealt with by the government. Workers instead have been forced to carry those responsibilities themselves.

We have seen it with the shutdown of VIA Rail facilities in different parts of the country. We have seen it with respect to the CBC. Many parts of the country have experienced loss of CBC services, and workers have found themselves faced with the loss of jobs which they thought were jobs which were serving the community and which would continue to serve the community.

Yet the adjustment process has not been considered as a responsibility by government. Therefore, it is good to see a piece of legislation come before us which provides for some consideration with respect to employees' pensions and labour relations in connection with the transfer of some of the airports involved.

Nevertheless, even when we get to the question of how the workers affected in this case are themselves treated in this piece of legislation, there are some serious problems and some serious gaps which will lead us to vote for this referral back to committee. They will also lead us, assuming that vote is lost, to vote against third reading of this piece of legislation.

What is interesting is that there were some amendments that were suggested to this piece of legislation, some amendments which our labour critic, the member who sits beside me in the House here, put forward to the previous Minister of Transport, who is now the Solicitor General. One of those amendments suggested that in the event that employees are transferred to a designated airport authority prior to the negotiation of a new collective agreement on behalf of their previous bargaining unit, the government will ensure that they receive any retroactive remuneration that they would otherwise have received for the period commencing on the date of expiry of their previous collective agreement until the date of their transfer to the designated local airport authority.

This in fact was quite a sensible amendment which was put forward.

The government indicated—and I have here the letter in which the previous Minister of Transport made this commitment on April 9, 1991—that there would be a change made which would effectively introduce that concept into this bill.

Now, the Solicitor General says that this was part of a deal. Let me suggest that if this was a sensible amendment which should have been part of the legislation and the government was prepared to put it into the legislation as part of a deal, surely it makes sense to put it into the legislation at this stage.

So that the minister's comments can be put quite carefully, this is a letter which was written to my colleague and I quote:

> Dear Ms. Langan:
>
> I am writing to you with respect to possible amendments to Bill C-85—

Which is, of course, the new bill as it is now before us, Bill C-15.

> —which you are considering proposing for Third Reading debate. Departmental and Justice Canada officials have had an opportunity to review the various draft amendments which you have made available to us.

The minister then goes on to make his comments, and I hope that the minister would not suggest that I am misrepresenting the position which he took in this letter.

With respect to the second amendment which was put forward, our labour critic, on behalf of our party I might say, put forward the following suggestion that this should have an amendment with respect to clause 6 which would read as follows:

> (4) Where an airport has been sold, leased or otherwise transferred to a designated airport authority, any designated employee for the airport shall retain the same rights and benefits as the designated employee enjoyed in the position held by the designated employee in the Public Service on the transfer date.

(5) The rights and benefits of a designated employee referred to in subsection (4) may not be altered or abrogated except pursuant to a new collective agreement that is binding on the designated employee, or, in the absence of any collective agreement binding on the designated employee pursuant to a decision made by the designated airport authority with respect thereto.

The minister continues to discuss this particular amendment and suggests that there may be some problems with the wording in subsection (5) and for that reason, it would not be acceptable to the government to accept that particular amendment.

There is a further amendment suggested by my colleague which, again, was not accepted.

The key point, however, is that the government was quite prepared, as given in this commitment from last April from the then Minister of Transport, to make some changes in this bill which would provide more protection for workers affected by this bill. One would have thought that in bringing this legislation back before us the government would have seen fit to see to it that these extra protections, which they were prepared to commit themselves to back last April, would be part of the new legislation.

• (1540)

Unfortunately that is not the case. This is yet a further reason, from our perspective as a party, to see this piece of legislation sent back to committee to consider some of the points put forward in the amendment which the Liberal Party has moved, and also to put at least one change into this piece of legislation which the previous Minister of Transport said he was prepared to do in order to provide a further safeguard for workers affected by this bill.

Without such changes, we have before us a piece of legislation which is faulty on a number of levels. It is faulty, first, because workers have not been consulted with respect to the changes which they would like to see in the legislation. The bill is in front of us. There has been no consultation with the the union of Transport Canada employees. What possible recipe for disastrous labour regulations could be chosen but to bring forward a piece of legislation meant to supposedly serve workers and not even to consult the union representing those workers? What could possibly be achieved with that kind of approach?

What will be achieved will be a situation in which workers are affected by a bill and will feel aggrieved, almost regardless of what is in the legislation, because the bill has not been discussed with those workers.

Surely one thing we should have learned as members of Parliament trying to do something in this vast, difficult country is that no action is taken without consultation, without discussion.

I see the previous minister is here. I welcome him to participate in the debate, to stand up and explain why this particular piece of legislation was not discussed with the working people of the country. "Why were the working people affected by this bill not consulted", I ask the minister. If he says that the union of Transport Canada employees were in fact part of the process of negotiation and consultation that has taken place between Transport Canada and various local airport authorities, contrary to what I am told by our transport critic, I welcome the former minister to get up and make that point. I think it would be a valuable contribution. The procedural and substantive rights of workers with respect to their existing pensions are not clear under this bill.

That is not the first time we have seen this kind of reality emerge. We had to fight very hard to get pension rights established for workers when Canadian Arsenals, for instance, was privatized. We were successful in that case, but in this case the wording is not yet clear.

The bill needs to incorporate the desire of the workers to continue under the plans which they are presently part of as part of the Public Service. That is not just a sort of hypothetical question. The local airport authority in British Columbia is having difficulty finding an insurance company to take on the disability insurance plan which is currently provided to workers.

In short, we have a piece of legislation in front of us which, as usual with this government, betrays a lack of consultation, a lack of concern and a lack of responsibility to the working people of this country. For this reason, I hope very much that this House will accept the amendment which has been put before us to send this piece of legislation back to committee for certain types of review, and hopefully for other kinds of review as well.

If we do not do that, we will have broken faith with workers who have given many years to the airport authorities throughout this country.

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, without wishing to delay the progress of this bill, I want to reiterate that it was quite clear in our introduction of the bill on third reading that the bill deals exclusively with employee related matters.

For the record, and for the hon. member who just spoke, I just want to note that the following parties were consulted in the preparation of this bill: the Alberta and Quebec provincial governments, the Edmonton, Montreal, Vancouver and Calgary airport authorities, Labour Canada, the Canadian Labour Relations Board, the Public Service Staff Relations Board, the Treasury Board Secretariat, the Union of Canadian Transport Employees, a component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the Canadian Union of Public Employees representing the Edmonton municipal airport employees, the office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, the office of Privatization and Regulatory Affairs, and Public Works Canada,

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the information that the parliamentary secretary has put forward. I am not certain if that deals completely with the question of the process of negotiation and consultation which has taken place between Transport Canada and various local airport authorities.

If in fact the unions at the various airport authorities affected by this bill have been involved at each stage of negotiation and consultation, then I am quite prepared to withdraw any suggestions that I meant to the contrary.

As I say, that was certainly not the information which had been provided to us by the trade union which represents these workers.

I think it is also important in cases like this to ask what the nature and outcome of the negotiation and consultation actually was. In the case of the Official Languages Commissioner, for instance, to whom the parliamentary secretary made reference, the Official Languages Commissioner certainly has expressed some concern with respect to the bill which now stands in front of us.

• (1550)

The fact that consultation takes place does not necessarily mean that some kind of satisfactorily negotiated solution is the outcome of that consultation.

I suspect in this case that that is indeed the fact.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague with much interest. In fact, with regard to this amendment moved by another colleague, I would like to ask him what he thinks about this whole idea of privatization, because it seems that privatizing everything is very fashionable for this governement.

Now, I am sure that the governement is not looking for the complete privatization of airports, but maybe the privatization of the workplace. I would like to hear a bit more from my colleague about what he thinks are the pros and cons. Is there a positive side and, if so, it seems to me that we are trying to fix something that does not need fixing.

I would really want to know where the present system needs fixing, and if it does not, why are we trying to fix it?

[*English*]

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, it certainly is a guarantee of the usefulness of the process of transfer if it is made clear that the process is not a sale, if we are not talking about privatization in the usual sense of the word, of assets to a private corporation for purposes of operating that asset in order to generate profits.

It seems to me that there often can be advantages to the transfer of something like a local airport to a local community. I think, for instance, of the airport in our community in Windsor where the transfer of the airport is something that would make a good deal of sense because there is within the community itself very much a feeling that under the direction and operation of the federal government, the airport's capacities and potential have not been fully utilized.

There are a great many people in our community who say that if the community itself through a community board had the ability to direct the strategy of Windsor's airport, it would be able to market it as an airport much

more successfully than the federal government has been able to do.

Frankly, I think that kind of transitional approach is what we should be looking at in this context. That is why I think the amendment which has been put forward here, which makes it clear that we are not talking about sales but instead are talking about transfers to community based boards and community based authorities, that kind of transfer, can make a good deal of sense.

Regardless, however, of how it is organized, there has to be ironclad protection for the workers involved. They have made commitments to their communities with the clear understanding that their work was part of the Public Service and part of everything that comes with the Public Service, both the downside, the fact that you get hit by governments like this that decide to treat you unfairly on wages, but also the upside, the fact that you are part of a public pension system which is indexed and which provides some security for the future.

It is the fact that those kinds of things are lost which is especially unfortunate about this piece of legislation.

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to have the opportunity to speak on Bill C-15. My intervention today is very timely in that my riding is an area that is very rural in nature and has small airports. I know that a lot of members who have entered the debate so far continue to focus on the larger airports in the country and probably the ones that have more opportunity to make money.

My colleague, the member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon, has made an amendment suggesting that we take a good look and make sure that the transfer of these particular facilities to airport commissions or to municipalities is not indeed privatization or selling of the facility.

That is a very important initiative. I think that if the intention of the government were to sell these facilities then truly there is an ulterior motive. There are some very grave difficulties with some of the airports in the areas that I am going to speak about.

One of the best ways I find to debate these issues is to pick a couple of examples and talk about those examples. That to me is an easier way of bringing the message across to our constituents and the people of Canada as to what the difficulties are out there as they relate to Transport Canada, and specifically to airports in rural Canada.

Before I get to those specific examples, I want to talk about some of the issues that I think have to be addressed before we get into transferring these particular facilities to municipalities or airport commissions. First of all I must emphasize that this government and Transport Canada itself have to set up some guidelines. They cannot just hocus-pocus or holus-bolus take these airports, depending on their condition—and I will talk about that in more detail later—and decide to transfer them to particular communities without having at least minimum standards.

The guidelines for the transfer of airports have to be maintained across the board and they have to be decided upon based on population and based on size of airport. I know people will argue this point, but I am a firm believer that airports are used almost as political tools, as a slush fund to give this member of Parliament a brand new terminal this week because an election is coming up. That terminal, even if it is way oversized for that community, will be put there anyway to make that particular member look good in the eyes of his constituents.

We have that all across the country now. It has become very obvious, as I travel around the country, that the airport facilities of some communities are much better than those of other communities almost identical in size. That is why I think it is very important. If we are going to get into transferring all these facilities to the communities, first of all they should only be transferred if they meet certain guidelines. Those guidelines should be standard and meet the safety purposes that we as parliamentarians would like to see for the future of those airports.

Second, I think we should look very seriously at the guidelines and make sure that when we do transfer these airports, the employees who are being transferred with the facility are looked after in a way that is compatible with what we think is fair. Those individuals were Transport Canada employees all along for many years and all of a sudden became employees of a different type.

• (1600)

We have to look at those very seriously. We also have to look at guidelines for capital improvements. It is very simple to transfer a facility, but not to discuss with Transport Canada the improvements of those facilities over a period of 5, 10, 15 and 20 years.

Without those kinds of guidelines, the community may be taking over a facility that is in good shape today but 10 years from now, when we want to improve our facility or to do some renovations, Transport Canada could easily say: "Well, we are sorry, we do not have the money any longer. You will have to go to the municipal taxpayer and get the dollars from them". That is a very sad and real issue that we will have to tackle before smaller communities would even consider taking on such an endeavour as running an airport.

We also need guidelines to make sure that we have increased funding for the maintenance agreements that we would be entering into.

One of the issues that hit home not too long ago in my riding was that Transport Canada put a freeze on the amount of dollars that it was going to allocate to the Dryden airport. The community said that it could not continue to run this facility with the amount of dollars being given to it. There has to be some sort of guideline or some sort of mechanism that would allow these communities, even though the airports are transferred, to be able to go to Transport Canada and the minister and suggest that because of some circumstances, there has to be an increase in funding in order to resolve those issues.

We are not all in the position, in these small airports in smaller towns and cities in Canada, to be able to make enough revenues from these particular facilities of not having to rely on the taxpayers of Canada, on Transport Canada, on the Ministry of Transportation in order to maintain these facilities in the way that we expect them to be maintained.

Those are a few guidelines that we have to set down if we are even going to consider transferring these facilities to smaller communities. If we are not going to put those kind of guidelines in place then this really is a scam. It is really saying to Canadians: "Listen, we do not want to be bothered any more with your airport facilities. We deregulated it for you. Told you that when we deregulated it the services would be better". That did not happen. "Well we deregulated this particular facility for you so that you would get lower fares". That did not happen. Now the government is saying: "Well, we cannot seem to run this facility very well as a government, we will give it to you at the local level and we are sure you can do a better job. But then again, do not come back to us at any time and suggest that we will protect you to a certain extent. You will just basically have to look after yourself."

That is not the kind of message I would hope that the government is sending to the small communities and the many, many small airports across this country.

Having said that, I want to give a few examples of some of the difficulties I see in transferring smaller rural airports. When I say smaller rural airports, I am talking about communities with 5,000 people, with 10,000 people and, in some cases, as in the one example I have in my hand, of a community of 22,000. Now this facility, when I describe what is wrong with it and the lack of guidelines and procedures that Transport Canada does not seem to have in place or, if it does, only in place where it feels that someone might be watching, it makes you kind of wonder just what the government has in mind.

Let me give an example of what is happening in a community of mine, Kenora, Ontario. Kenora has three communities in its area, Kenora, Keewatin and Jaffray-Melick. Those three communities have a population of roughly 22,000. You would think that there would be a pretty decent facility there with an area and a population of that size, not to mention that the population in the summertime blossoms to about 50,000 people. We are now talking about the tourism component of an area like Kenora—Rainy River, which is probably one of the most beautiful parts of Ontario and, indeed, probably one of the most beautiful parts of Canada.

This airport that I am talking about has a maintenance agreement with hours of operation of 42.5 hours per week. Everyone says: "Well, that is not too bad when you consider that roughly most airports run on a hundred hours a week" and people will ask: "Well, what seems to be the problem?"

Let me give an example. There are four other airports on my list and I will just list them: Dryden, Sioux Lookout, Red Lake and Fort Frances. Those are four

other communities of my riding. All have smaller populations than the one I am talking about.

Sioux Lookout receives funding for 15 hours a day, seven days a week which works out to 105 hours per week. That is over double the amount of hours and maintenance dollars given to the community of Sioux Lookout compared to the community of Kenora.

Red Lake is funded for 12 hours a day from Monday to Friday which is 60 hours per week.

Fort Frances has a maintenance operating agreement for 14 hours a day, seven days a week, which is 98 hours per week.

Atikokan, which is another one I did not mention, has 84 hours per week.

Those four or five communities all have double and some almost triple amounts of hours per week in funding for maintenance agreements which are signed with different governments, not all federal, some provincial. They have different agreements with senior levels of government to operate their facilities.

I have difficulty understanding where Transport Canada is coming from when looking at the facilities, the population and the potential of these different communities and their maintenance agreements.

I am very pleased that a community like Dryden gets 105 hours per week of operation dollars in its maintenance agreement.

That kind of facility is necessary in a community like Dryden. However, then there is a community like Kenora which has double the population, almost triple the population of a community like Dryden but has half the maintenance agreement that this community has.

You say to yourself: "Well, what does that mean, operating cost?" Let me put it in dollars and cents. That is a good way to explain to our residents and constituents what it means. It is right here. I will just quickly grab it for you. It explains in detail the operating costs.

Kenora in 1988–89 had an operating cost, money that it was given by the federal government, of $204,000 and made revenues of roughly $131,000 for a cost recovery of 64.5 per cent.

Dryden had an operating cost of $897,000 from money that was given by the federal government with revenues of $308,000 for a recovery of 34.4 per cent.

Fort Frances had operating costs of $273,500 and revenues of $81,000 for a cost recovery of 29.8 per cent.

I guess you are sitting there thinking: "Well, what are you getting at?" Let me tell you what I am getting at. The fact remains is that, if you are familiar with the region, the community of Kenora and the airport is a very essential component of that community's long term goals and hopes and aspirations for the future. Now, Transport Canada in its wisdom treats that particular airport much differently than it treats the one down the road a hundred miles. We cannot understand for the life of us why that is.

There cannot be any reason other than there are political decisions being made as to whether to fund a particular airport or to not fund a particular airport. It cannot be used as an argument that this airport is any less important than the other, considering that the population is double the size of the other communities that I mentioned.

I want to switch to the other example because I know I will end up running out of time as I usually do. I want to talk a little bit about another airport, the Sioux Lookout airport.

• (1610)

In March 1990, the town of Sioux Lookout submitted an application under the Local/Local Commercial Airports Financial Assistance Program to the minister. This Local/Local Commercial Airports Financial Assistance Program is run directly through the Minister of Transport, which means that when you apply for this program, in order to get assistance to improve your airport, you have to convince the minister and not Transport Canada of the importance of this particular project and whether he should fund it.

The town of Sioux Lookout went to the minister for this application. It was the previous minister. I will explain why this community went for these improvements and I will give some statistics just to show what has happened, but before I do that, let me give the groundwork.

This is a community of about 5,000 people. Why would a community of 5,000 need a large airport? This particular community is the jump-off point to go up north, to northern Ontario and to all the isolated aboriginal communities of practically half of Ontario. People fly out of this particular airport and go to that region which has, roughly speaking, about 10,000 aboriginal people. They have no alternative but to go by air for medical purposes and to get to the outside world, unless you consider a canoe or a dog sled to be a good alternative. That is the only possible way to get to Thunder Bay or Winnipeg, to fly out of there over to Sioux Lookout and from there transfer and on to points west or east.

Let me show the traffic trends. This particular community has increased seven fold in traffic in the last 10 years. It is the busiest airport in north-western Ontario, next to Thunder Bay. Thunder Bay has a population of over 100,000 people and this particular community of 5,000 has a large amount of traffic coming out of it.

In 1977, 8,100 passengers used the airport. In 1988, the number almost reached 50,000 passengers. It is estimated that by the year 2001, more than 60,000 passengers will use the airport. When the airport was built in the early 1970s, it was built for 8,000 passengers, it is now almost at 50,000 passengers and is expected to see over 60,000 passengers by the year 2001.

What did the minister say? He said: "We do not have the funding right now. You are not high on the priority list, therefore maybe you can apply next year and you will have to live with the airport you have". We are not talking about service to one community. We are talking about people from 30 communities who come from the far north to this airport and we cannot even get it on the priority list so that somewhere down the line we can tell all those communities in north-western Ontario that they will have a decent airport facility.

In that airport there is not even a confectionery, there is not even a place to grab a sandwich. There is a bubble gum machine, a place where you can buy cigarettes—heaven forbid—and a place where you can buy chocolate bars and chips and that is all. There are almost 50,000 people using that facility already. There is a population explosion going on in the north and I am sure they will continue to use it.

The only alternative is for the Minister of Transport to build us a road up north.

Those are two examples that I think bring to light the issue of how important it is to understand where the Ministry of Transport is going, before we start transferring these airports to municipalities and to the individual communities. Is it suggesting that it does not want to get involved in the future of these particular communities and their airports? Is it suggesting that it cannot afford it at the federal level? Is it saying: "You look after it municipally or provincially, or to hell with you?" I get the impression that is the kind of scenario we are looking at.

I think we are quite prepared as communities to take over these airports.

If we are given the proper guidelines, if you are quite honest and frank with us and tell us just what you are proposing to do as far as a long term capital for the improvements of these facilities, and if you are prepared to give us the kind of guidelines to help with the employee transfers and make sure that they get the same kind of benefits they got before, then I think we as a party will be prepared to take a good look at it.

First of all I think we have to clear up the most important part of this whole bill, and I was so very impressed that the member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon brought it up: We must make sure that this is not a privatization but a transfer of facilities, if the communities can come to some sort of understanding of just what the transfer means to them and if it is an improvement to them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Questions and comments. Before resuming debate it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Algoma, steel industry; the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, trucking industry; the hon. member for Scarborough West, immigration; the hon. member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley, the environment; the hon. member for Saint-Léonard, the economy.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Gander—Grand Falls.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, I cannot let this opportunity go by without saying a few words about this legislation. The reason why I do so is because Canadians must be wondering what is

going on. Are we talking about taking all of our airports in Canada and passing them over to organizations?

I picked up a brochure which says "airport transfer." It shows a picture of an aeroplane leaving an airport, and in the middle of it is the Maple Leaf; "Airport transfer, Transport Canada". I read these words in this brochure and I want to put this on the record: "The broad objectives of the policy are (1) to allow national airport systems to operate in a more cost-efficient manner."

If that were not enough, further down it says: "Key elements of the policy specify that federal funding requirements will not increase."

Finally: "Each LAA (local airport authority) will be an independent, incorporated business entity and will finance its operating and capital needs without recourse to the federal government."

In other words, we have a bill being passed in this House right now that will pass Canada's airports over to local authorities which are supposed to find the money to operate them and the capital expenditures to build new runways without recourse to the federal government to pay the bills. It is an interesting proposition.

I looked at the bill a moment ago and it is rather a strange one. I have the secret copy here, that is, the copy that came out before the other copies, I suppose. It should be called "secret" because what is in the bill is really a secret. I cannot figure out what is in the bill. I have looked at it and I cannot figure out what is in it. It says here that it is an act to provide for certain matters respecting official languages. Official languages; I looked in the bill and in the section under "official languages" it says that parts 4, 8, 9 and 10 of the Official Languages Act apply. The really relevant parts in the Official Languages Act are parts 5 and 6. We assume from this legislation then that parts 5 and 6 do not apply. If the other parts are singled out as applying, then the other parts of the Official Languages Act do not apply to the transfer of airports.

• (1620)

If it is the law of the land that the Official Languages Act applies to all the airports in Canada then the bill has to be rewritten. Montreal is changing hands and is no longer being operated by the federal government. Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary are changing and are no longer federal government airports. I believe the others are Edmonton and Calgary. Then there is a whole bunch of airports like Moncton and several others that are also going to be transferred from federal hands. The federal government will no longer be operating them.

This is certainly confusing here where it says an act respecting official languages and then it says employees' pensions. I looked up the clause affecting employees' pensions and it said in that regard: "The Governor in Council may, on the recommendation of the President of the Treasury Board", and the Governor in Council is what the layman would call the cabinet, "make regulations (a) respecting the manner in which" the Public Service Superannuation Act, the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act will apply.

In other words, there is nothing at all in the bill that deals with employees' pensions. There is not a thing. It says that the government will make regulations after the bill is passed in relation to employees' pensions.

One might ask how an employee of an airport, who is no longer a public servant because it is now passed over to a public authority to operate it, can come under the Public Service Superannuation Act anyway. He is no longer a public servant. How can that individual come under the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act when he is no longer a public servant?

The truth of the matter is that you need not be a public servant to come under the Public Service Superannuation Act. Petro-Canada employees are under that act. The post office is under that act. The Occupational Health and Safety Branch of the federal government is under that act. They are not really public servants and they need not be either.

I suppose it is rather confusing to the layman, but the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Public Service Alliance of Canada can also represent them even though they are not public servants. It sounds strange, does it not, to have the Public Service Alliance of Canada represent somebody who is not a public servant? But that is the way it goes. It represents people in Crown corporations, for example. The Canadian Union of Public Employees represents employees who are not public employees.

Nowhere in the act does it talk about and spell out the employees' pensions. That is two gone now: an act to provide for certain matters respecting official languages, but there is nothing in there to cover official languages, and then it says employees' pensions but there is nothing in there to cover employee pensions. There is a section that says the government may make regulations respecting employees' pensions.

The last part mentions labour relations in connection with the transfer of certain airports. I looked up the section under labour relations and it says that the whole matter will be passed over to the Canada Labour Relations Board. I can recall when the post office was passed over to the Canada Labour Relations Board. There were two years of *status quo* and then the Canada Labour Relations Board was supposed to determine the bargaining agents and the unions representing the employees. They have been at it now for nine years, and they still have not decided the question of bargaining units and bargaining agents.

I do not know why the government presented the bill to the House. What it means by official languages is confusing. It does not talk about employees' pensions and labour relations is left to the Canadian Labour Relations Board, so what is the purpose of the legislation?

To find the purpose of the legislation, of course, we can look at the brochure called "Airport Transfer". I asked for and received, a few moments ago, the outline of what is called the supplementary principles of airport transfer.

In other words, you have all of these airports in Canada now being passed over to local authorities. You have all of these employees in Canada who have families, who have been working for the federal government for years, wondering: "What is going to become of me and my job?", and then you have the travelling public who is landing at those airports. They are wondering: "Should I be landing at this airport? What kind of an airport is this? Does it have federal standards? If the plane catches fire, who is going to put out the fire? Whose standards are they? Are they good standards?" You have two of those concerns.

I had sent to me the actual list of supplementary principles which have now been sent to all of these airports. I want to put a couple of them on the record.

First of all, the federal government says that inspection agencies like customs and excise, immigration, health and welfare and agriculture will be provided free of charge to the Crown by the local airport authority. Then it says: "The local airport authority will provide at no cost to Transport Canada space requirements for such services as air navigation free of charge to the federal government."

It says that as far as the employees are concerned: "In any case, all terminated Transport Canada Public Service employees, whether or not they transfer to the LAA," that is the local airport authority, "have a right to have their name placed on the priority list for one year. More particularly, employees who were laid off by the LAA," local airport authority, "up to the end of the first year after the date of transfer would benefit from placement on the priority list."

In other words, Mr. Speaker, you could have an employee or employees terminated with no rights to any other job in the federal government, would lose his or her seniority rights, would lose all of their benefits, would have no more standing than a member of Parliament as an airport employee.

Then the ultimate of all of the regulations. I want to highlight this condition: "The LAA as operators," that is, the local airport authority, "will ensure the provision of crash, fire and rescue services at the airport." That is quite a statement. The local airport authority as operators will ensure the provision of crash, fire and rescue services. The LAA will development emergency and contingency plans, conduct exercises among the various jurisdictions and operating entities, for example, police, ambulance, hospitals and airlines.

The whole operation of the airport, including the fire department is being passed over to the local airport authority. Then it says the local airport authority will be responsible for dealing with air pollution, solid waste management and other airport related environmental issues. That is quite a change for Canadian airports. All airports in all of those communities across Canada will be passed from the federal government to a local authority and that local authority will ensure the safety of the travelling public. The only thing the federal government will do, according to these guidelines, is guard against terrorism and provide air traffic control services.

• (1630)

That is quite a change for Canada's airports, isn't it? That is quite a change. How do you provide, as a local airport authority, all of the policing that is required at international airports, for example? How do you provide for all of the environmental checks and balances that are required at every airport in this country?

The bottom line is that the federal government, in presenting the bill to this Chamber, and saying that it is a bill respecting employees' pensions and labour relations, and yet not having it in the bill what it is going to do, the federal government in passing over to local authorities responsibilities that should be nation wide and responsibilities by the Government of Canada.

Finally, the federal government is saying to every single airport employee in this country that the day is going to come for some of them immediately, when you will no longer be an employee of the federal government, when you will no longer have seniority rights, or sick leave, or vacation benefits. "We are going to transfer all of that", as the brochure says, "to operate in a more cost efficient manner", and then to say that "the LAA will be an independent incorporated business entity and will finance its operations and capital needs without recourse to the federal treasury". The bottom line is that the federal government is trying to get out of the business of transportation in this country.

The only thing that I can see moving this policy is the efforts of the Government of Canada to try to save money in every single area of responsibility that it presently has, and to pass all of that responsibility over on to someone else's shoulders. In the case of an environmental issue at one of our airports, say, with noise pollution, the federal government will very shortly say: "Too bad, but that is the responsibility of a group of businessmen in that community because they actually own the airport". If they do not own the airport, then why is it that they are responsible for environmental matters and noise pollution?

The government will be able to say to the Auditor General: "We are getting rid of thousands of employees next year. We have reduced the Public Service by thousands of people, because we erased all of those thousands of people working at airports in Canada". The travelling public, when they learn and when they hear on the news media about the firefighters at the airport saying: "We want to still stay in a federal system. We want to have our federal standards maintained". Someone will say: "Yes, they are still federal standards, it is just you are not a federal employee any more. You are operated by some incorporated body in the community of such and such".

The federal government should rethink this. I do not think they should bring a bill which does not guarantee a man his job after this is passed. I do not think we should allow them to pass a bill that does not guarantee a man or woman their pension after working at an airport in this country for the past 20 or 25 years. I do not think that we should allow the Government of Canada to cop out on its responsibility to provide security and environmental protection for the people of Canada at Canadian airports.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few brief words about Bill C-15, legislation introduced this past session. Before I start my comments, I would like to compliment the critic from our party, the member from Thunder Bay who, has led a lot of the debate on this particular legislation and to thank yourself, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to say a few words.

Bill C-15 is one of these interesting administrative pieces of legislation, I suppose. You look at the title and read through it and wonder exactly what is the purpose of the bill. You usually have to have a stack of other bills and information at hand to try and figure out what is happening. I guess as a short description of the legislation, the purpose of the bill is to protect essentially the collective bargaining rights, language rights and pension rights of federal public sector workers currently employed by Transport Canada during the transfer to airports from Transport Canada to local airport authorities, the LAAs that we have heard about.

You will be familiar with some of the attempts by this government to basically, privatize if you like, or localize the airport authority. The running and managing of a particular airport, is transferred to a local organization. I understand from some of the notes, in fact, it is being attempted for the first time in Edmonton.

In any case, this legislation attempts to ensure that when that is the case, that employees who will then start becoming employees of that local authority will be protected by some of the benefits they have now in their collective agreement under federal legislation.

While the general thrust of the bill is good, it suffers from a lack of clarity and in light of current worker–management relations, it does not provide the protection it purports to provide.

I would like to go through a couple of the points that have been raised by the union that represents the employees, the Union of Transport Canada Employees. They have cited a number of very important aspects of the bill that I think will obviously have to be addressed.

The first one is that workers or their representatives have not really been a part of the process of negotiation and consultation that has gone on between Transport Canada and various local airport authorities.

That has become an unfortunate aspect of legislation under this government. I think it is important that the government attempt to establish good employer–employee relationships, that the employees are taken into consideration and are given every opportunity to see in advance what is being planned in any particular legislation and especially a case that affects their future, their occupation, their livelihood and for many people, their pensions.

The procedural and substantive rights of workers with regard to their existing pensions under the Public Service Superannuation Act and the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act are actually not clear under the bill. It is being left up to Treasury Board to make regulations. There has been no consultation on the development of these regulations.

I would hope that every effort is made, when new regulations are developed that the employees have ample opportunity to comment on that.

• (1640)

It is increasingly a part of legislation in our country that a bill gives a general mandate and instructions to government. However, in reality the real nitty–gritty of a law comes in the development of regulations which are developed by the department and eventually approved by the Governor in Council and by cabinet. I think it takes a generous government to give the people an opportunity for input. It also requires a vigilant public, employees group or union to see that when those proposed regulations come forward they are looked at, circulated and considered.

The bill needs to incorporate the desires of workers to continue under these plans. I mentioned earlier the Public Service Superannuation Act and the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act.

We understand that the local authority in British Columbia is having some difficulty in trying to find an insurance company to take on the disability component and the plan that is currently provided workers. They have been told that it would be too expensive to continue this type of coverage.

Point number three. The continuation of the bargaining agent is also a matter of great concern. The bill provides for the continuation of the terms and conditions of an existing collective agreement at the time of transfer. However, past experience with other privatizations demonstrates that the determination of the appropriate bargaining agent is a very long and disruptive process.

The bill should incorporate provisions so that the existing bargaining agent remains in place for the period of one full collective agreement after the transfer, in order to ensure the protection of worker's rights and the orderly determination of a bargaining agent.

That sounds like a pretty logical way to approach this particular idea. It gives the workers and the employer a chance to know that there is a grace period prior to, likely, some initiatives from an employer. We would probably expect that. They might not be good initiatives, but under law employers certainly would be allowed to do that. Of course, the employees who have a new employer, obviously as time advances would be looking to approach that employer for new provisions in any collective agreement they have.

The bill fails to make clear that all services to the travelling public will continue to be provided in both official languages. One of the proposals is to ensure that any third parties who are under contract to the airport authority are required to provide their services under the linguistic terms currently set out the Official Languages Act and any regulations made under that act.

That is a matter of a great deal of concern for some of the members of the House who have pursued this particular issue a great deal. Obviously, when we travel a lot as most members do, we realize that it is important that standards developed from airport to airport should be the same. It makes for ease of travel and ensures that people travelling from one airport to another understand safety requirements and public notices, and the employees who provide that service can assist them the best they can.

Just as an aside, what bugs me is that there are different TV monitors in each airport. Trying to read the monitors in some of the airports, trying to figure out which airline and which aeroplane is landing at what time, is difficult. I know that is a fairly minor point, given the importance of this legislation. I suppose I will suffer along. However, it is obviously a small example of the kind of general services we would like to see from airport to airport.

The general theme of Bill C-15 is that this may not be the privatization of airports, but it is certainly privatization of the workplace. The government has a responsibility to ensure the rights of its workers are protected before and after the transfer.

In the United States, after its rush with deregulation, and now in Canada, we were told just a short time ago that with deregulation we would have all these new airlines and new services. Well, we are right down to two airlines now. Some are suggesting that we may end up with only one airline in the future. The point I am making is that there is no guarantee that once the local authority takes over and runs one of these facilities that it is actually going to do a good job of it.

We certainly hope it does, but as the public trustee of Canada's airports, obviously the federal government must have in the back of its mind at least a back-up plan to reassume control of a particular airport if it does not work. Then we would be looking at taking care of employees' various benefits and rights as well as if the government was to resume control.

The bill gives only more uncertainty. If the purpose is to stabilize worker-management relations, then the workers must be consulted and their concerns heeded. We have to underline that point. Too often when a number of these projects go ahead, we end up with bad labour relations. That is not going to be any help at all to our airports.

We are supporting the bill. We have some concerns, obviously, about what the government is planning to do. There are some very clear concerns that we have laid out and there have been comments made in the House by other members concerning employee relations. We feel that is important. We certainly hope the government will consider those in the future in the management of these airports. We respectfully ask these new authorities, when they are the employer, to treat their employees well.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to take part in the debate on Bill C-15, an Act to provide for certain matters respecting official languages, employees pensions and labour relations in connection with the transfer of certain airports.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, Bill C-15 contains an issue which is of particular interest to me. I will focus my remarks on clause 4 of the bill, which deals with official languages.

Clause 4(1) states that:

> Where the Minister has sold, leased or otherwise transferred an airport to a designated airport authority, on and after and transfer date Parts IV, VIII, IX and X of the *Official Languages Act* apply, with such modifications as the circumstances require, to the authority in relation to the airport as if
>
> (a) the authority were a federal institution; and
>
> (b) the airport were an office or facility of that institution, other than its head or central office.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, subsection 4(2) also recalls that nothing in subsection 23(2) of the *Official Languages Act* shall, in relation to an airport transferred to a designated airport authority by the Minister, be construed or applied so as to impose a duty on any institution other than that authority.

[*English*]

Clause 4 is sufficiently ambiguous to bring into question whether official languages regulations will be fulfilled at any airport which has been transferred to a non-governmental authority.

In subclause (1) only parts 4, 8, 9 and 10 of the Official Languages Act will apply.

In subclause (2) one is left wondering if certain parts of the Official Languages Act will only apply to the airport authority itself and not to other aspects or other individuals involved with the operation of that airport after the transfer has occurred.

The Liberal Party opposes the privatization of Canadian airports. However, we do support initiatives to transfer the administration and management of airports to local authorities under certain conditions.

One of these conditions is that the Official Languages Act apply in full to the local authority and its employees, and as well to services provided at the airport which has been transferred.

Bill C-15 leaves too much doubt as to the full application of the Official Languages Act upon the local airport authority, the employees of that authority and to the various services that will be provided to the public at the airport. Section 10 of the Air Canada Public Participation Act clearly sets out that the entire Official Languages Act would continue to apply to Air Canada, its employees and the services it renders after its privatization.

• (1650)

Bill C-15 does not extend the same stipulation concerning the full involvement of the Official Languages Act as does the Air Canada Public Participation Act of 1988. As a result, one questions why this is the case.

The Official Languages Act has 12 parts, yet Bill C-15 only includes parts 4, 8, 9 and 10. Part 4 deals with communications with, and services to, the public. Part 8 involves responsibilities and duties of Treasury Board in relation to the Official Languages Act of Canada. Part 9 concerns the commission of official languages and part 10 provides for court remedy. It is understandable why all these parts are worthy of inclusion in Bill C-15.

Obviously, one can understand why certain parts of the Official Languages Act are not included in Bill C-15. Some, such as parts 1, 2, 3, 11 and 12 are non-applicable as they deal with such matters as the proceedings of Parliament and the administration of justice. However, it is not clear as to why parts 5, 6 and 7 have been excluded from this piece of legislation.

Each one of these three parts are important components in our official languages legislation. Part 5 deals with the language of work, part 6 concerns the participation of English and French speaking Canadians and part 7 concerns the advancement of English and French. Certainly these are important issues.

In addition, parts 5 and 6 are designed to protect workers of both linguistic groups. Part 5, as I have said, has the mandate to protect the language of work, while part 6 protects equal opportunity to gain employment.

It is very difficult to determine the reasons behind their exclusion from Bill C-15. Why, indeed, were they left out of this legislation, but included in the Air Canada bill? Why should workers at Air Canada be protected and not workers at Canada's airports? Both institutions offer somewhat similar services to the public across the country.

Furthermore, the removal of part 7 is of equal concern. The exclusion of this part removes the right of the Department of Secretary of State to encourage and co-operate with both the provinces and the public to accomplish the objectives given to it by the Official Languages Act. This mandate is to enhance the vitality of English and French linguistic minorities throughout Canada and foster the full recognition and use of both official languages in Canada. I cannot think of any worthy reason as to why the minister would omit such an important part of the Official Languages Act from Bill C-15.

I would like for the minister to inform this House why his government does not want parts 5, 6 and 7 of the Official Languages Act to apply to local airport authorities and their employees. Has the government taken a change in course concerning official bilingualism in this country? Are they prepared to safeguard and protect the federal principle of bilingualism in all of its relevant legislation or in just some?

These are very important questions and Canadians want the answers.

We have a case here in Bill C-15 where vital parts of Canada's Official Languages Act are being excluded from legislation which should contain them.

The fact that these three parts of the Official Languages Act are, indeed, excluded from Bill C-15 is even further cause for concern given the current constitutional climate in Canada. How can this government talk of

fairness, equality and national identity one day and then turn around and introduce this legislation the next? The government cannot afford jeopardizing national reconciliation and preserving Canada's linguistic duality by watering down the objectives of the Official Languages Act.

The government cannot pick and choose which parts of the Official Languages Act it will include and what parts it will leave out of legislation, such as the one before this House today. The parts in question are not inconsequential, they are very important.

While there were obvious reasons for omitting certain parts of the Official Languages Act, as I have discussed earlier, there are no valid reasons I can think of to justify the removal of parts 5, 6 and 7 from Bill C-15.

I would like to conclude by quoting from the remarks made by the Commissioner of Official Languages when he appeared before the committee of the House of Commons responsible for examining Bill C-85, the designation given to Bill C-15 in the last session. At that meeting on March 7, 1991, the Commissioner said:

> That section 4 of Bill C-85 be amended to ensure that, as in the case of the decisions taken in the privatization of Air Canada, all the provisions of the Official Languages Act continue to apply to the designated airport authorities. Any weakening of this policy would seem to us to be an unacceptable and unjustified step backward.

I believe the Commissioner speaks for all Canadians on this issue and I fully concur with his recommendation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak, and especially to support the hon. member's amendment regarding the sale of airports. I think this is an important issue because we are being asked to trust this government and go along with its claim that it does not want to sell airports.

I am not so sure about that, and that is why I support the hon. member's amendment concerning the sale of airports, and his proposal to remove the word "sell" from the bill, because in committee, the government had said constantly that it had no intention of selling airports. Since it has no intention of selling airports, why did it put this in the text of the bill?

So I am rather wary of this government when it puts a word in a bill that doesn't have to be there. And that is why I want to support the hon. member's amendment, and I don't think we are being overly suspicious when we simply ask this government to remove the word "sell".

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

• (1700)

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): In my opinion the nays have it.

Motion negatived

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands) moved, seconded by Mr. Keyes:

> That the motion be amended by deleting the words "be now read a third time and do pass" and substituting the following therefor:
>
> "be not now read a third time but be referred back to the legislative committee with instructions that the committee consider amending the bill in Clause 4
>
> (a) by striking out lines 14 and 15 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:
>
> "4(1) where the minister has transferred an airport leased to a des" and
>
> (b) by striking out line 28 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:
>
> "an airport transferred by lease to a designated airport".

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The Chair will take the motion moved by the hon. member of Kingston and the Islands under advisement, for a few minutes, and meanwhile we will resume debate on the main motion. Resuming debate.

[*English*]

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, may I have the indulgence of the Chair to move another amendment? I move, seconded by the member for Kingston and the Islands:

> That the motion be amended by deleting the words "be now read a third time and do pass" and substituting the following therefor:
>
> "be not now read a third time but be referred back to the legislative committee with instructions that the committee considering amending the bill in Clause 4 by striking out lines 17 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:
>
> "transfer data part 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10 of the".

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): On a point of order the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, perhaps you could clarify. Some of us thought that you would not be in a position to receive another amendment at third reading until such time as the one before you has been disposed of.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan is right.

[*Translation*]

The Chair will first consider the motion moved by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands and then decide whether to consider the second motion moved by the hon. member for Hamilton West. I have asked the Table to advise the Chair as soon as possible.

I can now rule that the motion moved by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands is in order. Resuming debate on the motion in amendment.

Some hon. members: Question.

[*English*]

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): In my opinion the nays have it.

I declare the amendment lost.

[*Translation*]

I am told by the Chair's advisers that to be in order, the hon. member for Hamilton West will have to move his amendment now, if he still wishes to do so.

[*English*]

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I have just been handed a very important amendment that I would like to bring forward to the House right now. I move:

> That the motion be amended by deleting the words "be now read a third time and do pass" and substituting the following therefor:
>
> "be not now read a third time, but be referred back to the legislative committee with instructions that the committee consider amending the bill in clause 5 by striking out lines 32 and 33 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor: where the minister has transferred an airport by lease to a des–".

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): In that case, the Chair will take a few minutes to take the motion of the hon. member for Hamilton West under advisement.

Resuming debate on the main motion. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

Mr. Gauthier: This is a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

I do not want to speak on third reading because I have an amendment I would like to table in the House. However, if you call third reading, I cannot do so, since the Chair has to decide whether the motion is in order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): So far, the Chair can say that the motion of the hon. member for Hamilton West is in order.

[*English*]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): In my opinion the nays have it.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to propose an amendment, seconded by my colleague the member for Kingston and the Islands:

That the motion be amended by deleting the words "be now read the third time and pass" and substitute the following therefor: "be not now read a third time but be referred back to the legislative committee with instructions that the committee consider amending the bill by adding immediately after line 31, page 2, the following new clause:

"Section 51 notwithstanding any other act of Parliament, no designated airport authority to which an airport has been sold, leased or otherwise transferred shall use any moneys in the pension and or benefit funds managed by it for the purpose of operating or financing its airport activities.

2. Every person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding $20 million, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or both.

3. When a corporation commits an offence under this Act, any officer, director or agent of the corporation who directed, authorized, assented to, acquiesced in or participated in the commission of the offence is a party to and guilty of the offence and is liable on summary conviction to the punishment provided for the offence whether or not the corporation has been prosecuted or convicted.

• (1710)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The motion of the hon. member is in order. Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The question is on the motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Winnipeg North. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Defeated on division.

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, I would like to move an amendment also. I am certain that the people on both sides of the House will want to support this one in light of last week's National Access Week. It is seconded by by colleague from Hamilton Mountain.

I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting the words "be now read the third time and do pass" and substituting the following therefor:

Be not now read a third time but be referred back to the legislative committee with instructions that the committee consider amending the bill by adding, immediately after line 31 at page 2 the following new clause:

For greater certainty where an airport is sold, leased or otherwise transferred to a designated airport authority, such provisions relating to assistance for the physically handicapped persons apply in an airport under any Act of Parliament or regulations made thereunder shall apply.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The motion of the hon. member is in order. Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Motion negatived on division.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment:

That the motion be amended by deleting the words "be now read a third time and do pass" and substituting the following therefor:

Be it not now read a third time, but referred back to the legislative committee with instructions that the committee consider amending the bill in clause 6 by striking out lines 2 and 3 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

Minister has transferred an airport by lease to a designated airport.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The motion is in order. Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Negatived on division.

Motion negatived.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to move:

That the motion be amended by deleting the words "be now read a third time and do pass" and substituting the following therefor:

Be not now read a third time but be referred back to the legislative committee with instructions that the committee consider amending the bill in clause 7(a) by striking out lines 26 and 27 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

7.1 Where the minister has transferred an airport by lease and

(b) by striking out line 6 and page 5 and substituting the following therefor:

After the date of the transfer by lease, the Canada Labour

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The motion is in order. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Negatived on division.

Motion negatived.

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak on Bill C-15, which is the Airport Transfer Act. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this particular bill. It has been one of considerable concern to me since I was elected.

I have been in constant pursuit of the three various ministers who have been appointed since the election in 1988, to discuss not only the transfer of airports but also a number of components that deal in particular with transportation in the north.

We have a government in the Northwest Territories that has quite handily carved out a fairly comprehensive transportation strategy that includes and probably compliments the whole issue of airport transfer. In fact they have gone one step further to deal not only with the transfer of airports but also with communications and the whole issue of safety.

In the north the majority of the population is highly dependent on air travel. Considering that particular concern, my constituents in the Northwest Territories have specific concerns that they want to share with the authorities that be. They want those concerns to be made known to the minister who has the authority and the department officials who have the responsibility.

• (1720)

In particular, there has been much concern with the transfer of airports that not only is there a priority list of communities that would have their airports upgraded before the transfer was made, but also that there are communities which need complete refurbishing or rebuilding of their airports.

An example—it is not only one—would be Fort Franklin which has its own airport located right at the end of the schoolyard. When you fly into the community of Fort Franklin, the minister should know that you fly over a schoolyard and a school. This is quite a dangerous situation if we talk about safety.

There has been much of a push over the last four or five years by this community to have a complete relocation.

This is not the only community. There are other communities that asked for a complete rebuilding mostly because of safety.

The other thing that the northerners, my constituents, would like the authorities to know is that we have currently the proposal to build a new terminal in the very busy community of Norman Wells.

A cost analysis team went in, but the cost analysis has not been returned to the community. In the greater scheme of things across Canada, on an economy of scale, the northerners feel they are not at the top of the list of priorities.

They feel they would not want to miss the opportunity for this proposal to go forward. That is one particular concern which they want to be made known.

When I am speaking about the transfer of airports, I also want to speak about the conditions of some of these airports. These responsibilities have been transferred but to the over all infrastructure, upkeep and refurbishing of this infrastructure, the costs are prohibitive.

It is very expensive in the north and the amount of use that these particular airports get is very high because many of these communities rely solely on air travel. They do not have highways or railways attaching them to the outer communities.

These are expressed concerns. With the main carriers that land in some of our main terminals throughout the Mackenzie Valley, specifically in my area, we find that on the whole issue of official bilingualism we have taken it one step further.

Canadian Airlines should be applauded for the steps it has taken by way of tapes and technology to serve the people in that area in various languages. It serves the people in Inuktitut, Chippewan and in all the Dene languages.

It has been quite innovative and quite ingenious in the way it has done that. I would like to take the opportunity to applaud this type of activity which has been undertaken by a particular carrier.

I have one other concern. If you are a northerner you may have had the opportunity for the government to have transferred the authority to the Northwest Territories for airports. We have little power when it comes to the kind of services we receive at those particular airports from the main carriers.

For instance, if you live in the Northwest Territories you will notice that when the schedules have changed through the two main airlines service is reduced. It is impossible for the working public in the north to get out of Yellowknife, the capital of the north, on a Sunday.

On a Sunday, a working individual travelling to the east must leave the Northwest Territories at 9 a.m. and arrive perhaps at a destination of Ottawa at 9 p.m. or 10 p.m. That is a complete day of travel.

If that is not your preferred choice, you could leave Yellowknife at 7.30 in the evening, wait in Edmonton until a quarter to or twenty to one the next morning, take the all night flight and travel from Edmonton to Ottawa to arrive 8.05 bleary eyed and ill prepared for a full day of work.

It has been extremely difficult for the working and travelling public to appreciate the kind of situations that have arisen every time the schedule is changed. We appreciate the service. We know it is far better than we had 10 or 20 years ago, but still we believe that every time the schedule is changed, service is reduced.

We want to say that we are appreciative that our government in the Northwest Territories has essentially taken on the responsibility. We have a lot of reservations about the prohibitive costs it entails when a program is transferred and the authority is taken over. It is one thing to have the authority, but it is quite another thing to have adequate resources, not only to upkeep, maintain and to refurbish, but to completely relocate for the purposes of safety.

Since we have a new minister, many of my constituents have urged me to welcome this minister to come to our communities and to have a look and see the conditions that exist there. We would like to extend an invitation to the minister and to the senior officials to come and meet with our chiefs and our people who have concerns, and to meet with the Government of the Northwest Territories, if it so desires.

I just want to take the opportunity with regard to National Access Awareness Week last week to raise an issue of particular concern. I was honorary chair for the disabled in my area and I believe that as much as possible, although we live in the remotest parts of Canada, we have to make accommodations for the disabled, we have to ensure that there is mobility where it is possible and if there are additional costs, that those have to be incurred. Those people have to be put on an equal level with everyone else in terms of mobility and accessibility.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak at the third reading stage of Bill C-15. I would like to focus on official languages and the application of the Official Languages Act in airports which, according to the bill,

will be a municipal responsibility if they are leased or possibly sold to municipal or regional airport authorities.

Mr. Speaker, I have an abiding interest in the Official Languages Act and—

Mr. Prud'homme: Always did.

Mr. Gauthier: —this act will not have the kind of impact on municipal or regional airport authorities that one would like to see in this country, in relation to a service that we feel is an essential one for Canadian travellers. Clause 4 of Bill C-15 now before the House provides that only four of the twelve parts of the Official Languages Act will apply.

Mr. Speaker, I can understand why Parts I, II, III, XI and XII of the Official Languages Act do not apply but I find it hard to understand why Parts V, VI and VII do not, and I intend to explain to the House the impact of this oversight or this government decision not to include Parts V, VI and VII.

Mr. Speaker, Parts V and VI of the Official Languages Act are designed to protect employees belonging to the two language groups, in other words, to respect their legal right to work in the official language of their choice, which may be English in Montreal, where the majority official language might be French, and French in Winnipeg, for instance, when the majority official language is English.

• (1730)

Mr. Speaker, the idea is to allow any Canadian to work for an institution as important as a company dedicated to public transportation, and to obtain from that agency and its managers the right to work in the official language of their choice. Yet, there is no such guaranty in the legislation before us.

Part V protects the language in the workplace, whereas Part VI ensures equal employment opportunities. We have discussed this on second reading and in committee. Mr. Speaker, we have tried to convince the government of the importance of that issue, but our requests have fallen in deaf ears. That is why we are back, in third reading, after a rather short debate—let's face it—because the government has used a rather unusual procedure. The government has reinstated, so to speak, the bill in this third session of Parliament when, normally, this legislation, which was not passed during the second session of the House, should have died on the Order Paper after the House prorogued, and should therefore have followed the normal legislative process afterwards.

We now find ourselves in a somewhat exceptional situation. On Wednesday May 28, the government, using its majority, passed a bill reinstating former bill C-85, which is now bill C-15.

Mr. Speaker, I simply want to say that Parts V and VI are important to us because, in our opinion, they deal with the most fundamental issues, that is the rights of individual, the rights of Canadians to equal employment opportunities but also the right to work in federal institutions in the language of their choice. Mr. Speaker, if this policy applies to Air Canada which, as we know, must follow all the provisions of the Official Languages Act, I fail to see why an employee of Air Canada would be entitled to equal employment opportunities and would also be entitled to work in the language of his choice, whereas an employee of a local, regional or municipal authority in charge of an airport would not enjoy the same protection.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment was made at the committee stage. The government rejected it, so we are trying again. As regards Part VII of the Official Languages Act, the fact that this part is omitted deprives the Secretary of State of his right to support the public and to cooperate with the provinces in order to fulfill the mandate given to him in the Official Languages Act. The Secretary of State must foster the use of the official languages, promote the rights of the Francophone and Anglophone minorities, and ensure the full recognition and use of both the French and English language in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, this omission is rather difficult to explain. Why is it that Parts V, VI and VII of the Official Languages Act are not integral parts of this legislation? This is beyond us and that is why we bring it up everytime we have a chance to do so.

Mr. Speaker, does bill C-85 give a measure of protection as regards the services that are presently provided in the airports affected? Such airports as in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, and Montreal. Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is no, and that is the cause of our concern.

Local airport authorities are free to choose the criteria, strategies and priorities they consider necessary to manage and operate the airports to be transferred.

Mr. Speaker, I will be brief, but I have to make myself clear again: All we, the Liberals, want is to be sure that Canadians can get from these airport authorities the same hiring and working conditions other companies, such as Air Canada, can offer them. No more, no less. We insist, because we have often seen this government forget extremely important matters, in its haste to privatize and transfer everything. That is why we are back with this motion to amend Bill C-15, which I want to introduce, Mr. Speaker.

Consequently, I move, seconded by my colleague from Saint-Denis:

> That the motion be amended by deleting the words "be read the third time and passed" and substituting the following therefor: "be not now read a third time but be referred back to the Legislative Committee for the purpose of reconsidering clause 4 of the Bill, by striking out line 17, at page 2, and substituting the following therefor: Parts IV, V, VI, VIII, IX and X of the Official Languages Act".

[*English*]

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I followed the debate this afternoon with considerable interest because I introduced the original bill in the House. That bill passed second reading and then went to committee where it was considered in depth, returned to the House and amendments at report stage were placed on the Order Paper by members of the House. The House then prorogued and those amendments were lost.

The bill was then reinstated at report stage by means of a motion along with other bills in an effort to not redo the work that the House and members had already done. Then I understand that a time limit was missed and there were no report stage amendments placed on the Order Paper for debate.

I would ask my hon. friend if he thinks that maybe the House and the Table should review the transcript of this afternoon's proceedings to see if we are not reinstituting report stage at third reading.

As a bill goes through the House, once it has passed second reading, it goes to committee where seven or eight members, including the chairman, can hear witnesses and consider the bill in depth. No member, except those eight people, can place an amendment at committee. That is the reason for report stage.

Report stage allows any member who was not on the committee to make an amendment. I think that process has served this House well.

I ask my hon. friend, who has served considerable time in the House, if he thinks we are using the time of the House properly if we allow a specific amendment, in other words, to send the bill back to committee with instructions to consider whether or not clause *x* should be amended by *y*.

• (1740)

I would submit to my hon. friend that obviously he does not want to quarrel with an opinion of the Chair. I would ask my hon. friend, without quarrelling with that opinion either, with the benefit of his experience around here, to comment on whether or not, by allowing this process to go on, we have not reinstituted report stage at third reading.

I know what Beauchesne reads because I took the time to read it, but I just wonder if Beauchesne should be interpreted that way, in light of our Standing Orders as they exist today and what we try to do with our Standing Orders in terms of committee consideration and report stage by the whole House.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I guess the answer to that question is very simple. The member is a former House leader and he knows that the opposition has a certain time to put amendments at report stage.

In this case, it is because of the exceptional measures the government used last week when they forced this House to adopt by closure a motion reinstating five bills. On Friday we had our amendments. We were ready to table them at report stage, but 2 p.m. is the deadline for tabling these amendments.

The government did not tell us they were going to call this bill today, but they knew, and on Friday afternoon after the deadline for report stage had been passed, they called the bill for today. Mr. Speaker, do you call that fair? Do you call that what I would call playing the game? Do you call that really being a good parliamentary organization. Do you call that leadership, Mr. Speaker? I said to the minister, with all due respect because I like the guy, he is barking up the wrong tree.

The question is well put, but the answer is that it was all planned by them to make us unable to present the amendments at that time. If they had not used that exceptional—exceptional I say, underlined—procedure of forcing their will on the House of Commons and then playing games with the rules as they know them and as we understand them, we would have had our motions by 2 p.m. on Friday. They would have been put within the 24-hour period which is, I think, 76.(2) unless I am mistaken here, which covers that 24-hour period, the time one requires to put amendments at report stage. If that is not the answer, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what is.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to say that the minister knows that this morning at the opening of government business at, I believe, 12 o'clock, there was a request made by the House leader for the New Democratic Party or the Whip to have unanimous consent of the House to put his amendments. We would have gone on the same basis, but Mr. Speaker, the government members denied unanimous consent to put these amendments at the report stage. Therefore, the only way we could have a decision of the House on these very important amendments was to move them in this way at third reading.

It is unusual, but then usually we get some co-operation from the government. It was not forthcoming.

Mr. Lewis: I always enjoy my hon. friend, who is usually very, very accurate with his facts. The suggestion was made that the opposition did not know what was going to be debated on Monday.

I refer the members of the opposition to page 826 of *Hansard* May 30, 1991. The words of their eminent House leader, Mr. Dingwall:

> Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to take the time of the House, but to be clear, we will be on C-6 this afternoon, Friday will be an allotted day, Monday is airport devolution.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The period for questions and comments has now expired. The Chair rules that the motion moved by the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier is in order.

[*English*]

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I am most reluctant to get involved in this discussion between two of my colleagues who are far more experienced than I am. I also took part in the discussions on Bill C-85, now Bill C-15.

We are faced with a *fait accompli*. We are faced with a bill this government wants to get through the House, over the reasonable objections of the Official Opposition and the NDP. We objected to several aspects of this bill. There is of course the issue of official languages, the Official Languages Act, and I have another objection, reflected in the motion we tabled which was voted down. In this motion we asked the government, quite appropriately, to remove that part of the bill concerning the sale of airports. I know this is all over and done with, but I was really very disappointed to see that the government was so emphatic about keeping the word "sell" in the bill.

Why? Because when I sat on the committee, the government said: We have no intention of selling. So why put this word in the bill? Are we being overcautious? I don't think so. Are we being overly suspicious of a government that told us the GST would be a visible tax and a revenue neutral? Are we too suspicious of this government when it says that we must stop selling arms outside the country while proposing a bill aimed at doing just that?

Are we too suspicious of this government, Mr. Speaker, when it says that we must sell Canada abroad, in the other countries, in order to present it in a flattering light, while the Prime Minister is a little too critical of Ontario following its last budget?

Are we too suspicious of this government when it speaks about reconciliation between provinces while trying to create a new department? I think it is about the fortieth department in charge of regional development in Quebec, created I might add without consulting the province.

So, I wonder, are we too suspicious of the government when it uses the expression "has sold—an airport", even though we are told today that it is not considering selling any airport?

I don't know whether or not we are too suspicious, but the government is neglecting a good opportunity to say: "Yes, you are right, we do not need to use the word "sold" in the bill, this is an oversight on our part." Well, I don't think it is an oversight, Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is all planned. We are not yet privatizing airports. For the time being it is only privatization of the workplace, of all services inside airports. However, with the word "sold" in the bill, privatization through sale of airports to private companies is only a question of time.

This is why I object to this bill and why I support the hon. member's motion. I think he is right to oppose the inclusion of the word "sold" in this bill.

• (1750)

I would like to talk about another objection I raised in the committee this bill was referred to and it concerns the official languages.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is a slap in the face of all Canadians with regards to official languages. I have always maintained—and I know some hon. members opposite have come to the realization—that, wherever you are in Canada, whether you are francophone or anglophone, services have to be provided in both languages. This is, essentially, what I think tourists and Canadians alike see as typical of Canada. We have two languages. Why? Because there are two groups of taxpayers: the English-speaking taxpayers and the French-speaking taxpayers.

So, on the subject of official languages, we should have the right to be served in the language of our choice anywhere in Canada, without exception. As a Quebecer, I can tell you that I am proud because, in Quebec, we have always respected the other language. Yes, there were clashes here and there, but on the whole we show due consideration for the language of the minority, the English language. But when it comes to federal institutions, I find it very important to preserve the intent of the Official Languages Act and to keep the provisions of the said Act because, only through these provisions can the intent really be respected.

It is not the case here, Mr. Speaker. In this instance, and I am sure there was no mistake on the part of government, in the terms under which it can contract out services to a third party in an airport, the government did not make it mandatory to comply with the Official Languages Act. The Official Languages Commissioner had to criticize the government saying that it contravenes the intent of the Official Languages Act of Canada.

When I took part in the proceedings of the committee that examined this bill, I asked to what extent the government could enforce the Official Languages Act if it was not specified in the bill. The answer I got is that it cannot be enforced and that it is left to the good will—quite an interesting phrase—to the good will of companies or individuals who will get the airport management contracts.

You should be wary of good will, Mr. Speaker. I heard that authorities who will be in charge of the Dorval airport expressed the view that they would not be able to compete with airports in Boston or New York if they had to comply with the Official Languages Act. It is a shame because it will create a system whereby workers in Dorval will not know what to do and passengers will have problems obtaining services in their own language, be it English or French, because there will be no obligation to provide services in both languages.

It is a shame because, when we studied the bill in committee, we tried to define which services should be provided in both languages, under the Official Languages Act, and which services could be provided in one language or the other. They said before the committee, Mr. Speaker, that only those services related to the act of travelling should be provided in both languages. It means that, if you have to eat in a restaurant, yes, you can be served in both languages, but if you want to buy an apple or an orange or if you want to have a haircut, those services do not have to be provided in both languages.

Then, they talked about places where one can order a drink, among other things. In such places, services might have to be offered in both languages. In fact, a real—how would I say—cacophony was heard from the committee trying to describe the services or the products to be available for sale in both languages.

Mr. Speaker, when people like my hon. friend from Edmonton-East say they have stood up for French in Alberta and are sorry that the Official Languages Act has not been respected, I think it is important. If people from Alberta and from across the country are saying: "Listen, we would like that law to be enforced", I think it is important and that the government should have considered including in the bill the enforcement of the

Official Languages Act. It should have been done and that would have had a very beneficial effect.

Who do governement MP's want to please? Who do you want to please? Certainly not Canadians who are proud of their language, be it English or French. We are proud of our Official Languages Act.

Thus, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that the governement has failed to understand that we, Canadians, are for the enforcement of the Official Languages Act. We believe it is part of Canada, part of our heritage, and it is unfortunate that the governement has but a short-sighted vision of Canada that only goes as far as the next election. I think they made a mistake and that, in fact, most Canadians are disappointed by this government's performance.

* * *

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Riis: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. There have been discussions among the parties and I think you would find unanimous consent to pass the following motion at this point:

> That notwithstanding any standing or special order of the House:
>
> When the House adjourns on Thursday, June 6, 1991, it stands adjourned until 11 o'clock a.m. on Monday, June 10, 1991, provided that one allotted day for the current trimester be deemed to have been disposed of on the said Friday, and provided that one additional allotted day for the autumn trimester of 1991 be designated in the said autumn trimester.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct. There have been discussions among party representatives and we would concur with this motion, keeping in mind that Friday normally would have been an allotted opposition day for the New Democratic Party which will be postponed to a later date in accordance with the motion, as indicated by my colleague previously.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, there have indeed been discussions. I thought the timing would be slightly different. I thought we would dispose of Bill C-15 with the voice vote and a deferred vote tomorrow night and then pass the motion, but I am quite prepared to see unanimous consent for the passage of this motion on the understanding that we will at least be through Bill C-15 in preparation for a vote before we leave here tonight.

That is my understanding and we will not see the clock until we are finished.

I see that members are agreeing to it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The House has heard the motion. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AIRPORT TRANSFER (MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS) ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Corbeil, and of the amendment of Mr. Gauthier (p. 940).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): We are now considering motion of the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, seconded by Mr. Prud'homme.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Yea.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declared the motion lost, on division.

The motion is negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The question is now on the main motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Call in the members.

The Government Whip, on a point of order.

[*English*]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Negatived on division.

• (1800)

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions and we are all prepared to defer the vote until 6 p.m. tomorrow, so the bells can cease.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a) I have been requested by the Chief Government Whip to defer the division until a later time. Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a) the division on the question now before the House stands deferred until 6 p.m. tomorrow, at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, in the short time I have today I would like to put on the record some important comments regarding questions I posed to the government specifically last Friday, and as well a similar question that

I put today by chance to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. It relates specifically to a very important issue in northern British Columbia in my riding. It is the whole question of a major hydroelectric project in my area commonly referred to as the Alcan project.

The question I put on Friday to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment and today to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans concerned the government's intent as it relates to a very important court ruling on May 16 of this year regarding this particular project. The Federal Court ruled that the Government of Canada must have an environmental assessment review of this Alcan project in northern B.C.

It is a very important ruling. There is a newspaper article on the ruling which quotes the decision of the judge in this case. It is an incredible indictment of this government's environmental policy and an indictment of the policy that this government has had over the last number of years as it relates to this entire project and its subsequent impact on the Nechako and Fraser Rivers.

The judge in this particular case declared, and I am quoting from the article in the newspaper, that the former environment minister's decision at that time to exempt this particular project from the full environmental assessment review process was "a failure to undertake a legal obligation". The judge certainly slapped, if not the government's wrist, the government around a bit and rightfully so. To not have an environmental assessment of this very major project draws into question this government's intent and its concern for the environment. It is also inconsistent with the announcement over the weekend of this government's plans under the green plan to try to clean up the Fraser River.

No plan to clean up and protect the Fraser River will be complete without a full environmental assessment of the Alcan project.

Just briefly, there are a couple of concerns that have been raised about this project that we have to repeat time and time again so that this government understands what it is a partner in. It is a partner in destroying the recreational fish habitat in the area, lowering the river flows, and increasing the temperature of the river affecting the salmon stocks in that particular area. It is a massive project that the government has allowed to continue.

So far to date, as recently as this afternoon, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has yet to make a decision about an environmental assessment review process.

It is critical and important, given all the evidence and information that has been made public about this project.

Former fisheries officials have commented about the late night closed door decisions that have been made. It is clear to me that we need an environmental assessment review hearing process so that all the information can come out concerning this project.

We also must ensure that this government will follow the law as issued by the Federal Court to see that a decision is made. The right decision should be to have a full environmental review of the Alcan project in northern B.C.

Mr. Rob Nicholson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to inform the House that the Kemano hydroelectric project near Kitimat, British Columbia, was subject to detailed examination related to fisheries and other environmental issues.

The 1987 settlement agreement among Alcan Aluminium, the province of British Columbia and the federal government was a unique agreement providing an excellent example of sustainable development allowing economic development to proceed with ongoing implementation of mitigative measures as required.

Mitigation measures identified during environmental studies and a scientific inquiry by 10 experts chaired by Dr. David Strangway, President of the University of British Columbia, are being implemented by Alcan.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the province and the company continue to work through the mechanisms established by the agreement, such as the technical and steering committees to ensure that fishery matters are dealt with satisfactorily with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans monitoring the fisheries' mitigative measures to ensure their success.

The agreement among the province, Alcan and the federal government was based on several environmental considerations. Alcan prepared an extensive environmental impact report to describe the potential impacts of the project.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans carried out consultations to determine public concerns for impacts on fish and fish habitat, and government decisions were taken only after consideration of these impacts.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to inform the House that Department of Justice officials are actively involved in analysing the complex and numerous legal issues raised by the recent Federal Court decision regarding Alcan's Kemano project.

I am also pleased to inform the House that a full and proper interdepartmental consultation process is well under way to ensure that the many legal and policy considerations arising from the court's decision are carefully and thoroughly addressed.

A decision on whether to appeal the court's ruling will be made in the near future following the completion of this analysis.

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, on May 28, I put a question to the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and the Minister for International Trade concerning the very serious situation which faces the community of Sault Ste. Marie, and specifically the plan which has been made public in the past week concerning Algoma Steel.

I asked the Minister for International Trade what specific plans the federal government has to assist the city of Sault Ste Marie, Algoma Steel and most important the families and the workers who have not only been laid off, but the 1,300 who are on recall at the present time.

The plan that has been put before the public calls for the loss of some 3,500 additional jobs in the community. These are devastating proposals which have been made by the company.

The Minister for International Trade, in responding to my question, gave no real specifics. He got into the question of countervail and the difficulty of government making specific proposals or providing direct support.

In my supplementary question, I asked the Minister of Labour, who is responsible for older workers adjustment,

if the Government of Canada was prepared to make a commitment right now to the program for older workers adjustment which provides up to $1,300 per month of assistance to workers in the age group from 55 to 64 when people, of course, would become eligible for old age pension, Canada Pension and other benefits.

• (1810)

The minister suggested that a committee made up of representatives from the Ontario government and the Government of Canada has been holding meetings, that they plan to make recommendations on this matter and that he hopes the recommendations will be favourable.

It would be really good to have more of the details because there are workers in Sault Ste. Marie who have been laid off for many months now, perhaps some for over a year. If this program is going to become available immediately that would be good to know.

Actually, it is necessary for a worker to have exhausted his severance pay and his unemployment insurance benefits in order to be eligible for the program for older workers' assistance, but I cannot think of any particular program that would be so important. I am told that of the people in the employ now. There are some 1,780 who would be in the age group of the proposal. It is slightly modified from the original plan, but then there are all those other workers who have been laid off during the last year or two.

Clearly, if there is an industry and a community where this program should be provided, it is to those workers who have been laid off by Algoma Steel in Sault Ste. Marie. Many of them are older workers who have very little chance or opportunity of being eligible for finding other jobs, especially in the current economic situation which faces us in Ontario, throughout Canada and certainly in the city of Sault Ste. Marie.

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague is well aware, the federal government continues to have a strong interest in the situation at Algoma Steel. We are particularly concerned for the future of the company and its workers and the possible impact on the people of Sault Ste. Marie.

As the hon. member knows, in February of this year Dofasco announced that it was writing off its investment in Algoma and that the firm was on its own financially. At that time, Algoma announced that it would be meeting with its lenders to restructure its debts and begin operating under the company's Creditors Arrangements Act. This has afforded the company a measure of protection until July 31, 1991 to have financial arrangements worked out with all its lenders and creditors.

The federal government participated with the province of Ontario, Dofasco and the Royal Bank in providing Algoma with a $60 million loan guarantee. The federal government's share was $15 million. This guarantee, provided at commercial rates of interest, provided a bridge loan to allow the company to continue operating and meet its payroll and other financial obligations until it received the money for the sale of its coal mine properties in the United States. Before the end of March, Algoma had repaid this loan, and the federal government's financial commitment to the company ended.

The federal government is represented on the Algoma task force. It is composed of representatives of the federal government, the province, the banks, the employees, the suppliers and the community. While direct financial assistance to the contrary is not appropriate, the federal government will continue to work with Algoma and the other stakeholders to assist the firm in becoming more competitive.

In addition, federal efforts will include working with Algoma through External Affairs and International Trade Canada to develop new overseas markets for the company, identifying possible investors or partners for the company, and working with the community and the workers to help them adjust to the situation.

As to the employees of Algoma, the Canadian Steel Trade and Employment Congress has government funding and the mandate to assist laid off steel workers. In addition, the Community Futures Program of Employment and Immigration Canada has been operating successfully in the Soo since 1986.

The federal government has great interest in the Algoma situation and monitors the situation on a daily basis.

Adjournment Debate

[*Translation*]

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, you will remember that on May 23, I put a question to the Minister of Transport about three Montreal apartments leased by the National Transportation Agency. I have in hand a brochure describing the characteristics of these apartments located at 2000, Saint-Marc St., Montreal. And I see here a little map showing they are just one block from the Forum.

An hon. member: Coincidence.

Mr. Boudria: Of course.

Now, Mr. Speaker, according to the brochure, the Saint-Marc is located in the Montreal city centre. Be comfortable, relax, enjoy the pool. The magic of Montreal is within reach (Above all, at the taxpayers expenses.) Characteristics: air conditioned, colour TV, Cable TV, china cutlery, linen, large balcony, indoor swimming pool, sauna. There is almost everything in there, Mr. Speaker, except mirrors on the ceilings and, of course, padded toilet seats. All in all, there seems to be everything but that.

The National Transportation Agency has not rented only one such apartment in Montreal, Mr. Speaker, a mere block from the Forum—surely a coincidence—but three of them. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you how devoted the people working for that transportation agency are, there are so hardworking that they always want to use the apartment located two blocks from the Forum on weekends.

An hon. member: Precisely on weekends.

Mr. Boudria: Precisely on weekends. Let me give you an example, Mr. Speaker. On the long weekend of September 1989, all there apartments were occupied. You see what I mean? It was a long weekend which indeed encouraged those people to work.

An hon. member: Was there a hockey game?

Mr. Boudria: We do not know whether there was a hockey game or any other activities. But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell you now about the long weekend in October, in the fall of 1989: it was a glorious weekend, with beautiful fall leaves on the trees in Mont Royal park and elsewhere— But I know that the people involved did not use the weekend for the purpose of admiring nature, Mr. Speaker, they were too devoted to their work. Every apartment was occupied of course at 200 Saint-Marc Street, in Montreal, two blocks from Forum Street, but it was sheer coincidence.

[*English*]

The government has a housing policy, we have now discovered. It has a housing policy for Erik Nielsen and his friends at the National Transportation Agency; such a good housing policy that they get free housing when they go to Montreal.

I have the booking list here. It apparently is every now and then registered to guests. Who are those guests? Guests of whom? Why does the National Transportation Agency have an apartment in Montreal? Why does it have three apartments in Montreal? What is the purpose of this exercise? What does it cost the taxpayers, in addition to the $31,000 every nine months that it costs to rent the place, to administer the program?

I even have a sample form here of how you apply to use the fancy digs in Montreal if you happen to work at the National Transportation Agency or a as member of the board of the agency or others. Here is a request form: "Form for booking Montreal apartments, Part 1, general information, date, request submitted, requested by" and so on, "authorization from director, Part 2, confirmation". This is for the boss to say whether you can have the apartment in Montreal and so on.

The minister told us in the House she would investigate this, but I want to know what the answer is. What is the excuse for this abuse of taxpayers' money?

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that after that entertaining interlude all of us would want to have the answer. In response to the hon. member's question I would like to put some facts before the House.

The National Transportation Agency has advised that it did rent three apartments in July 1989 in Montreal. One of the three apartments was used on an interim basis for an employee who was relocating to Montreal. It was cancelled when no longer needed.

The other two apartments were used for auditors travelling on a regular basis to Montreal to audit the books of CN and CP. One of those apartments was let go in April 1990.

The decision to rent the apartments rather than use hotels was made for a combination of reasons. First, economically it would provide a cost benefit to the National Transportation Agency. Second, it would ensure availability of space in Montreal. The hon. member may know often hotel rooms are difficult to locate, particularly during the convention season. Third, the location: the apartment offered affordable access from both the headquarters of CN and CP to the Montreal offices of the agency.

The use of the apartments was carefully monitored for the first four months and it was shown to provide a positive cost savings to the agency.

• (1820)

The accusations of the hon. member as to the luxuriousness of the apartments are quite exaggerated. A comparison with other similar apartment hotels in the government directory shows that this one comes in at the low end of the scale.

As she indicated in her response, the Minister of State for Transportation asked for a full review of this matter. A cost analysis indicates that there are no longer cost savings and thus the agency advises that it has cancelled the rental effective June 19.

The decision by the agency to rent this apartment was made by employees who were seeking a better solution to management problems, which is very much in keeping with Public Service 2000 philosophy.

I think that rather than criticizing the agency for this initiative, the member should be complimenting its employees on trying an innovative approach to solve a management problem.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, in the brief time that I have this evening, I want to expand a little bit on the question I posed to the minister of external affairs May 30.

At that time I was talking about the Al-Mashat affair and specifically about the differences between version *a* and version *b*. I want to go back briefly because I think it is important for the House to know that version *a* of the Al-Mashat affair was provided to us at a press conference with great fanfare by the minister of external affairs and the minister of immigration, at which time they assured us that the matter was full and complete.

This was a report which contained four pages plus one paragraph. Is it my wording that says that the report was full and complete? It is not. On May 15, the day after the report was submitted, the hon. minister said: "A report was made. It is as complete as it can be and it tells people what they need to know". Lo and behold, two weeks later on May 30, another report was released—version *b*.

The first report was four pages and one paragraph. The second report was 26 pages. It does not take a mental giant to realize that there are additions and amplifications in version *b*. Are there any discrepancies? There are.

I chose to ask the minister about one of those discrepancies on May 30. At that time I pointed out specifically that on page 11 of version *b*, the report makes specific mention of a written memorandum dated March 8 which was prepared by the enforcement branch of Employment and Immigration Canada. It was to go to the minister of immigration. To say what? To advise of what was happening with the Al-Mashat application.

Interestingly enough, if you looked at version *a* you would find absolutely nothing whatsoever about that memorandum. It is not even mentioned. It is not even brought to our attention and yet we were assured by the minister of external affairs that the report was as complete as it could be and it told people what they needed to know.

Two weeks later, it seemed we needed to know more and so we got a little bit more.

What is even more troubling is the response that I received to my question. My question, very simply, was: Why is there something in version *b* that is not in version *a*? What does the minister answer? I am quoting: "I am going to have all these documents in front of me before the committee. I will be very happy to answer all these questions, as I was this morning when—let the record show—this member" referring to me, "walked out too".

Let the record show that the minister did not have the documents when she appeared. Let the record show that at 6.25 today I still have not been provided with the documents.

I ask the question again: What is going on? Why is version *a* different from version *b*? Why are there documents mentioned in version *b* that are not mentioned in version *a*? Which is the true version or is there going to be a version *c*?

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in releasing the report of the deputy ministers on May 14, which provided a chronology of events, every effort was made to provide as complete a record as possible concerning the arrival of Mr. Al-Mashat in Canada on the basis of information then available.

The question of differences between the report released on May 14 and the chronology tabled at the committee on May 30 was referred to by the Secretary of State for External Affairs at the Standing Committee meeting of May 30. At that time she responded that minor differences between the two documents were easily explained by a closer examination of events as time permitted and the coming forward of private citizens to reveal their involvement.

In particular, this resulted in clarification of some points regarding the source and timing of representations on Mr. Al-Mashat's behalf. It also allowed for further amplification of the information on the record.

The matter is still under examination before the standing committee where the government is making every effort to provide a complete and accurate account of the Al-Mashat case.

With regard to the particulars of the memorandum prepared for the Minister of Employment and Immigration, officials of that department will be appearing before the standing committee tomorrow.

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, tonight I want to follow up on the question I raised on May 28, 1991, concerning the economy in the Gaspé and Magdalen Islands area.

The area, Mr. Speaker, is undoubtedly in deep economic trouble. its youths are discouraged and demoralized because the unemployment rate in Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands is over 27 per cent a figure matched in Canada only by one area in Newfoundland. If there is no change, the whole province of Quebec will soon have this record. That is why the level of self-confidence of the Gaspé people is at its lowest. These people wonder what the future holds for their children in terms of job opportunities.

We must avoid or prevent an exodus of residents in search of lasting jobs they cannot find in their region. Such an exodus, that we must prevent, explains why I raised the issue of the Gaspé economy last May 28.

I asked the Minister of National Health and Welfare when his government would table economic policies that would give some hope and create employment for these people, so that they can work and raise their children in one of the most beautiful regions in Canada.

The minister did not answer my question. Instead, he told me to wait for an announcement he was going to make on his trip to the Gaspé region, on May 30. I listened carefully to what he said, and I must say I am very disappointed with the empty shell the minister unveiled to the people of the Gaspé region. He did not unveil a long-term plan to create long-lasting jobs. Instead, he chose to announce the creation of an Economic Development Agency for that region. The new Agency will receive a $1.7 million subsidy, over the next five years, from the federal minister of Quebec Economic Regional Development. The subsidy will cover the Agency's operational costs. Mr. Speaker, that may look like a considerable amount of money, but over five years, it only means $340,000 a year.

Does the minister really think this Agency will be able to promote the economic and industrial development of this region, as well as attract new investors, with only $340,000? Surely he must be dreaming. But the worst of it is that this subsidy is not new money. That amount had already been allocated by the Conservatives, before the last election, under the 1988 Canada-Quebec Agreement. Is it another election commitment? An old commitment with a new look? We do not know. I remember that, in 1988, before the election, they announced a Canada-Quebec Region Development Agreement worth $800 million.

After almost three years, Mr. Speaker, they are still left with $1.7 million to invest in the area where they did nothing since 1988. Are they recycling those promises? Are these new promises? It is definitely not fresh money and the Gaspé people are disappointed by this announcement, by this empty shell. They have not only put forward an empty shell, they have provoked everybody, every circle in Quebec have been incensed by this announcement.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope the parliamentary secretary will be able to provide me with more concrete answers than the ones the Minister gave me, either in this House or by his announcement.

Mr. Charles Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I will give some information to my hon. colleague. Gaspésie is a region I am particularly fond of. I was born there and I still have relatives on my father's and my mother's side living there, more precisely in the area of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Rivière-Madeleine and other villages in the same county.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member for Saint-Léonard that the Minister of National Health and Welfare said in this House last week that people in Gaspésie and îles-de-la-Madeleine would be quite happy with the announcements that would be made in the next few days.

Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member and other members of this House read the documents prepared for the visit of the minister in Eastern Quebec, they know that the Minister did not announce only one measure but a whole series of concrete initiatives to promote development and job creation in that region.

The first concerns the creation of the *Société de développement économique de la Gaspésie et des Îles-de-la-Madeleine*. This agency will strive to develop the region, it will be active in economic prospecting, investment and promotion of industry and tourism in Canada and abroad.

Mr. Speaker, the government will support the operating costs of this agency for five years, by giving it $1.7 million in financial assistance. The Canadian government will also give $2 million in contribution to the new agency, so that it can take part, as a limited partner, in the new venture capital corporation called *Investissement-Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine Enr.*

The minister also announced, Mr. Speaker, the creation of a new loan insurance program which will apply specifically to the Gaspe and Magdalen Island area. With this program, important initiatives will be realized in the area initiatives which would not otherwise get started for want of adequate financing.

I would like to add, Mr. Speaker, that, under this program, our government will be able to offer loan guarantees totalling $6.4 million for the period up to March 31, 1993.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, last week, the hon. minister had the pleasure to announce the extension of the industrial component of the business development program. The objective of this initiative is to make new activities related to the primary and tertiary sectors eligible for federal financial assistance.

If my hon. colleague calls that an empty shell, Mr. Speaker, I personally think that it is very substantial.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.33 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 4, 1991

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Shall the questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 81—MONTREAL ECONOMY

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce) moved:

That this House condemns the government for having abandoned the population of Montreal through its obvious lack of political will to provide jobs and economic opportunities to the people of this region.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in the motion before the House today, we are condemning the government for having abandoned the population of Montreal through its obvious lack of political will to provide jobs and economic opportunities to the people of this region.

Mr. Speaker, the unemployment rate in Montreal has now reached 13.1 percent, the highest municipal rate in Canada. Moreover, 22 percent of Montrealers are living in such poverty that the municipal rate in that regard is also the highest in Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, this motion may sound severe but it is not an exaggeration. Let me say this at the beginning: I do not want this debate to be a contest of rhetoric or a contest of partisan political verbiage. I am trying to make an honest attempt to examine a serious situation, to analyze its causes and to find solutions. I note that the first ones to laugh and make jokes about the resolution were members on the governement side and I must say I am here today to let the facts speak for themselves.

If the government can put forward sound solutions, I would be the first to withdraw my motion of condemnation.

As I said at the beginning, Montreal has the highest urban unemployment rate in Canada. It has the highest urban poverty rate in Canada. Liberals did not create those facts or that situation. I am simply bringing it to the attention of the House as something that has to be dealt with.

There have been massive layoffs in Montreal, closures of factories and businesses, a high rate of bankruptcies. In Montreal at the present time there are over 188,000 individuals unemployed. Food banks are at their highest number and at their greatest demand. Last night I was at a meeting in my own constituency in Montreal, a district of Montreal that by some is considered a more prosperous area—which is not correct—but a report that I listened to last night with respect to the N.D.G. Food Depot showed that from 1990 to 1991 the increase in demand for persons served in that food bank went up by 218 per cent. In 1990 that food bank in N.D.G. served 7,600 persons and this year so far, 16,500 persons.

It has been estimated that in Montreal, there are 15,000 homeless people, people that are either sleeping on the street or sleeping in shelters, that have no home of their own.

I would like this debate to be a serious attempt to deal with a very sad and difficult situation. I want the facts to speak for themselves. Let me list the layoffs in Montreal which took place in 1990 and 1991.

I will only list those for the House that are over 100 persons: Valmet-Dominion in Lachine laid off 200; Black and Decker laid off 150; Marconi laid off 150; Bristol Myers Squibb in Candiac laid off 124; CBC laid off 160; Thibault in Pierreville laid off 150; General

Motors in Broisbriand laid off 1,700; Steinberg's laid off 150; Clairol in Knowlton, Quebec laid off 228; CN laid off 2,000 in the Montreal area; Miracle Food Mart, 350; Canadian Marconi, 13; Goodyear at Valleyfield, 890—

An hon. member: Is that in Montreal?

Mr. Allmand: Yes. The hon. member says: Is that Montreal, too? It is in the region of Montreal. Mr. Speaker, here we have a minister of the Crown and a member of the government side making light of the fact that over 800 people are laid off at Valleyfield, which is in the Montreal region. As a matter of fact, not only is it in the Montreal region from a demographic point of view, but it is served by offices of this government from the Montreal area.

Rolland Inc., 293 laid off. That is in 1990. In 1991: Eaton's, 190 laid off; Noranda, 125; Culinar, 256; Circo Craft, 211; Pratt & Whitney, 1,200; Air Canada, 2,900 across the country but the head office is in Montreal and a large number of those will be in the Montreal area; Primo Foods, 194; Télé-Métropole, 200; Goodyear, 145; and of course one of the largest layoffs of all, Pascal's hardware, a company that was in business in Montreal for 87 years, just in the last month closed 21 stores and laid off 1,600; and today it was announced in the Montreal newspapers that Pratt & Whitney have announced a lay-off of another 200 by June 21, making the total lay-offs at Pratt & Whitney of 1,000.

There have been many reports on this situation in Montreal and again I emphasize to the government these reports speak for themselves. It is not the Liberals speaking. It is not the New Democrats speaking. These are reports commissioned by the province of Quebec, the city of Montreal, and other social agencies in Montreal which state the facts with respect to the city.

There is a report by *l'Office de planification et de développement du Québec* from March 1991, indicating 188,000 Montrealers out of work by the end of 1990 and a report of May 1990 by *Centraide de Montréal* which shows deepening poverty and an expanding underclass of Montrealers without jobs, with substandard housing, and with poor health.

This report was completed by a 14-member committee headed by Paul Lacoste, former rector of the *Université de Montréal*. Its recommendations included protection for low-income individuals, equitable taxation, home nursing and care for the aged and handicapped, subsidized housing, massive training and literacy programs and incentives for employment. That is a report, I would like the government to note, not by Liberals or by opposition members but by a very responsible committee in Montreal.

The 1989 report by federal economist, Mr. Jules Leger, stated that the large number of low income families puts Montreal in the forefront in terms of poor compared to other areas of Canada. Montreal, he said, has 192,000 more poor people than all of the four Atlantic provinces.

In April 1990, *le Regroupement des départements de santé communautaire du Montréal Métropolitain* stated that one in four Montreal residents live below the poverty line. In May 1990, a report by the *Ministère des Affaires sociales du Québec* warned that Montreal is becoming impoverished faster than the rest of the province. The Canadian Apparel Manufacturers Institute expects the free trade agreement to kill fully one-third of 40,000 jobs in the Montreal region by the year 2000.

Finally, we have the Picard report from a commission which was appointed by this Conservative government to put forward a plan of action for Montreal to reinvigorate the city's economy and to create jobs. I will deal more with that report in a few minutes but that report made 84 recommendations, hardly any of which have been taken up by the government.

I would like to refer to a few of the clippings that have been put forward describing the situation in Montreal.

• (1020)

Bankruptcy jumped by 50 per cent in Quebec. Of course, a great majority of the businesses in Quebec are in Montreal.

Another clipping from April 1990 reads: "City Facing Unemployment Crisis, the Trade Unions Say in Montreal". Michel Bruillet, spokesman for *Comité Régional de Syndicat de Montréal* told reporters that there were 188,000 people without work in the Montreal employment pool.

He said action must be taken to deal with this very serious problem.

An article from the Southam newspapers of February 16, 1991: "Quebec Manufacturers Among the Hardest Hit Victims of the Free Trade Agreement."

An article from *La Presse*, December 1990:

[*Translation*]

"The level of activity in the manufacturing sector will decline unless there is a radical change in attitude". This is from the Montreal Board of Trade.

[*English*]

"Economic Outlook Worsens: A Report by the Conseil de Patrons du Quebec."

It goes on and on.

Another report was by Secor, an agency which was commissioned by the provincial government to study the

situation in Montreal. It reported on March 28, 1991. *La Presse* of Montreal said the following:

[*Translation*]

"Poverty is spreading in the Montreal area. There are 615,000 people living in low-income households, half of them in Montreal proper".

[*English*]

There are other reports which show that, despite the fact that in Montreal many people gained economically during the period of 1985 to 1990, many people were big losers. That was principally the conclusion of the Centraide report, which I referred to already, under Paul Lacoste.

It said that Quebec went from having the fourth highest level of low-income households for families and individuals in 1979 to the highest rate in Canada for individuals, and the second highest after Newfoundland for families.

I spoke about food banks and the great proliferation of food banks in the Montreal area. Again, there is a report in this morning's paper with respect to the Sun Youth food bank in Montreal centre.

It said in the headline of *The Gazette* this morning: "Two Women Collapse, Two Men Fight in Food Line-up."

The Old Brewery Mission is another agency which provides food and shelter to homeless men.

An hon. member: It is known well by the Prime Minister.

Mr. Allmand: It is known well, as my colleague says, by the Prime Minister. Reverend McCarthy, who is an outstanding individual, has been helping these men for years.

After 28 years of running the Old Brewery Mission, Reverend McCarthy is "disturbed by the dramatic increase in numbers of men showing up, and especially in the number under 25 who used to be comparatively rare among the mission's clientele and now account for around 60 per cent."

With respect to welfare, it says that the Government of Quebec is anticipating that costs for welfare will rise this year by $200 million.

A report from Quebec City by the minister André Bourbeau says: "The recession has caused at least 15,000 households to join Quebec's welfare roles since early fall. The total number of Quebec households on welfare now stands at 355,000."

That is the situation. It does not make me happy to recount those figures to the House of Commons. I was born in Montreal. I love Montreal. It is my city. It was once the metropolis of Canada. It was the economic engine for the entire province of Quebec, and I think we must look at that situation seriously to try to determine the causes.

What are the causes of this deplorable situation? If we look at the Picard report, the Secor report and some of the other reports, they say part of it is historical and part of it is recent.

Historically, according to some of these experts, Montreal had too many old-line industrial plants with skills geared to the old technology. Of course, as the old technology became outdated, for one reason or another Montreal did not adapt quickly enough and did not receive support to adapt quickly enough. I am not only speaking of the machinery and technology, but also the manpower, the trained workers.

Recently, however, I think we have to say to the government that some of its policies have also impacted on the situation and made it considerably worse. The free trade agreement has no doubt encouraged several businesses to go to the United States. On the radio this morning I heard a report—it was not with respect to Montreal but with respect to Toronto—about an agency which stated that it worked with 86 industrial firms which have moved from Toronto to the Buffalo area. We have not heard a similar report with respect to Montreal, but we know that certain companies, consolidating under the free trade agreement, moved their subsidiaries to the United States. One example is the Gillette plant, which was a subsidiary of the American company. It closed the plant in Montreal and consolidated its operations in Boston.

The free trade agreement has had an impact on this situation, which has to be looked at seriously. So has the goods and services tax. Everyone said, even those who agreed with the goods and services tax, expert after expert said that it was the wrong time to bring in the goods and services tax. It increased prices at a time when people were being laid off, when jobs were going scarce and people had a hard time coping with their economic situation.

I would submit that the free trade agreement, combined with the goods and services tax, has certainly contributed to the massive increase in cross-border shopping because it has increased the difference in prices between retail goods in Canada and retail goods in the United States.

Not only the GST, but other taxes have contributed to this recession and made the situation even worse in

Montreal. There was the report yesterday by the Ottawa-based firm, Global Economics, which pointed out that since 1984 all taxes have increased by $1,530 a year for middle-class taxpayers with a family of two.

Other things which might have been the cause and which require examination are the government's policies of deregulation and privatization, or one might say the dismantling of the infrastructure of Canada. Just a week or so ago we had the protest on Parliament Hill by the truckers. From time to time we have had other similar industries which have submitted that they have been extremely hurt by the policies of deregulation by the government. As for privatization, companies such as Air Canada and Petro-Canada also suffered from an employment point of view after privatization took place.

Put together all these policies, the policy for free trade with the United States, deregulation and privatization, and we see that we have had a dismantling of the Canadian economic infrastructure. I would submit that once we dismantle the Canadian economy and take away those things which made it a Canadian economy, sooner or later the political structure will disappear as well.

I could also refer to the high interest rates, which not only affect businesses in Montreal and employment in Montreal, but affect the situation right across the country.

One of the most important causes of this situation is the philosophy or policy of this government. If we look at the budgets of the government since 1984, we will see that it has adopted a series of policies which are more or less a doctrinaire commitment to a free market economy, a philosophy which says: "Let things be as they are, let the market operate as it will and everything will take care of itself". Government members continually rise in their places and condemn suggestions to spend money to stimulate the economy.

• (1030)

They describe that as throwing money at the problem. I think that where a country spends its money shows where its priorities are. There is no doubt that money has to be spent on certain items if we are going to reinvigorate the Montreal economy.

Mr. Speaker, you are indicating to me that I only have a minute left. I have enough material here to go on for a quite considerable length of time.

I am sure that in its response the government will refer to certain things it has done. It will refer to a contract to Canadair. It will refer to some things it did for the pharmaceutical industry. It will refer to the new agency that will be set up under the Minister of National Health and Welfare. It will refer to the program for older workers adjustment.

These things, while good in themselves, are isolated *ad hoc* policies which have not dealt with the problem that needs to be dealt with. If they had been successful, we would not have the situation I have described. These policies are not enough. Montreal needs much, much more.

I have a report here which says that the POWA program is a cruel lottery for the "laid off". It is underfunded, it does not have enough money.

My final remarks are that we need political will, political commitment to create jobs in the Montreal area. It can be done. It has been done in other countries. Liberals did it in the past. Between 1965 and 1980, there was a 5.6 per cent unemployment rate in Canada. That is because we believed in a mixed economy.

I encourage the government to look at the situation in Montreal once again and come forward with some positive policies. If it does so during the debate today, I will withdraw my motion and give it credit for doing so.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to what my colleague had to say, especially about some programs the Conservative government implemented to protect workers living in the province of Quebec, and particularly in Montreal. I would like my colleague to give us more details about two programs that have had a negative impact on POWA a program for workers affected by changes in the industries and plant closings due to economic upheavals, or as some would say, due to the free trade deal. There is also the other program the hon. member has mentioned. I would like more information on that one, because as an member, I have received a lot of complaints from people who wanted to benefit from POWA and other programs put in place by the federal government to help workers when they lose their jobs. I do not think these programs are working at all. Like my colleague has just said, they have become more like a lottery for the laid off.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, for POWA, I do not have figures for the province of Quebec, but I do have overall statistics for Canada showing that the amount of money available is inadequate. For example, I have here an article published in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, on May 23, 1991, where it says:

[*English*]

Only $73 million of the promised $150 million was used in those first two years for the program for older worker adjustment, providing benefits to 2,244 ex-workers. That is for the entire country, 2,244 ex-workers. I already put on the record, and these were not my statistics, that in the Montreal region there are 188,000 workers who have been laid off in the last two years and are now out of work.

The article goes on to say that, despite the steady stream of plant closings and business bankruptcies, only a tiny fraction have been declared by POWA's joint federal-provincial labour department committee to meet the major layoff test, and therefore qualify for designation under the program.

In Ontario, only 39 qualified. I do not have the figures for Quebec. In answer to the hon. member, while the government has some programs which in theory look good on paper, they are drastically underfunded and do not meet the seriousness of the problem.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Montreal for bringing to the attention of the rest of the country the problems of Montreal.

I would like to refer him to the Question Period last week when different members were pursuing the question of the economic health of Montreal. The minister stood up and said that they were trying to develop a plan because of Montreal's poor health. When another member got up and asked him about the future of Winnipeg, the Minister of Finance stood up and said: "You do not need a plan because you have good macro policies".

I wanted to bring this to the attention of the member and ask a question. I think in previous governments, particularly in the Liberal government in the 1970s and 1980s, there was a good mix between federal activity and provincial and municipal activity in support of regional base plans. There was the Montreal base region, the Winnipeg base region and other parts of the country. In the absence of having coherent plans for these cities, you end up with the extreme opposite. You end up with people competing against each other and running the risk of having plans which are contrary to the interests of the country.

For example, there is the story both in Winnipeg and Montreal of the competition over the CF-18 plane. That was a debate which should not have taken place in this country, pitting one region against the other.

I would ask the member if he could perhaps elaborate on the need for city base plans, not only in Montreal but across the country. The federal government should show leadership financially, morally and with the expertise in the Public Service so that people appreciate the government's understanding of their needs in terms of unemployment, poverty, training and getting the proper businesses set up. This is a holistic approach which deserves the interest of the federal government. In fact, one of the big surprises that we have is the total absence of planning on the part of this government.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct. Liberal governments over the years believed in a mixed economy. We believed in the market system but we believed that in a country such as Canada where we have 25 million people dispersed over a large area, right up against the giant economy of the United States, it was necessary for us to have certain government support programs and certain government economic intervention. Over the years that approach worked. We had the greatest eras of prosperity in this country under Liberal governments in the fifties, sixties and seventies.

I pointed out that from 1965 to 1980 the average rate of employment was 5.6 per cent. The government always refers to the two years of 1981-82. We had a recession but it was no worse than the recession which is going on right now.

We believed in doing things to deal with recessions. We did not have this doctrinaire belief, this 19th century belief that the marketplace would take care of itself and all situations and that there would be a trickling down effect which would help small businesses and the economy generally.

In response to the member's question with respect to municipalities and planning, the Canadian Federation of Municipalities has for years recommended a joint federal, provincial and municipal program to reconstruct municipal infrastructure; roads, bridges, sewers, water systems, anti-pollution systems, ports, airports, transpor-

tation systems and power systems. The government has continually rejected the recommendations of the Canadian Federation of Municipalities.

Not only would that program provide employment, it would also provide the necessary infrastructure for business to invest in those municipalities and invest in an environment which would be more conducive to profit making, creation of jobs and economic growth.

This government has its philosophy. I must say that previous Conservative governments did not have that same philosophy. The government of Mr. Diefenbaker did not have this doctrinaire belief in the free market economy. It also believed in a mixed economy. The government of Mr. Clark did not have this doctrinaire approach.

It seems with the coming to power of the Conservatives in 1984 under the present Prime Minister they were wed to the policies of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, which are a disaster for this country and are not really in the tradition of political parties of all stripes in this country.

• (1040)

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if the member could explain how he rationalizes the attitude of the province of Quebec. It is clear that the province is responsible for cities and municipalities within the province. How can he rationalize that view with his present view, apparently, of the Constitution that the Government of Canada should directly interfere with municipal financing and municipal activity?

Is it the policy of the Liberal Party that we should go right over the head of the province of Quebec and deal directly with the municipality so that the municipality would not have to worry about Quebec City? Should the federal government handle roads and subsidies for roads and direct where traffic ought to go?

Is it his view and that of his party that because there is unemployment in Montreal—there is in other cities in other parts of the country—and because of the incompetence of the Quebec government we ought to go at that problem and deal with that problem? Is that the view of the Liberal Party?

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, not at all. That is not our view. When we were in power we had a department of housing and urban renewal which worked closely with the provinces and the municipalities but always recognized the principal jurisdiction of the provinces.

Right now there are several departments in the federal government: the Department of Transport which deals with railways, airports, ports, canals; the Department of the Environment; and the new agency being set up under the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

The only complaint I have about that is that they did not consult close enough with Quebec. I am not suggesting that the federal government run roughshod over provincial jurisdiction. I am suggesting that they sit down with the province of Quebec in this case and the city of Montreal and develop a plan whereby those things which are under federal jurisdiction, such as transportation and certain types of housing, can be done in conjunction with the city. They have been done that way in the past in a very positive, effective way, and they can be done that way again.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, Montrealers who were watching the first speaker this morning, the mover of the motion before the House today, must have noticed how good the opposition is at blaming the government and how little they have to offer in the way of solutions. Not a word, and I would be embarrassed if I were them, Mr. Speaker, not a word about their failure to deal with the situation in Montreal during the many years they were in power here in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about Montreal and the economy of this major Canadian city, a number of factors should be put into perspective. Today, unfortunately, Montreal is faced with a number of economic problems. With 207,000 unemployed in April 1991, the Montreal metropolitan area has an unemployment rate of 13.1 per cent, which is unacceptable.

However, this situation did not arise in a matter of months or a few years, I think it is correct to say that Montreal's economy started to falter in the middle of the 1960s, and for the next ten years, it steadily declined.

As far as job creation is concerned, Montreal's performance has been lacklustre for the past 30 years. It ranks below Halifax, Mr. Speaker. It created one-third of the jobs created by Calgary. Toronto had about the same number of jobs in 1961. Today, Toronto has half a million more jobs than Montreal. The situation worsened at the beginning of the 80s. During the past ten years, Mr. Speaker, Montreal has ranked twenty-first among Canada's 25 metropolitan regions, on job creation.

What is the underlying cause of the economic malaise that has affected Montreal's economy for so many years? The cause is structural because, as was said earlier by the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, historically, Montreal has specialized in producing consumer goods—mostly for the Canadian market—including food, beverages, tobacco, textiles, clothing, leather items and furniture. As international competition strengthened in these sectors, many jobs in Montreal were lost.

When our government was elected in 1984, it immediately addressed the task of turning the situation around. The point I want to make today, Mr. Speaker, is that our government is the first one since many years that did not remain indifferent to Montreal's problems. In fact, a lot has been done since this government came to power. However, we did not go in without a plan. No, Mr. Speaker, we wanted that every initiative bore fruit. So our interventions followed an approach favouring the development of Montreal based on its many strengths in areas such as high technology, for example, tourism and cultural activities, design, finance, commerce and international activities.

For we should not forget that Montreal does not only have problems. It has, for example, a modern manufacturing sector which, as a whole, made considerable progress during the last decades, whether it be in plastics, electronic products or transport equipment.

Montreal has many assets, and that is why we decided to rely on these strengths to revitalize its economy. That does not mean we should not do something for some less advantaged areas on its territory. In this regard, let me remind you, Mr. Speaker, that in February 1988, this government set up a $35 million special program for the economic recovery of eastern Montreal. In May 1990, it was the turn of south western Montreal businesses to avail themselves of a similar program with a $15 million envelope.

To complement its action, the Department of Industry, Science and Technology announced that it would make available a $6.5 million funding for the implementation of special projects by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Later on today, we will be able to provide you with more details on those various initiatives that we can rightly be proud of.

As I mentioned a few moments ago, this government has been very active in Montreal since 1984. Our action took place in sectors considered a priority for the development of Montreal.

In the area of research and development, I want to remind honourable members that our government tried to pass as fast as it could Bill C-22 amending the Patents Act. This bill gave back to Montreal the level of research and development activity it lacked for so long and it encouraged several important drug companies to implement research and development programs totalling tens of millions of dollars.

Mr. Speaker, this government has invested more than 2.5 billion dollars in new money to support initiatives in science and technology. Through the Networks of Centres of Excellence Program, the Canadian government has been able to give real support to at least two Montreal networks. For example, the Institute for Robotics and Intelligent Systems will bring together the best Canadian scientists in research on expert systems and intelligent robots.

Through the same program, this government granted a 12.3 million dollars contribution for the respiratory diseases network which is based in Montreal, in order to find better treatment and better means of prevention. The work of both networks dovetails with that of other institutions and will contribute to the reputation and economic renewal of Montreal.

If there is another area where our government did not spare his efforts for Montreal, it is that of high technology. For example, it supported the creation of the Technoparc Montréal Métropolitain, which will facilitate the emergence of new businesses, the intensification, transfer and diffusion of high technology.

• (1050)

Mr. Speaker, our government has also not forgotten the aeronautical and aerospace industries. The aeronautical industry in Montreal creates jobs for more than 40,000 people, which makes it, by far, the single most important high technology sector in the area. Bombardier—Canadair, with which our government has cooperated on several occasions in recent years, particularly with a contribution of $43 million for the development of its regional transport jet, the famous stretched aircraft, should expand noticeably in the next few years.

The future of CAE Electronics, the world's number one builder of flight simulators for commercial aircraft, looks also very good, since the demand for this product should continue to grow in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, as regards the aerospace industry, allow me to mention again that our government has established the Canadian Space Agency in the Montreal region. This initiative will have a positive effect in promoting space related activities in Quebec. Already, a great number of firms, under the umbrella of Spar Aerospace Limited, with whom our government signed, in 1986, a memorandum of understanding for $300 million, take an active part in the development of this important industry.

In Quebec, some 60 companies employing close to 7,000 workers build equipment or components used for transmitting and receiving voice, image and data communications. It is expected that the international market for telecommunication material will increase at an annual rate of 8 per cent between now and the year 2000. Mr. Speaker, when one considers that the companies of the telecommunication sector are almost all located in the Montreal area, it is easy to understand that their possibilities for growth are particularly good.

Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the important role that the tourism and cultural industries can play in the development of Montreal. For that reason, those industries have benefited from important federal contributions in recent years.

Major facilities have been built and have helped Montreal become a world-class destination for tourists. Soon, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts will have more than doubled its capacity for exhibits. The Montreal Botanical Garden, with its Japanese garden and its insectarium, has become one of Montreal's most important tourist attractions.

The old port area, where the Canadian government will have invested a total of $65 million by the end of 1992, will also become a major tourist attraction in North America.

The Lachine Canal, that will be opened to boaters after restoration work is completed, will be reconstructed according to the original course. The priming of the locks is scheduled for October 1991. In the east, Mr. Speaker, important developments are planned, including a basin, the Bonsecours basin, and a large multi-purpose area on the Jacques-Cartier pier. That area will be used to accommodate large crowds and to hold special events.

The Department of Industry, Science and Technology has also spent more than $2 million on various feasibility studies for the establishment of the Museum of Science and Technology.

Again near the St. Lawrence, the government is committed to spending more than $10 million to create a centre for archaeology and history at Pointe-à-Callière, to illustrate Montreal's evolution as a commercial city.

Just across the old port area, Mr. Speaker, our government has recently confirmed its commitment to invest nearly $40 million on Île Sainte-Hélène for the development of the "parc des Îles", which will become the biggest park in Montreal. In the biosphere will be the water and environment interpretation centre, and development costs will be paid by our government.

The "parc des Îles" will be inaugurated in 1992, the year in which Montreal will celebrate the 350th anniversary of its foundation. Moreover, in order to show how important that anniversary is to our government, we are committed to spending $10 million for the organization of major activities related to the 1992 celebrations.

In addition to museum equipments, large amounts of money have been invested, Mr. Speaker, in the renovation of theatres and music halls in Montreal, and financial assistance to major cultural events has helped maintain their attractiveness for Montreal's tourists.

Our government, Mr. Speaker, has strived to reaffirm Montreal's vocation as an international city. Even if one of my colleagues will speak on that aspect of our mandate later on today, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that the federal government supported the Société du centre de conférences internationales de Montréal in order to conduct a feasibility study to create an international centre in Montreal and to promote concrete initiatives for the development of international activities in this city.

It is also with a $10 million grant that a United Nations organisation, the Multilateral Fund for the Montreal Protocol on the Ozone Layer, chose our city as the site of its permanent office.

Mr. Speaker, all these initiatives of our government show very well the development potential of Montreal. Moreover, different projects which are under way all over the city are an indication that the situation is changing in Montreal. These projects are also an eloquent proof of the interest that the government of Canada has taken in Montreal since 1984, and of the support it intends to bring in the coming years.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, the minister mentioned that the government has introduced several programs for the Montreal region, but the situation has not improved. In Montreal, the economy is still in shambles. The minister said, for example, that the government has introduced a program for East Montreal. But what is the result? How many jobs were created with this program?

If this program was good for East Montreal why is it that we still find in this area an unemployment rate of 20 per cent and that 25 per cent of the population is on welfare? How can we explain this situation if the programs are so good and efficient?

The minister mentioned Canadair. We are very happy for Canadair and in this case, it is a success, but it is not enough for the Montreal region. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, why this government has chosen to ignore the Picard Report, a commission it created.

[*English*]

The things mentioned by the minister in his speech are truly an *ad hoc* band-aid approach. They remind me of the doctor, after his patient is dead, telling the family that he had given aspirin, Alka-Seltzer and such minor medications to the patient before he died.

This patient, the city of Montreal, requires something more than aspirin and band-aids. I ask the minister: When will the government finally announce a substantial, comprehensive response to the Picard commission, a commission that made 84 recommendations?

The government set up the commission and yet we have not had any response to the 84 recommendations.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce shoots from the hip—that is how he began his speech this morning—by quoting newspaper articles when we would have expected him, as the mover of today's motion, to give us examples of what his party would have done in previous years and what positive measures it would propose now to help Montreal.

It seems that he did not read the Picard Report, Mr. Speaker, that he is not giving any consideration to what we are achieving right now because the great majority of the programs I mentioned in my speech are directly derived from individual recommendations contained in the Picard Report.

In fact, that report recommended government intervention in areas of its jurisdiction and never proposed that the federal government should take responsibility for the economic recovery of the entire island of Montreal because it would have been totally ridiculous to propose such a thing. Essentially it would have been like saying that the federal government should submit itself to all provincial and municipal governments in Canada and carry out the responsibilities of all levels of government.

Because we are always in contact with the municipal authorities of Montreal and the suburbs and with the provincial government, I know that nobody wants the federal government to forcibly impose its way of doing things. The elected people at all levels expect the federal government to be a facilitator in the implementation of the programs and projects they propose. That is what we have been doing since 1984, Mr. Speaker, in the most complete harmony with the other levels of government.

• (1100)

[*English*]

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I was involved in the House when we had a massive debate, to a large extent led by the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, on Bill C-22 involving the removal of patent protection. The minister alluded to the increase in employment as a result of that measure which was opposed by the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce.

I was also in the House when the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce led the opposition against the sale of Canadair to Bombardier. That sale enabled Bombardier to become a leading manufacturer of aircraft. I was wondering if the minister could outline the exact numbers of additional people who are now working in Montreal in the high-tech aircraft industry as a result of that measure. In other words, outline the measures that this government has used, opposed by the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, that have enabled more employment in Montreal.

Mr. Corbeil: Mr. Speaker, the example just cited by my hon. colleague about Bombardier and Canadair is a perfect example of the proper application of privatization by this government.

Canadair was going nowhere when Bombardier took over its operations from the Government of Canada. Because of the knowledge and competence of the private sector which took over this company, it is now a viable business. At the time of the takeover, Canadair was reducing the number of its employees. On the day of the takeover, the employment at Canadair was less than 5,000 people. At the present time there are 7,500 people employed at Canadair. On the day of the launching of the new regional jet, the president of Canadair told me that within the next few months they expect to have over 10,000 people working at Canadair.

These are high-paying, high-tech jobs and are the type of jobs that this government wants to generate to really reinforce the economy of Montreal.

When this government took power in 1984, we decided that never again would we repeat the errors of the previous government who spent and indebted this country for generations to come by creating make-shift jobs that were very good for electoral purposes, but did absolutely nothing for the economy of Montreal.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport complained that the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce was quoting from newspapers. I would like to quote to him from the throne speech where in the conclusion the Prime Minister says:

> My government will work with Canadians to achieve its goals of unity, prosperity and responsive government so that all Canadians feel themselves a part of this country, so that all Canadians have an equal opportunity to share in its bounty, so that all can see themselves reflected in its constitution and so that all will find the fulfilment of their aspirations in its future.

I want to ask the minister, do the words in the throne speech "equal opportunity to share in its bounty" mean sharing this bounty by lining up at food banks where the lines are getting longer and longer? Does sharing this bounty mean that the Montreal school boards have to give free breakfasts to children before they can teach them? Is this what the throne speech means by sharing the bounty, the wealth, the prosperity of this country?

Very specifically, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister what concrete plans does his government have to reduce and finally eliminate the food banks in Montreal, Toronto, Windsor, and almost every major city in this country? What concrete plans does this government have so that the boards of education will not have to subsidize breakfasts and free milk to children before they can be taught in schools.

I asked the minister and this government following the last throne speech and I got no answer. I am giving this minister an opportunity on behalf of his government to give us some concrete plans and programs for eliminating food banks and subsidizing children's food.

Mr. Corbeil: Mr. Speaker, I believe the members on the opposite side think that Montrealers have forgotten what their government has imposed on them over the years when they were in power.

They are the party that fought the adoption of Bill C-22 which was such a sweeping tool for the pharmaceutical industry to create more jobs. It is that government that fought the working and the action of *la Caisse de dépôts* in Montreal that was such a wonderful tool for helping the local industries.

It was that party that fought for two years, with the help of their Liberal friends in the Senate, to prevent the

adoption of Bill C-21 which is now providing the necessary tools for people to move from low technology, low paying jobs, through training necessary to apply for the better paying jobs in high technology fields. They are the ones that are at fault for doing these things that have been such a detriment to the economy of the Montreal area.

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say, in the spirit of this lack of partisanship, I think we have started off on a very bad foot this morning. It seems to me that this debate is going absolutely nowhere.

We have members on the government side saying it is not their fault that Montreal has a 25 per cent welfare roll, UIC roll; it is not their fault that unemployment is about 14 per cent in the city of Montreal.

On the other side we have our Liberal colleagues saying it is not their fault either, the deterioration of the city of Montreal has occurred under the present government.

I suppose for people who are listening and watching us on television it is hard to understand exactly where this debate is going. I think we should go back to the sense of the motion of my colleague from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and look at it as an opportunity for the government not to wash its hands of this affair and say look, it is your fault, you Liberals, because of C-22. It is your fault because of your so-called opposition to the *élargissement des pouvoirs de la Caisse de dépôt du Québec.*

We have right now, this morning, an excellent opportunity for the government side to say that they have made a few mistakes and there are some things they can do. "Yes, Mr. Deputy from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, you have some good points, but we do not accept all of them. We are all somewhat responsible for the mess we find ourselves in". That is what I would like to have heard listening for the past hour or so, but I have not heard it.

I am a Montrealer and I would like to give you first of all, some of what I have seen as a Montrealer. I live in downtown Montreal, and I also represent a number of cities on the south shore of Montreal, all of them having been affected by this downturn in the economy, this recession. First let me give you some statistics on the Montreal area.

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

First of all, 25 per cent of Montrealers receive unemployment insurance or welfare benefits. Let me talk about these people, because we have a strong tendency here in the House to quote figures, but 25 per cent of the people depend on unemployment insurance or welfare. That means that 175 persons per day must apply for unemployment insurance or welfare benefits, 175 persons per day.

As you know, much has been said about Argentina's foreign policy and disparecidos, those people who disappear. One day they are present, but the next, they are gone.

Well, that also happens in Canada, that happens in Montreal. We call them economic disparecidos, those who disappear from the economic picture. These people disappear when they lose their jobs. Losing your job sometimes means losing your house, your family, and finally, you end up losing hope. We have nearly reached that point, Mr. Speaker. People have practically no hope anymore. I do not mean—and I hope that the government will understand—that the government has done nothing. In fact, the government has tried to correct the situation, but the question asked by my hon. friend for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce is excellent, because he recognized that the government has made some efforts, but he wanted to know the results. Where is the beef? Where is the result? What are the results of your efforts in Montreal?

I think one must understand that Montrealers blame the federal government, among others, for not delivering results. It is obvious. The government cannot claim that it did everything it could.

Much was said about Laurent Picard's report. I read it and I found it excellent. It contained many recommendations, not 84, but 86, and those were good ones. But in an analysis of this government's behaviour, the editorial writer of *The Gazette* was saying in late February 1991: "The federal government ignored almost all of these 86 recommendations." This is not a New Democratic member or a Liberal member, but a non partisan editorial writer who said that the Picard report, sponsored by the government, was almost totally ignored by this government.

Mr. Speaker, there are things we can do and I want to take this opportunity today not to criticize this government—some have done it and others will—but to suggest some alternatives, to make some suggestions that the government can use and that are not new. I do not think these are new to the government, because it already heard several of the suggestions that I will make. But I think it is nevertheless an excellent opportunity to remind this government which actions it should take to specifically deal with this unemployment problem, with the deterioration of the social and local infrastructure in Montreal.

I saw very recently the request of the CSN in Montreal, and they gave me a number of actions that they thought were necessary to boost the economy in Montreal.

In going over their suggestions, I find they are quite sensible. Let me tell you what the CSN in Montreal is suggesting. In order to boost the economy in Montreal, we must deal with the issue of the interest rates, which are still too high. I know that the rates are down, and it is a good sign, but the problem with the interest rates in Canada is that they had remained high for so long because of this government's policies that now that they are down a little, companies which could normally invest money and help revive the economy are almost running out of it. We do not have what we call a big pool of risk capital, it is dry. The government needs to continue to intervene to lower interest rates, although up to now it did not do much to lower them. They have gone down despite government programs. A lowering of interest rates is vital, there is no doubt about it, because there won't be any economic recovery without it.

Now, I would like to talk about the POW. It was referred to briefly a short while ago, but I should say it is extremely important for Quebec and Montreal. Have you ever heard about the POW? This is a program which was established shortly before the signing of the free trade agreement. The government had said: "We know that people working in the clothing industry, for example, will be adversely affected by the FTA and that is why we will be setting up a program to help and retrain these people so they can find another job. Mr. Speaker, if there is an area about which I receive a lot of complaints, it is certainly the POW. This program is not working well. To be eligible, people must have worked a certain number of years in a soft sector of the industry. But what is a soft sector in Montreal? Most industries in that city are in a soft sector. So, how do we define a soft sector? People who believed the government when it was saying that the POW would protect workers affected by the free trade accord are in deep trouble.

I could mention a number of people I met who were working in the women's clothing industry. I remember very well Mrs. Lorraine Vaillancourt, a member of the FTQ. She is really concern about these workers, because they have very little protection, and that is why the POW needs to be improved. I hope the minister, when he comes back, will explain to us what he intends to do about this program.

When we talk about economic recovery in Montreal, we must also talk about taxes. Taxes are killing the middle class. Taxes are killing industries. And what about the GST? Frankly, that tax which was supposed to be visible, to be revenue neutral, is none of that. We know that it is a milking cow which is going to produce not the $18 billion forecasted, but up to $30 billion per year for the government, if my information is correct. That money comes from the taxpayer's pocket and that is the reason why people are going shopping elsewhere. Quebecers, and especially Montrealers, have to do their shopping outside Canada, in Plattsburg and Burlington, precisely to escape the clutches of this federal government which has taxed almost every product and service. Quebecers are trying to avoid this tax. They have become nomads, shoppers who have to seek out good deals wherever they are, even if it means shopping outside Canada.

• (1120)

Consequently, I think that GST must be abolished. It must go. It is an unfair tax, a tax which creates a lot more problems than it has solved and a tax which, even now, forces Quebecers to turn their backs on their own country. The real tragedy in this is that we are forced to turn our backs on our own workers in Montreal, on the lady who makes clothing in a Montreal plant because we can get them cheaper in States.

It is a fact. I think that this government can take some steps towards solving these problems, but I must add that as long as the GST remains, these problems will persist.

Another issue was raised by CNTU, that is tax reform in general. My colleague from Mississauga South, whose speech was excellent, wanted to know how we could settle Quebec's problems if we cannot deal directly with the municipalities, or if we must always work with the provincial level.

When we're talking about tax reform, nothing is more normal than to cooperate with the provinces. I am not aware of any circumstances when Quebec has refused to accept initiatives undertaken by the federal government. The question is about cooperation, not about forcing a measure nor presenting an ultimatum. It is all about cooperation. And herein lies one of this government's problems. We have seen an example of it when the minister wanted to create a department of regional development for Quebec. I think it's the fortieth federal department encroaching on Quebec's jurisdiction.

This is not what we would like to see the federal government do. We want the federal government to work with us, we don't want it to tell us what to do. I think there is enough room for manoeuvre. Quebec is always intelligent enough, I think, to accept a federal presence as long as the provincial jurisdiction is respected.

So, we are talking about tax reform. I was here, yesterday, when the leader of the official opposition and the leader of our party, the New Democratic Party, asked questions about tax reform and how Quebecers were taxed. The Prime Minister was laughing throughout those questions. He thought it was hilarious, and he was laughing in our faces. It's true. That is the picture that we get on the screen. Consumers can now see what the government is doing and how arrogant it is. I have seen such arrogant behavior on both sides of the House. I also remember how arrogant the previous government was.

But now the middle class is an endangered species because it is taxed too heavily. The minister recognized it yesterday, the one who is staring at me in amazement. He said people are taxed, overtaxed even, and he is right. Somebody has to pay taxes. But he was quoted in the press. Maybe he now wants to withdraw his words but he did say that someone had to pay taxes. He then admitted that the middle class was paying more and that as a member of that class he was also paying more and that it was necessary. I say that is not necessary for there are other ways of collecting taxes. Corporations can be taxed. I know that the U.S. have a minimum tax on corporations. I think it is 20 per cent. I believe business is working as well in the U.S. as it is in Canada, if not better. When we talk of boosting Montreal's economy, we cannot refuse to consider a major tax reform to create an environment that would allow such a recovery.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you why the CNTU has formulated a number of suggestions. I can also tell you that in my region, the UPA, Union des producteurs agricoles, has endorsed suggestions quite similar to that of the CNTU. This union and this group of farmers made these suggestions because they believe that there is still time for the governement to act. They believe they have solutions to propose. They believe that, with a minimum of good will, we can find solutions together, we can improve Montreal's economy as well as that of Quebec and of Canada as a whole.

So, even if we admit that the government has done a couple of things to offset the problems of Montreal and elsewhere, I repeat that what we saw is clearly too little and, unfortunately, too late. It is not what this government had promised us before signing the free trade agreement and certainly not what it had promised before being re-elected in 1988.

[*English*]

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, since the hon. member was putting words in my mouth I felt I should stand up and correct the impression that he left with the public. He was referring to a report that came out by Patrick Grady of a company here in Ottawa called Global Economics Ltd. which very correctly pointed out that the income tax level in Canada is higher than in other countries of the world. In the same report he also pointed out that we pay less than half the taxes for our social policy fields. We pay less sales tax than other countries and our corporate taxes are comparable to other countries.

Today we are talking about the economy in Montreal but the hon. member failed to mention this. Mr. Grady praises reform of the corporate taxation system saying, "changes have boosted investment in economic growth and in job creation". He also generally approves of the 7 per cent goods and services tax introduced in January: "The corporate tax changes are improving the economic efficiency by reducing the degree of tax induced distor-

tion in investment, decision-making across industries, and acid types," he says in the report. "This leads to a pattern of investment and economic activity that is more productive and conducive to economic growth and employment criticism". Grady said: "The Tories have eliminated some tax incentives that had prompted companies to make the wrong investment decisions as well an over-all lowering of corporate tax rates has kept Canadian companies from moving operations to the United States".

The report that is quoted widely by both the opposition parties is not complete in its quotation by the opposition parties. I want to ask the hon. member whose party, the New Democratic Party, the socialist party of Canada, wants to increase taxes on corporations which in doing so would place them in an uncompetitive position with their neighbours, our competitors, not only to the south but internationally. If the hon. member looks at this report, and studies it carefully, he will see that our corporate tax rate is right in line with most other countries of the world. I think the only other country that taxes a much wider spread is Japan. I think Japan is the only one, and Japan has a lower income tax rate as well, but far greater productivity than we have here. It all has to be weighed.

• (1130)

When the hon. member is making his selective reports, why does he not come out and give the government credit where the report gave the government credit, that in fact tax reform has done a good job in making the tax system fairer for corporations? We are realizing $1 billion more in income from corporations. We have cut out a lot of the cute little deals that the Liberals put in the tax act, that you could write off. We have taken those out of there to make the tax system much fairer. Why does the hon. member not stand up and congratulate the government for those moves?

Mr. Edmonston: Mr. Speaker, I started off this debate saying that there were things that this government has done. I would not stand here today and say that it was all white or all black. There have been some things, but I will be darned if I will be accused here in this House of saying that I have not given the government credit for some things. I have said that the government has done some things, but not enough.

When the minister talks to me about how the government has reined in the corporations as far as tax liability is concerned. I do not believe him. Canadians do not believe him. It is not fair for him to stand up here day in and day out to continually say: "These people are wrong and they are only right when they agree with us". That is wrong.

The point I am trying to make in this report is this: "PM laughs off attack on taxes". I was here and I saw it.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just mention to you, in the same report that we are talking about, we are talking about corporate taxes.

Mr. McDermid: That is nonsense.

Mr. Edmonston: You raised the subject, as far as corporate taxes are concerned. Let me speak to the Chair because I am just learning and I do not want to be direct to the minister.

Mr. McDermid: You've been here three years. What do you mean you're learning?

Mr. Edmonston: Mr. Speaker, this man says I have been here three years. I thank him for his compliment. I have been here exactly a year and three months.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to your attention that he brought up corporate taxes, I did not. I would like to refer to the same article. It says, and it is not difficult to understand.

Mr. McDermid: Are you quoting from the *Sun*?

Mr. Edmonston: I am quoting from the *Ottawa Sun*, Robert Fife, Parliamentary Bureau. As for corporate taxes, the tax load of corporate taxes, the tax load declined to 2.6 per cent of GDP in 1989, compared with 3.4 in 1984.

Mr. McDermid: But we took a lot of the write-offs out.

Mr. Edmonston: Mr. Speaker, whenever you bring up a point—and here you go— that the government does not agree with, it says: "Yes, but", or it will shoot the messenger, or it will say that was the other government, or it will say that minister is no longer here.

This is absolutely unreal. Canadians demand more of us than this. Mr. Speaker, let me ask you if I can do this. I have had my say. I am going to sit down. There is a little bit of time left. I am going to ask this of the people on the other side. We have talked about whose responsibility it is. We all realize that Montreal is in trouble. We all realize that there are some things to do. I am going to sit

down right now. The government can have the rest of my time and it can tell me what it is going to do.

Mr. McDermid: I certainly cannot pass up an opportunity like that because we have done a tremendous amount of work, not only for Montreal but for everyone across this country.

Tax reform and the free trade agreement, which the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party have opposed all along, are going to bring benefits to this country for years and years to come. There is no question about it.

As a matter of fact, we have seen examples already where our exports are up in many areas of the economy. This helps the entire area. Montreal has had a tremendously difficult time, and nobody talks about it. Nobody stands up and talks about it.

I think the political atmosphere has had something to do with people making investment decisions in this country. If there is anything we can do in this country, it is to bring our country together in a unified, caring way for one another across this country. I think that will reap benefits for Montreal and the province of Quebec and all regions of this country.

For far too long we have tended in this country to point fingers instead of hold hands. We have been more apt to say goodbye instead of say hello to one another. I think one of the problems that the province of Quebec is experiencing is this political uncertainty.

Mr. Edmonston: It is our fault.

Mr. McDermid: No, it is not. It is all our faults. It is the fault of all Canadians. It is the problem of all Canadians. I do not think we know one another well enough. I think that is probably one of the biggest problems we have in this country. We do not know one another well enough. We in Ontario do not know the westerners well enough; the westerners do not know the Quebecers well enough. It can go right across, from coast to coast. This is a huge country. It is 5,000 miles wide. We have a small population. We do not have the same opportunities that smaller countries have to get to know one another. That is our problem. We have to get to know one another in this country.

I am going to tell you that part of the problem in Montreal is just the political uncertainty. I do not think there is any question about that. I think people making investment decisions and deciding to expand or establish businesses look at those things. I am sure they do. They look for political certainty.

There is a story this morning in *The Financial Post* of concern in Ontario now about investment decisions. A group has made a statement. I do not know if it is true or not, but its experience has been that people are taking a very close look at what the government in Ontario is doing now for investment decisions because of its political situation. So that comes into it. Nobody talks about that and I cannot understand why.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Before recognizing an Official Opposition member, I would like to know if the next speaker wants to use his full 20 minutes, or only 10 minutes.

An hon. member: It will be 10 minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for LaSalle—Émard has the floor for 10 minutes.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to deal with an issue which is very dear to all of us, and certainly to us Liberals, namely Montreal's economical situation. I particularly want to congratulate my colleague, the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, supported by the hon. member for Saint-Denis, for attempting to force this recalcitrant government to recognize the slump my city of Montreal is in.

Our city, Mr. Speaker, is not about to regain its former status of Canadian metropolis, as Brian Mulroney had promised it would in 1984. A close look at its situation brings about this sudden realization. Let me mention a few data: in April 1991, unemployment stood at 13.6 per cent; no other major city in Canada shows such a pitiful record. There were 17.6 per cent unemployed among youths between the age of 20 and 24. Youths are our future. In southwestern Montreal which I represent with my colleague, the unemployment rate stands at 16.2 per cent; 17 per cent of young people drop out of high-school before graduating. The true unemployment figure is close to 30 per cent, 10 000 people, Mr. Speaker, have been victims of mass lay offs as in the case of Coleco, Simmons, Sidbec and VIA Rail. Come to my riding in the southwest of Montreal and you will see all the plants which have closed down. You will be in a position to understand the situation. For each plant which has

closed down, there are thousands of employees who have lost their jobs and this puts stress on their families.

Montreal slump, Mr. Speaker, is a national disgrace for which this government must accept a large part of responsibility. It is under his administration that Montreal's economic erosion started.

• (1140)

The causes are obvious: devastating economic policies on the part of the Conservatives; the high level of our dollar, which closed at 87 cents yesterday. That is ridiculous, absolutely absurd and it is killing us! High interest rates. How could we develop industries in Montreal when we are crushed by interest rates 3 percent higher than in the United States? There were no adjustments made after the Free Trade Agreement was signed. This government and this minister had promised adjustment measures to help our industries and our workers who are the big loosers in this deal. What did we get? Absolutely nothing. Training and retraining? What for? It is ineffective, unproductive and redundant. Research and development? Shame on this government for slashing funding to nothing!

Mr. Speaker, this government simply lacks vision for Montreal. It is incapable of delivering the goods. The federal government is running a one man show. There is no coordination, no consultation with the people involved, no agreement with Quebec, no agreement with the city of Montreal. You have just heard the announcement made by the Health Minister concerning the regional development of Quebec. No consultations with the people involved and no intention of harmonizing their involvement. The government has no agenda, no vision and no political will to act. Here is the Conservative track record for you!

Mr. Speaker, Montreal is the driving force of the Quebec economy. Left unattended, the whole province stands to suffer. Fortunately, the slump Montreal is in is not irreversible. It can get out of it. Solutions do exist. The key is an expression of political will on the part of the federal government to work in concert with the city and the province. Unfortunately, the Tories are showing no such will. Brian Mulroney and his government never showed the will to do anything concrete and reasonable. It is obvious, Mr. Speaker, that the Tories do not understand what Montreal needs. It is absolutely appalling that no Cabinet member from Quebec is taking part in this debate. They let a minister from Toronto defend Montreal. That goes to show how unreasonable the Tories are.

[*English*]

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. First, it is traditional in this House that we do not talk about the presence or the absence of a minister. Second, the minister was in the House and delivered his speech. He had to leave on government business. He will be coming back. I think it is very unfair of the hon. member to take that kind of a shot at him. He asked to be excused and he will be back. I trust the hon. member will take that as advice.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate a minister from Toronto who spoke out for Montreal.

[*English*]

I am quite sure when it comes time to talk about Toronto, the ministers from Montreal will be in this House and will defend Toronto. I am also sure that when we look at what this government does, the Montreal ministers must defend Toronto a great, great deal.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, what is the Conservative philosophy? Retire as soon as possible. Act only for political reasons. Forget sustained intervention. Forget consultation, in other words, *laissez-faire*.

Mr. Speaker, that won't work. So what will? I have a few suggestions. First, we must clearly identify the basic components of new industrial and scientific policies that will help us achieve our objectives. Second, we must provide leadership and the political will to achieve those objectives. How?

First, create an economic co-ordination and development board for the Montreal region: get all economic sectors together; define common objectives.

Second, create a cabinet committee responsible for the economic recovery of Montreal and the region.

Third, encourage the creation in Montreal of a consortium of big and small businesses; pools of risk capital; study and technical services; super-incubators.

Fourth, invest selectively but substantially, with research and development as the local point: develop high-tech niches; strengthen the aeronautics sector; scientific research parks; centres of excellence.

Fifth, ensure that Quebec and Montreal receive their fair share of funding for research and development, not the 13 per cent we are getting now.

Sixth, design manpower training and adjustment programs that consider Montreal's objectives for economic diversity. No more one-man shows by this government, Mr. Speaker!

And finally, leadership and political will are the basic prerequisites of this recovery.

I painted a gloomy picture of the current situation. Unfortunately, it is also an accurate picture. The situation in Montreal is as I described it, but I also want to show there is light at the end of the tunnel.

I just offered the House six proposals, six steps for recovery. The government must act now, it must act quickly and it must act on several levels at once. However, to be effective, the types of action taken must be complementary and not compete with each other. The federal government must demonstrate, through a variety of concrete achievements—we have had enough studies—its political will to give Montreal new hope for the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Five minutes for questions and comments.

[*English*]

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the hon. member's speech, primarily because he is the first who spoke today to come out with some positive suggestions. Everybody else got up and complained and moaned and groaned.

I am concerned about some of his suggestions, not all of them, and to this end I would like him to comment on them.

He is asking the federal government in many ways here to get extremely involved in one city, to have a cabinet committee, I think one of his suggestions was, for one city in this country. First, if the hon. member really means this, is he saying then that the federal government should become more directly involved in individual communities throughout this country?

Second, should we take a city and designate it the research centre for Canada or the specific area for certain whatever it may be?

How does that coincide with diversifying the economy of the west, for example, or diversifying the economy of the maritimes, and so on?

• (1150)

Is he suggesting that we have a cabinet committee on Halifax, St. John's and so on so that we could get involved in economic development in those cities? I understand his whole theme but I am not sure why he wants to involve the federal government so directly in the goings on of one city.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his interest and I thank him quite honestly as a representative of a city other than Montreal for the interest that he is showing in my city.

As you look at economic development you realize very quickly that it flows from major motors. There are locomotives. This is true in most of our major cities in terms of the hinterland and the periphery that is around.

Montreal is undoubtedly the major economic locomotive for the province of Quebec. As Montreal goes, so goes the province. There is no doubt about that. That is clear in terms of the development of almost any great city in relationship to the surrounding area anywhere in the world.

The sheer absolute number of unemployed in Montreal is greater than in a great number of the other regions of Canada which really do have a specific economic focus.

What I would say to the minister in response to his question is that if what you want to do is develop economic growth, you have to have regional development, you have to focus on the country as a whole and you cannot neglect your major motors.

The multiplier effect from those major motors is such that it is worthy of having a cabinet committee look at it, specifically at Montreal because of its importance in eastern Canada and in the province of Quebec.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to add my compliments to that expressed by the Minister of State for Finance and Privatization.

The hon. member for LaSalle—Émard, as always, does come out with very concrete suggestions. You can agree with them or not, but at least he does have something to offer.

I would like to ask the minister about the plant closings that he mentioned in his debate, displacing thousands of workers. We have the same thing happening in Toronto and in other parts of Ontario.

The difference between the plant closings today and the plant closings 10 years ago is that the ones which closed then were somehow revived or opened under another industry. Today in Ontario when they close they close permanently.

I would like to ask the member: What is the trend in Montreal and in Quebec? What solutions would he recommend for that?

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, the comments of my colleague from Parkdale—High Park are very well taken.

Exactly the difference in the plant closings today and the plant closings of 10 years ago is that we are not looking at temporary but permanent job loss.

These companies are either shutting down completely because of the economic policies of the government or they are moving away and going to what they feel are attractive climates.

This is why it is so important and why I put such emphasis in my speech on research and development and on the ability to reinvent our economy. We need this so that when companies close down on Monday there are new companies building their market share, ready to take their place.

What we must do is essentially reinvent the Canadian economy. Montreal and so many other areas are motors because they can be the locus of research and development.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Resuming debate.

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to rise in this House to explain the economic situation in Montreal.

I am particularly concerned with the clothing industry in Montreal, simply because our family business, which is apparel retailing, is closely linked to that industry in Montreal. We have been involved in that business since 1912. It has been a while. Throughout the years, we have met clothing manufacturers from Montreal, but these last few years, we noticed that the industry, once a major industry in Montreal, is going downhill. That is a serious cause of concern for people whose livelihood depends on the clothing industry.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to give you a short history of that industry. At one point, a few years back, Montreal's clothing industry was booming. As the main clothing manufacturer in North America, Montreal was second only to New York City. It was a major industry in this country, and it was flourishing. I remember when Montreal's clothing industry was extremely busy in the mid-50s.

When we think that all across Canada, about 120,000 people used to earn a living working in the clothing industry and 57 per cent of those jobs were in Montreal. And that, Mr. Speaker, does not include another 20,000 people or so who were working at home. There were also some plants in the Beauce area, outside the Quebec region and there was another group in the eastern part of Quebec. So, it meant 90,000 jobs all across Quebec that were directly associated with the clothing industry.

Of course, one of the things that hurt us was the imports. If we take a look at the numbers—and they tend to increase—about 30 per cent of the clothing is imported and, sadly, that percentage is still increasing.

The federal government certainly failed in that area by not protecting the clothing industry, as it failed in many other areas. You know that much has been said about research and development. But what is still more important than that? It is the development of the existing technology and the implementation of the development. Research in that area is not as necessary as in the past.

Another factor that weakens the clothing industry in Montreal is the interest rates. In Montreal, the manufacturers needed to have access to capital, lots of it, in order to maintain their competitiveness. With high interest rates—I am aware of that, because I have been in contact with several organizations, the unions, the Guilds, as we call them, the Dress and Sportwear Manufacturers' Guild—so, they were explaining to me that it was extremely difficult for them to upgrade their equipment because of high interest rates. This is a suggestion that we could make to the federal government, that is to try, with a special program, to help the clothing industry, which is so important to the city of Montreal. If not, we could do as a number of organizations did, like the Canadian Manufacturers's Association, and reduce the interest rates.

However, if it is impossible to do so, we will have to set up a program for the clothing industry because of its importance. In the last year, and in the last months in particular, I was able to note the difficulties faced by the manufacturers in Montreal. Because of the 7 per cent GST they must add to the 8 per cent provincial tax, the clothing retailers whose products were not taxable before must now add 15.5 per cent to the bills they give to their customers. You can see how that has affected the retail sales of clothing in Quebec stores. Consumers found this price increase too hard to absorb and effectively there was a 25 to 30 per cent drop in sales.

• (1200)

Considering all these factors, it is no wonder that the clothing industry had such an important decline. We all know that it used to be a very flourishing industry in Quebec, but we are letting it slip right through our fingers. It is almost criminal to see that we cannot find solutions to the problems encountered by the manufacturers. Yet, they have stated time and time again that they want to meet with the federal and provincial authorities to find a solution for their industry. One must not forget that a great many women were employed in the clothing industry. I must say that, over the years, the average wage in this industry had a fairly normal growth and is now over 9 dollars. It is not much, but there has been over the years a fairly substantial increase.

Another element that concerned the manufacturing sector in Montreal is free trade. From the outset, they were against the free trade agreement, because they saw the difficulties it could bring to their industry. Now, they raise a cry of alarm. When they see that the central government wants to negotiate a free trade agreement with Mexico, knowing that the hourly wage in Mexico is far lower than ours, even ten times lower. In Montreal, they say: "We hardly had time to adjust." It has been very hard for them to adjust to free trade with United States and now we want to plunge them in a free trade with Mexico where the hourly wage is much lower.

So, you can imagine the anxiety prevailing in this sector. What are we asking of the central government? We implore you, this industry is very important to Quebec and to Montreal. You cannot leave this sector, this industry which means a lot to Montreal, at the mercy of free trade with the United States and Mexico. Moreover, interest rates are too high. You must realize that this industry used to be the pillar of the Montreal economy. But if you let it continue to be bloodied by free trade with the United States and Mexico, you will see that we will lose completely an industry that was and still is so important and that can be saved.

So, to wind up, I say to the government: The manufacturing sector in Montreal wants to speak to you, to have the opportunity to express its great concern and to propose alternatives, solutions to save this industry. They speak not only on their behalf but also on behalf of the 90,000 persons who earn their living from an industry which they see disappearing.

So, it cannot be stated more clearly. They want to have the opportunity to speak out and to express their concern.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I am particularly interested in the comments of the hon. member for Lasalle-Émard who suggested that Montreal be a high-tech area following along in the aerospace type work that has been done by the takeover by Bombardier of Canadair and the work done on Bill C-22 where we changed the patent law and allowed research and development in pharmaceuticals.

Is it the view of the Liberal Party that we should also be a country of high tariffs where we keep out the manufactured products of other countries, particularly clothing and footwear; that we should be a country where the import of those articles that can clearly be purchased in other countries cheaper be denied our citizens so that they pay higher prices for those articles; and that we allow no trade so our high technology cannot be sold in those other countries?

I was wondering if he could square the economic philosophy of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Assad: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is making reference to the fact that we import 30 per cent, I never suggested that we should have additional tariffs. All I am saying is that the clothing manufacturing industry in Montreal was extremely important and there is no reason why we have to leave this industry open to the wind and allow it to disappear on us because of either free trade or high interest rates.

Montreal, with regard to the high tech and pharmaceuticals industries—obviously everybody promotes high tech in Montreal or elsewhere, but it does not mean we have to sacrifice a domain where we were once the champions.

All we are saying is if we had decent interest rates, if there was a reasonable amount of dialogue with these people to find alternatives so that they could modernize, we could compete with these imports. However, we seem to have shackled them with high interest rates and all kinds of disadvantages so they are having difficulty competing with the imports. These are artificial difficulties that the government has put on their backs.

We are not trying to trade off high tech for the clothing industry. It was a viable industry, we had the expertise and it was very labour-intensive, especially for women. Why should we sacrifice it when we do not have to? All they need is a little bit of dialogue and understanding and we can balance both of them easily.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, briefly.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned the free trade debate. Throughout that debate, I sat on the parliamentary committee studying the agreement. Each and every association representing the clothing and textile industries which came forward said they were against the free trade deal. They also said if the agreement was deemed necessary, we had to have adjustment programs. Now then, the prime minister promised adjustment programs for those grand industries, as recommended by the de Grandpré Commission, the Macdonald Commission and the Economic Council of Canada.

Since the hon. member knows the textile and clothing industries pretty well, can he tell us what adjustment programs have been planned for those industries affected by the Free Trade Agreement. I am not as familiar with those industries as the hon. member is.

Mr. Assad: Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. I could quote the president of the Quebec division of the Canadian Manufacturers Association, Mr. Raymond LeHir, with whom I had a number of conversations, as well as with Mr. Dubuc, the president of the Parity Committee, and with all the people connected with the garment industry. They were very surprised to see there were no support programs, no retraining programs, no programs at all to help the garment industry in Montreal. They told me these programs were non-existent. What is going on here? The Prime Minister and some of his ministers announced a number of programs, but unfortunately, there are none and that is what has us puzzled. Who is telling the truth here?

• (1210)

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I would like to go back briefly to some comments that were made by the hon. member for LaSalle—Emard, when he mentioned that Montreal was the industrial centre of Quebec, and that if Montreal was doing well, industrially speaking, if there was industrial development in Montreal, it was the whole province which was benefitting, and that if Montreal was not developing, it was the province that was hurting.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some comments as a way of explanation in order to tell him that I do not agree entirely with that. I would like that the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard recognize that when there is development in the Quebec regions, whether in the field of natural resources or the development of primary industries, for example, the major aluminum projects in Becancour, Deschambault, Baie Comeau or Sept Îles, my hon. colleague should recognize that the engineering firms in Montreal are doing work on those sites. Lavallin and SNC are there. There are also manufacturing

industries from the Montreal region which build industrial equipment that go into these new plants. If the forest industry is doing well in Abitibi, in Lac Saint Jean and on the North Shore, again, Mr. Speaker, it is the parts manufacturers, the equipment manufacturers of the Montreal region that benefit from it.

So I would like my colleagues from Montreal to admit that when the federal government takes part in the economic diversification of Quebec regions, Montreal also benefits from it. We should not think that because some Montreal areas are in trouble, the situation is catastrophic in the rest of the province.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, I would like to underline that, in his speech, my friend the minister responsible for Montreal Island has described fully the federal government's initiatives in the Montreal region. We could conclude from his comments that this great metropolis is evolving, like other urban centers all over the world, and is about to take a new direction which will allow it to live a new age of prosperity. In fact, we intended pursuing the actions already undertaken to that end, particularly in matters of industrial development.

Historically, industrial development has always been the cornerstone of Montreal's economic prosperity. We just have to remember the many big companies located near Montreal's docks or the other main cross roads of the time. With the evolving means of communication, Montreal's industrial base has had to adapt and we saw the rise of new industries, with a bigger technological content.

While more efficient companies were created in new industrial areas, the more traditional industry also needed attention, in order to cope with international competition.

These are indicative of the two main thrusts of the federal government action to support and revitalize the industry in Montreal: first, rely heavily on the strengths of the Montreal economy and, second, help more traditional businesses still providing many jobs, to update and reinforce the expertise acquired over the past few decades.

When I am through, hon. members of this House will realize that the opposition motion disregards an entire set of measures that have been implemented by the government I have the honour to be a member of. As you all know, the Montreal economy is remarkably complex. Nonetheless, this government has managed to sucessfully implement a plan of action in which industrial development plays a major part.

The federal government's strategy is, first, to develop high technology sectors in Montreal, particularly in the following three industries: aeronautics/aerospace, electronics/telecommunications and pharmaceutical industry.

One of the main projects the federal government has carried out in these sectors in years is certainly the establishment of the Canadian Space Agency in the Montreal area. This decision unanimously added a major change in direction to strengthen and give a new start to this industry destined for a great future. Through its activities, the Space Agency has helped strenghen industries in related sectors and, above all, create new businesses attracted by the Space Agency. Furthermore, thanks to its research programs, the Space Agency has helped develop new industries in advanced sectors such as composite materials.

In fact, all parties with a stake in Montreal's economic future agree that the aeronautics industry is one of the city's major strengths. The federal government, through targeted support, has helped to ensure a bright future for this outstanding member of Montreal's industry.

The decision to privatize Canadair gave the internationally known company a second lease on life, as reflected in the recent success of the Challenger. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that not long ago, the Prime Minister helped launch the regional jet, which has caught the interest of a number of airlines, despite an economic climate that is not very conducive to investment.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government has provided significant support for research and development by all large companies in the Montreal region. Federal assistance has on untold occasions been instrumental in developing new products by companies that include Pratt & Whitney, Canadair, Spar Aerospace and Héroux. Thanks to federal support, these companies have been able to compete on world markets. The recent launching

by Spar of a communications satellite is an eloquent case in point.

In electronics and telecommunications, many large companies have received federal support to develop new products and thus acquire a substantial share of the North American market. You will recall that Paramax in Montreal won the contract for all the electronics for the frigates, thus generating a significant subcontracting potential for a number of firms located in the Montreal region.

[*English*]

Moreover, it is important to stress the importance of the decision to privatize Teleglobe Canada for the development of a new leadership by the private sector in the field of satellite communications.

[*Translation*]

I would now like to talk about a sector that our government, by way of a courageous decision, has helped revitalize. All the members will remember that the pharmaceutical industry was once a major industry in the Montreal area. Indeed, one only had to drive along the TransCanada highway, between the Decarie expressway and Vaudreuil, to see the numerous pharmaceutical companies along this important stretch of highway.

The members of the House have often heard debates and speeches emphasizing the importance of putting a stop to the stagnation of that industry, a process which has started in the early 80's. The pharmaceutical companies had drastically reduced their investments in research and development because the results of their basic research were no longer protected.

The changes that we made to the Patent Act enabled us to completely reverse the situation. Indeed, without government aid of any kind, several big companies decided to invest in R&D, as well as to expand their research centers in Montreal, among others Merck Frosst, and Nordic laboratories.

Even though the Montreal region experiences problems that essentially arise out of certain economic conditions, that city possesses nevertheless many of the characteristics of a winner. The cities that attract businesses and companies all have something in common. In each of them the political and business leaders have cooperated to create a favourable environment for development. The leadership shown by the private sector is also particularly noticeable in those cities. By the way, the federal government supported a private sector initiative by helping with the establishment of a high technology park in the Montreal region. The interested firms will thus be able to concentrate their resources in an environment conducive to this high level activity.

• (1220)

The technology park will, in fact, act as a catalyst to improve liaison between universities, government research centres and business. This linkage between universities and business will have top priority in industrial sectors that the world over are the foundation of a flourishing industry: aeronautics, biotechnology, microelectronics and informatics.

Although federal support has tended to concentrate on the most advanced and most promising sectors, we have also included other industries that have always played an important role in to Montreal. For instance, the transportation equipment industry registered major investments in recent years that would have been impossible without direct government intervention. A recent announcement that Dowty would invest $90 million to manufacture landing gears has further consolidated Montreal's position as a major centre for aeronautics. In the automobile industry, Montupet has now located in the Montreal region to manufacture automobile parts, while 3,000 jobs were saved at Ste-Thérèse thanks to federal intervention. Without our support, the GM plant at Ste-Thérèse would now probably be a thing of the past.

I would now like consider another aspect of our integrated program for supporting industrial development in Montreal. As I said earlier, the Montreal area has always had a very diversified industrial structure, whose sectors have had their ups and downs, owing to various factors. With increased international competition has come the need to adjust to a new game plan. The free trade agreement has made it very important to help businesses update their plant, to be able to face the competition.

Bearing this in mind, our government designed a program that was tailored to meet the new challenge of a global market. The Manufacturing Productivity Improvement Program, which was an instant success, has now been in place for two and a half years. To be eligible for this program, businesses must meet very strict criteria. Nevertheless, the results have been most impressive. The program has received 250 applications for assistance, and sixty businesses have been able to benefit from government assistance, thanks to contributions totalling $14 million.

Similarly, it seemed important to us to get small businesses into new product lines. Just a few months ago, the minister responsible for Economic and Regional Development announced the creation of an innovation assistance program with a $3 million enveloppe. This program is only six months old, but over 30 requests have already been received and over half a million dollars in contributions. It is indeed off to a good start.

I would like, in closing, to mention two initiatives we are particularly proud of, which were very well received by the communities concerned. Over the years, some industries congregated in specific areas of Montreal had been deteriorating gradually. This was particularly true of eastern and southwestern Montreal. To overcome that situation, the Canadian government agreed to implement two programs suited to the needs of these disadvantaged areas.

In February 1988, minister Robert de Cotret announced the implementation of the Industrial Recovery Program for East Montreal (IRPEM). With a $35 million budget, this program resulted from the Picard report and the work of the Committee for the Economic Recovery and Revitalization of Employment in East-End Montreal. The IRPEM is designed to strenghten the local industrial structure, encourage the industrial diversification of that area and foster the establishment and development of new businesses, particularly small- and medium-sized businesses. The latest statistics show that the minister responsible for implementing this program had received 326 requests and that over $28 million had been spent to support recovery in this area of Montreal.

In May 1990, my colleague, minister Benoît Bouchard, announced a similar program for the south-western part of Montreal, the IRPSWM.

This program is intended to provide assistance for the design and construction of new facilities as well as for the extension and modernization of existing facilities. This all new program has already resulted in investments of almost $9 million.

A close look at federal government actions reveal that due to its flexibility our strategy fits the various capabilities offered by greater Montreal that were identified in the Picard report. This flexibility is particularly obvious in the case of industrial development, where we have put in place programs on a needs basis. In fact, that is the strategy we intend to follow in the months to come because we are convinced it is the best way to develop Montreal's potential while allowing the private sector to participate fully.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that regional development is crucial for the province of Quebec and for Canada. There is no doubt either that the entrepreneurial skills of Quebecers have their roots in the Beauce area, in Lac Saint-Jean, in the Eastern townships and in the Abitibi. That is why I absolutely cannot understand the fact that this government is abandoning the Gaspé and the Northshore regions. I cannot understand, for instance, his reluctance to push for flow-through shares, which are so important for the mining industry.

That being said, one must recognize that when the unemployment rate exceeds 15 per cent, as is the case in Montreal, you have a number of unemployed workers that far exceeds that of many regions of Canada. Montreal is the heart of the economy in Quebec. My question is this: Does the hon. member, the parliamentary secretary, think that Quebec, as a province, can possibly win if Montreal loses?

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, it is very easy to answer the question asked by my honourable colleague from LaSalle—Émard. It is obvious that if the industrial structure of Montreal becomes more diversified, if the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government work together to attract new industries in Montreal, namely high technology industries which create new jobs, and if development and support programs can help reinforce existing industries, it is obvious that the economy of Montreal will contribute, and I think we agree on that, to the economy of Quebec as a province. But I want the hon. member to know that I find it very difficult to let someone claim that Montreal is the only place that counts in Quebec. The hon. member should look at the reality. The regions contribute to the development of Montreal in the same

way that Montreal can provide expertise and specialized services for the development of the regions.

My honourable colleague claims that the federal government, that is the Progressive Conservative Party, has abandoned the Northshore and Gaspé regions in Quebec, but I would like to remind him that, since 1984, there have been more industrial investments on the Northshore, from Tadoussac to Havre-Saint-Pierre, then in the 25 years previous to that. Indeed, Reynolds, Quebec and Ontario Paper in Baie-Comeau, as well as Alouette in Sept-Îles, have all benefited from federal investments. Moreover, other investments in the private sector will also be announced shortly, thanks to the direct intervention of the federal government, through his regional development programs.

As regard the Gaspésie, some of our colleagues were in Gaspé last week to announce three important initiatives that will enable the Gaspé peninsula to benefit from industrial development as well as economic diversification based on initiatives taken by local people and entrepreneurs. Mr. Speaker, that is what we call a sound intervention in the field of regional development, and our government has been acting in that fashion since 1984, in Montreal as well as in the regions of Quebec.

• (1230)

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I have had the pleasure to sit with my hon. friend on The Province of Quebec Chamber of Commerce. At the time, it seemed to me that the performance of a governement could be judged by its results. Well, the results that we can see in Quebec now are not very glorious for the party in office. In Montreal, the unemployment rate is 15 per cent. In Quebec remote areas, it can go up to 20 per cent, not taking into account the people who outlast their unemployment benefit period and are now on welfare.

I remember, a few years back, when I was working pretty hard to get the Space Agency on the South Shore. We got the Space Agency, we were proud and boastful, and we kept repeating: "Now, we have the Space Agency." Time has gone by, but the Space Agency is not yet built. There might be a hundred employees in Montreal. At the same time, we launched the centres of excellence, and the University of Calgary obtained the contract for space research, while the Prime Minister said that aerospace research and development would take place in Montreal. We realize today that Pratt and Whitney has put nearly 1000 employees on unemployment.

Imagine, we boasted because we got the Space Agency, and I was so proud at the time. But there was no serious basis to all that. This plan to develop aerospace in the Montreal area, it was old rubbish. We realize today that approximatly 800 aerospace jobs have disappeared in the Montreal region, and that is counting only those at Pratt and Whitney, and the Space Agency.

The hon. member who has just delivered his speech is boasting about the help that the federal government has given Quebec. The fact is the federal government simply helps us pay for welfare and unemployment. It certainly is of no assistance to us in terms of economic development.

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I was expecting a question from the hon. member from the South Shore of Montreal, with whom, of course, as he pointed out, I had the pleasure to be involved for some years in the activities of the *Chambre de Commerce du Québec*. It is obviously with great pleasure that I met him again in this House in 1988. I must say that the circumstances have changed and I am a little sorry to see him on the other side of the House. I think that the hon. member was doing an excellent job for his region and his riding when he was a member of the Conservative caucus, when he was on this side of the House. He decided to join the other side, sadly, to the detriment of his riding.

I should tell him, Mr. Speaker, and I think the facts speak for themselves, that the numbers I quoted earlier in my speech and the ministers, Mr. Corbeil and Mr. Bouchard quoted in theirs, show that the Conservative government is concerned with the development, not only of the Quebec regions, but also of the metropolitan area of Montreal. I would like to assure my colleague from the South Shore riding of Montreal that the Quebec caucus follows very closely the actions taken by the

government for the economic development of Montreal, and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. member for Manicouagan who praised the government for what it has done in the last few years, and who quoted several figures. However, there are figures he forgot to mention. In this regard, I would like to point out to him that this debate, today, is about the unemployed in Montreal. I congratulate him for talking about all the jobs created outside of Montreal, but this is not today's subject. The question I would like to put to him is this: Given the fact that he seems to be provided with a lot of figures, could the hon. member for Manicouagan tell us what the figures are for the unemployed in Montreal and in the rest of the province of Quebec? Also, what is the number of welfare recipients in Montreal and in the remaining of Quebec, as these people are certainly unemployed?

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows very well that those figures are public. Unfortunately, since I do not have them on hand today, it is impossible for me to be specific.

But, I can tell him that, for years, people from all regions of Quebec, in particular from the Gaspé Peninsula and the lower St. Lawrence region, came to Montreal because their was work to be found in the city. Is it so difficult to now leave Montreal for those Quebec regions where there is work to be found? I think that Quebecers, both men and women, are mobile and are able to adapt to changing situations. The fact of the matter is that there is development, there is construction with new jobs on the North Shore, in the Abitibi, in Saguenay–Lac–Saint–Jean and in the Center of Quebec, and that those jobs are available to all citizens, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, I encourage Montrealers who are in search of a new job, to take advantage of the training programs offered by the Department of Employment and Immigration to gain access to these new job opportunities.

So, Mr. Speaker, the economic development in Quebec will encompass the whole province. Some regions may have problems. The North Shore, which I represent, had tremendous difficulties at the end of the seventies and into the eighties. People had to leave their homes to find work somewhere else, but now, they are coming back, and I am very happy about it.

Mr. Speaker, that is the story on workforce mobility.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Resuming debate with the hon. member for Saint–Laurent—Cartierville.

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint–Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleague for Manicouagan to what jobs he is referring?

I rise today to spotlight the poor state of the Montreal region. This sad situation is due in good part to initiatives like the GST, as well as to a lack of initiatives like job creation, which was promised by the Conservative Government.

In Quebec, nearly 5,000 companies and 14,000 individuals have been forced into bankruptcy in 1990. Most of these cases were in Montreal. The level of unemployment is more than 14 per cent in Montreal and rises to 25 per cent east of Montreal; there are also those on welfare. The unemployment rate does not seem to be getting any lower. All those jobs could be lost forever.

Plants closings, commercial and personal bankruptcies, relocations do not bode well for the future. All these Quebecers who suddenly lose their jobs and are without hope of getting them back must rely on the unemployment insurance for their rent. How many of them will be forced to go on welfare?

According to action unemployed, the cuts and changes made to the unemployment insurance program have really hurt. In Quebec city, the situation is all the more serious since it is a region where employment is seasonal. Many peoples have to had to go on the dole, following the changes introduced by Bill C–21.

And what about immigrants? When a company must cut jobs, the first to go are very often the last ones hired, and most of the time, they are immigrants. Some welcome!

Mr. Speaker, Montreal has enormous potential but this government and its irresponsible department seem determined to check its development.

The GST is but one initiative affecting everyone and reducing consumer spending. When sales are down, so is spending and employees must be laid off. As a result, unemployment is sky high and welfare offices are sending an increasing number of cheques.

Montreal already has 14 per cent of its population who depend on welfare to survive and there seems to be no economic recovery in sight.

Food banks find it more and more difficult to help soup kitchens. Demand is rising instead of diminishing, it seems. It is not healthy to start the day on an empty stomach.

As for children, they cannot be expected to learn and retain what they are taught in school if they do not eat properly. That is not how they can be able to develop their potential and be alert.

• (1240)

[*English*]

I would like to cite a few facts on welfare and UIC in Montreal to give a better perspective to this problem.

Between March 1990 and March 1991, 65,400 jobs were lost, of which 17,500 were in the clothing industry, and 14,300 were in hotels and restaurant service industries.

The maximum amount of benefits a person could receive from UI was $480 a week. The welfare benefit being paid to a single person willing to participate in special government make-work programs is $587 per month and $486 per month if they are not willing to participate in these programs.

With this type of revenue, it is a miracle that anyone can survive in our society.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, a society which cannot meet the basic needs of its citizens, making them completely dependent on the State, not by choice but out of necessity, is a society doomed to face a depression.

It is difficult to be optimistic, to create attainable dreams, to give growing children a vision of a better future when, as parents, the daily worries are as real as the rent payment which often takes more than 50 per cent of their meager income. How is it possible to give children nourishing meals and proper clothing when work becomes more and more scarce and is often limited to short periods?

Mr. Speaker, Montreal was, not so long ago, a major city where life was good. Today it holds the national record for bank robberies. It has a waiting list of 22,000 families who want low rental housing and 40 per cent of its people would need this type of housing.

[*English*]

When the federal government, which through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation was the main builder of subsidized housing in Canada, dropped its rental renovation program two years ago and in its recent budget announced cuts to social housing, it did nothing to remedy the situation.

The country is in crisis and Montreal seems to be going downhill at a very rapid rate. Without basic security like housing and food, how can people be expected to be in top shape, ready to learn new skills, on minimum revenues given by UIC, that could be out of date by the time the courses are finished.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, this is the early 90s and the future does look kind of gloomy for the Montreal residents. Crime and violence are on the rise, the cost of living is becoming more and more prohibitive for too many families, low-cost housing is rare and jobs are obsolete.

Since coming into office, this government has done nothing but overtax people, and they still do not understand why people cannot make ends meet!

Mr. Speaker, this government has no consideration whatsoever for the wellfare of Canadian men and women, who will take the opportunity, at the next election, to remind them of their existence.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I have to remind the House that when I put questions to the minister responsible for the Montreal area, he answers by wondering how I can be so bold as to mention these issues That is on record, it is published in *Hansard*. As far as I am concerned, that is unacceptable, and a government which is so bold as to keep a minister who gives little hope to the Montreal residents and does not care about them, does not deserve to govern this country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Questions and comments. Five minutes.

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the Progressive Conservative Party says they play a major role, but what the hon. member was mentioning a few moments ago are just a few projects he was blowing up out of proportion to show the people of Quebec that he was dealing with regional economic development, that he was dealing with the economy of Quebec. About two years ago, when I was a member of the Progressive Conservative Party, it was the party that was the most critical of the interest rates increase, and I recall very well—and that is on the record—that when

Mr. Crow, appearing before the Committee of Finance, told us that it was absolutely necessary to increase interest rates to curb inflation, I replied to him that he was doing everything to create a recession. I was right to tell Mr. Crow that he was creating one. I was also right to tell Mr. Wilson, who was then the Minister of Finance, that he too was creating a recession, and that he was doing everything to create one.

You know, I have been in business for more than 15 years. I know how difficult it is, particularly in Quebec, for small businesses, for men and women who have worked hard for five, ten, fifteen years, and for ten, twelve or fifteen hours a day, at building a business, to see the government decide out of capriciousness to increase interest rates and thus slow down the economic growth, which has been badly managed for the last decade. Bankruptcies are thus in fact created. I do not have the exact figure in mind, but we know there are bankruptcies in numbers large enough to realize how bad the situation is now, particularly in Montreal. The blame lies with this government which does not know how to manage economic growth. It is not by giving money, from time to time to this or that businesss, to show that you are doing something, that you control the economic system while having a stable economic system, a reasonable growth. That is not what has been done during the last few years. So, it is a shame to see these people who worked so hard be penniless again and without a job. These are entrepreneurs who had built firms and are now jobless. It's not only them, but all their employees who find themselves unemployed.

You know, with regard to the social problem the hon. member for Saint-Laurent spoke about a moment ago, it's a shame to see this large number of unemployed, these people who lose their jobs. When these people end up without a job, the spouse often says: "You're no good, you can't find a job, what's wrong with you?" Then the two start arguing and end up getting divorced. Then there is a problem with the children, with the families. It's a terrible social problem and we must be aware of it. It seems that this government is not aware of it. It is breaking up families and destroying the whole society and it will take 10 to 15 years to correct. That is where the misfortune of Montreal lies presently, there is a lot of unemployment and many people on social welfare.

The hon. member for Saint-Laurent is right when she says that crimes are rising in Montreal and that there is a terrible social disorder emerging. Yet, they want us to believe that they have helped Montreal economically. I was just telling the Conservative member: One judges businesses, and actually one talks about government; businesses are judged on results, not on what is perceived as being right or wrong; they are judged on results. Yet, results are that in Montreal the level of unemployment reaches 15 per cent and there are almost as many people on social welfare; in areas such as Lac-Saint-Jean and Gaspésie, unemployment reaches 17 per cent and even 20 per cent. It's appalling!

• (1250)

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take part in this opposition day debate on the motion proposed by my colleague, the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. I would like to read the motion before commenting on it, because what it says is important.

> That this House condemns the government for having abandoned the population of Montreal through its obvious lack of political will to provide jobs and economic opportunities to the people of this region.

Mr. Speaker, we have all accepted voluntarily to take ten minutes to speak to this question because we believe, as liberal members representing the region of Montreal, that it is very important. I have three points to make. When I say we have to give the opportunity to the people of Montreal to create jobs, to find jobs, I am not saying that the government should intervene everywhere. But, as politicians, we have the duty to create opportunities. As for the monetary policy, everybody agrees, in Quebec particularly, that this government's monetary policy is an incredible economic disaster. We cannot have a free-trade agreement with the United States and let our dollar go up while we implement this agreement. Because we automatically lose all the advantages that we had. Canada gave itself a social structure and priorized it and the human values going with it compared to the american economy having a totally different structure. By letting our dollar go up, we lose the little competitive edge that we had.

What is worse is that we have seen this government, through the Governor of the Bank of Canada, increase each week the interest rates and make the situation unbearable. We have then a high dollar and high interest rates. Mr. Speaker, we know that every company has a line of credit today. If interest rates go up, interest charges take up a larger portion of the operating budget.

Those are major policies which were disastrous for the economy, and that was a choice, Mr. Speaker. It was not due to international circumstances. The recession we are presently going through in Canada is a Canadian-made recession, triggered by the economic policies of this government. That is what we want to say in our motion today. The words are very clear. They relate specifically to the political will to provide jobs and economic opportunities for the people of that region. And then, how many times did the Quebec government, the *Conseil du patronat*, all the social and economic interest groups of the Montreal region and the whole province of Quebec say: "We call on the Conservative government in Ottawa to stop its high interest rates and high Canadian dollar policies because they are disastrous for our economy. We are not competitive on the American market"? During the electoral campaign in 1988, the Conservatives led everyone to believe that their policy would aim for a stable economic situation. We must admit that Quebec subscribed to that theory. It is the province of Quebec, especially Montreal, that pays the price for this same free trade policy, a policy that was not followed by an adequate monetary policy aimed at responding to the impact of the Free Trade Agreement.

When we say that this government has no policy, the evidence is there. One does not need to be a genius or some expert in economic or international affairs to see it. A dollar too high, plus high interest rates—

An hon. member: The high interest rates of 1982.

Mr. Gagliano: The hon. member mentioned the interest rates in 1982, and he is right, but we should compare to the situation in the United States and in Europe. At that time it was an international situation, while in 1990 and 1991 the high interest rates were made in Ottawa, the situation was created by the government. So, we have to compare with the rest of the world.

When interest rates are high in Canada, but high also in the United States, we are competitive, as problems are the same on both sides of the border. However, when we create our own problems— Here, Mr. Speaker, I just woke up the Conservatives. That's it, I woke them up.

An hon. member: They are shocked by the truth.

Mr. Gagliano: No doubt about it. What I was saying when my friend interrupted is that we had high interest rates, a high dollar and, on top of that, Mr. Speaker, the famous GST. This government said that it had to slow down the economy, that Canadians were spending too much and that was creating inflation. To that end it raised the interest rates, to prevent Canadians from spending. Then there was the new tax on goods and services applied to everything.

When we talk about inflation, we should not forget the taxes. Everything we pay to governments are taxes, whether they are federal taxes, provincial taxes, municipal taxes, school taxes, building permits, licence plates, etc. If we add all these taxes—and they keep increasing—we see what is responsible for the rise in inflation.

On the one hand, the government tried to control inflation with the interest rates, but on the other, it imposed the GST. Now we see the result. The inflation rate rose from 4 to 6 per cent. So, this government does not know exactly what it is doing. On the one hand, it says that it wants to reduce inflation, but on the other, it increases taxes.

Mr. Speaker, these words are not mine. The government members will deny it. This morning, I heard the minister responsible for the Montreal area say that the Liberals were to blame, after seven years of conservative rule.

But Mr. Speaker, these words are not mine. Let me quote from an article I read:

[*English*]

"One in four Montrealers lives in poverty, starving. City population getting older and poorer, Health department finds. Montreal's population is growing older and poorer and one in four of the city's residents is below the poverty line." It is not new, says *The Gazette* on April 18, 1990.

[*Translation*]

Poverty is gaining ground in the Montreal region: 615,000 people live in poor families, and 50 per cent of these are in Montreal, in the metropolitan area. As for the recession in Quebec: the situation will be worse than expected. It's Quebec and Montreal again, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, we heard about an important study on taxes.

[*English*]

"Tax up $1,530 a year during Tory rule."

[*Translation*]

Because of this government's policies since 1984, a family today pays $1,530 more in taxes than it did in 1984.

In 1984, the Conservatives were in power, not the Liberals. So if they want to blame someone, they should start with themselves, especially considering that from month to month, they have remained steady at 14 per cent in the polls because people have finally understood.

More news: a 70 per cent increase in bankruptcies in April; in Quebec, 2,097 bankruptcies were filed in April 1991, 72 per cent more than April last year.

Earlier, I heard the parliamentary secretary talking about government policies, and he said that everything was fine. If everything is fine, why does Montreal have an unemployment rate of 15 per cent and up? Why are there so many bankruptcies? Why is one Montrealer out of four living under the poverty line? Look at the economic policies the leader of the Tory government, Brian Mulroney, announced at Place Ville-Marie in 1984—happiness for everyone—and look at where we are now.

I see you are signalling that my time is up. Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The time allowed the hon. member for Saint-Léonard has now expired.

It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

The House took recess at 1.00 p.m.

S. O. 31

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

1991 CENSUS

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, today is census day in Canada, the day for all Canadians to stand up and be counted by 38,000 census representatives whom the federal government has hired and equipped at a cost of $9.24 per Canadian.

Canadian census representatives will be counting us with 38,000 freshly sharpened pencils taken from their 38,000 census satchels adorned with the Canadian census logo.

That is right, the Canadian government is spending $253 million to conduct the census, while equipping the census takers with pencils manufactured in Turkey and satchels manufactured in China.

Surely, if the government is going to count Canadians at a cost of $23.98 per household, it could do it with 38,000 pencils that were made in Canada and 38,000 satchels that were made in Canada, providing jobs for Canadians.

The Canadian census is made in Canada, so should the equipment.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT WEEK

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, this is our twentieth National Environment Week. Environment Canada's Green Plan has a budget of $3 billion and urges Canadians to play a role, both individually and as a group, in cleaning up and protecting their environment. Some of the Green Plan's initiatives have already started across this country. The Canadian government has announced programs to clean up the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence. Canadians are working on action plans for cleaning up eleven critical areas in ports and coastal areas on the Atlantic.

Furthermore, an unprecedented air quality agreement was signed with the United States to deal with the problem of acid rain and other types of trans-border air pollution.

Mr. Speaker, this summer, new programs for the environment, backed by funding of over $1 billion, will be introduced in Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

FORESTRY

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, on March 31, the federal-provincial forest agreement between Nova Scotia and the federal government expired. Both governments have been dragging their feet and have not yet renewed the agreement. Done properly, these agreements can be used to develop forest management initiatives involving forest research and wood lot management.

The forest minister told the forestry committee on March 25 that he had the funds identified for a "generous and ambitious" agreement.

Concerns have also been expressed that a new agreement must be signed for longer than the previous two-year bridging period. The government should get on with it and sign an agreement immediately.

* * *

LESTER B. PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Harry Chadwick (Bramalea—Gore—Malton): Mr. Speaker, in last week's debate over Bill C-5, an act to amend the Aeronautics Act and to amend an act to amend the Aeronautics Act, discussion about Lester B. Pearson International Airport and the effects on surrounding communities was once again front and centre.

My constituents and I appreciate the co-operation that is being shown by all sides of the House in encouraging the speedy passage of this legislation.

However, my constituents and I wish to make clear certain misconceptions that were presented by the opposition.

Residents who live in the communities surrounding the airport are being presented as airport haters unable to tolerate disturbance of any kind. At best this is an oversimplification of the position my constituents have about Pearson. At worst the proliferation of this misconception means we jeopardize our ability to work toward a rewarding partnership between the airport and its surrounding communities.

My constituents wish it to be known that they appreciate the benefits the airport can provide and that, as long as the airport plays fair and accepts its responsibility toward the community, they will work with the airport to foster a productive and equally beneficial relationship.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq): Mr. Speaker, last week a very sad incident occurred in Winnipeg. We watched on national news as a young Indian man asked for justice and understanding from the Canadian people and their governments on Winnipeg's radio airwaves.

Mr. Cameron Kerley Antoine was sent out of the province of Manitoba as a young child to the United States where he was adopted by a non-Indian bachelor. He was beaten and sexually abused by his adoptive father for years until he killed him. Originally sentenced to 15 years to life, this sentence was reduced in 1986 to 20 years on compassionate grounds by the Governor of Kansas.

Now serving his sentence in Canada, Mr. Kerley Antoine deserves compassion from the Canadian government.

I urge the government to review his incarceration in light of his own victimization, in light of some previous acquittals of victims of spousal violence who killed their spouses, and in light of the years he has already served in prison.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, this House, and the media were filled yesterday with charges that the Conservative government had increased middle-class taxes dramatically.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is essentially right, but as the author of the report stated on *The Journal* last night, if the Conservatives had not inherited a huge debt, right now the government would have a multi-billion dollar surplus.

However, while high taxes may be understandable, governments at all levels could be doing a better job in treating taxpayers. There ought to be more co-operation between various levels of governments so overlap and duplication are eliminated, so we can work toward the integration of local, provincial and federal taxes, so tax forms can be simplified, so taxpayers can see exactly how much taxes they pay and so that we can put an end to hidden taxes.

I hope the Economic Council of Canada can explore these areas as it conducts the Prime Minister's study on competitiveness. I hope we can achieve what is really needed, a total reform of the tax system.

* * *

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, as the dust from this government's budget of last February begins to settle, the ramifications of the government's lack of commitment to education and health are beginning to be felt by Canadians from coast to coast.

According to the president of the Canadian Medical Association, Dr. Lavoie, Canada's medicare system will be in ruins within the next 10 years if this government continues its present policies.

In my province of Prince Edward Island, the $2.3 billion cut in provincial transfer payments is now affecting the ability of the province and the hospitals themselves to maintain their health care services.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital will be closing 25 per cent of its beds for the month of July and 22 beds for the rest of the year. Our other main hospital, Prince County, will be closing almost 10 per cent of its beds for the rest of the year.

The other hospitals in my province are being affected as well.

I urge the federal government to recognize how the policies are hurting Canadians and to rectify the damage it has done to our health care system.

S. O. 31

NATIONAL UNITY

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, how are we going to resolve the fundamental conflict that haunts our country, a conflict between two very different visions of Canada: the equality of all versus the distinct society?

In 1867 we found the answer by adopting a federal rather than a unitary system of government. In 1991 we may find the answer by giving every province exclusive jurisdiction over language, culture and communications. Language rights would be attached to places and not to people. This would give Quebec full control over matters it considers essential for its survival. It would also give the nine other provinces the right to have unilingual traffic tickets or cereal boxes if they wished. That could substantially reduce the support for Quebec independence and allow other differences to be settled by common sense rather than by emotion.

* * *

CHINA

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, Amnesty International's detailed report today begins: "Nearly two years after the suppression of peaceful pro-democracy protests, which resulted in the massacre of hundreds of civilians in Beijing on June 4, 1989, human rights violations continue to be widespread in China".

China refuses to answer inquiries by Amnesty or by members of this Parliament, arguing that human rights are internal matters only.

Nevertheless, since China shares international trade and credit and responsibility for the U.S. led UN invasion of Iraq, China cannot ignore the UN declaration of human rights. Although it upholds the right to work and fair pay, to health care and to education, it must also uphold the rights to life, liberty and security of person, to freedom of peaceful assembly, and to being presumed innocent until proved guilty in a lawful public trial.

S.O. 31

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT WEEK

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, as we begin Environment Week in Canada, I would like to bring to the attention of the House the most important anniversary we will be celebrating this time next year, namely the 20th anniversary of the Stockhom Conference on the Environment. At that time, heads of state will have gathered in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the June 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the spirit of consultation Canada has displayed on the international scene. We recognize the need for Canada and the other industrialized nations to help developing countries meet their needs for sustainable growth.

All Canadians will benefit from Canada achieving its goals and contributing to setting a new course worldwide. So, they can start by setting an example at home. During Environment Week, I encourage everyone to make a special effort to preserve and clean up the environment. Let us all be active partners in this nation-wide endeavour. The future of Canada depends on it!

* * *

• (1410)

CANADA POST

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the people of Scoudouc, in my riding of Beauséjour, have just sustained a loss they would rather have been spared. The fact is that Canada Post has decided to close their post office. This decision came as a surprise to everyone.

In the letter announcing the closure, Canada Post refers to communications between municipal authorities. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that had the corporation been in touch with the president of the local service district of Scoudouc and myself, there would still be a post office in Scoudouc.

The post office played a major role in the economy of this community. All the businesses established in the industrial park as well as the people of Scoudouc use this local service and they want to keep on using it. So, I urge Canada Post to reconsider and to keep the very busy post office of Scoudouc open.

[*English*]

AMHERST AEROSPACE

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the volunteer members of the community transitional board for Amherst Aerospace who are working diligently and tirelessly in the interests of securing a lasting future for this major employer in Cumberland county.

This board is made up of volunteer professionals from the area working closely with members of the staff and the union in an effort to protect one of the area's largest employers. The board was formed when it became clear that the owners and financiers of the business had lost interest in the business at a time when in fact it needed the total attention of all concerned.

The board has worked seven days a week since its inception and has been successful in identifying future prospective owners and determining the actions required to make the business viable.

Part of the goal has been to secure community ownership interest, and the board has already been successful in raising a substantial amount of money. The problems are not solved yet. However, this board and its actions are examples of how a community can pull together when given a challenge, and they are to be commended for it.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CITATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, many Canadian men and women are committed to promoting, through their actions, the fundamental values of our society.

Yesterday, 21 individuals and 4 organizations were honoured during a special ceremony in recognition of their remarkable contribution to communities across the country and received the Citation for Citizenship which is awarded every year.

All over the country, Canadian men and women are working behind the scenes towards a better and fairer future. I think that the energy, determination and

dedication of these individuals are what make changes happen. To recognize their work and their contribution to the Canadian society is truly an honour and a pleasure for a government.

Liberty, justice, equality and respect for diversity will continue to prevail in this country as long as we believe in these values and all work for them.

Let us applaud the winners of the Citation for Citizenship who have demonstrated an examplary commitment in promoting the values that Canadian citizenship stands for.

* * *

QUEBEC SELF-GOVERNMENT

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, for over 30 years, Quebecers have been demanding the political autonomy they need to grow.

The Meech Lake Accord was the latest attempt to negotiate a new agreement. It failed. Since then, the people of Quebec have started demanding self-government again in order to grow as a mature and distinct society.

So, what does the federal government do? It infringes upon Quebec jurisdictions: education, economic and regional development and health. The federal government has become an "agent provocateur".

That worries me, Mr. Speaker. We Quebecers want to have a cordial relationship with Canada, but that cannot be done in a climate of provocation.

* * *

[*English*]

1991 CENSUS

Mrs. Edna Anderson (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wish to draw attention to and take issue with the 1991 census form. I agree with my many constituents who have called to label the long version as sexist and racist.

Females are asked whether they have had children while men, married or single, are not. Housework is considered a non-occupation. Questions of this nature merely perpetuate the stereotypes we are trying to eradicate.

To add insult to injury, never in the history of our census has "Canadian" been accepted as a valid ethnic origin. This is a disgrace. Are we trying to entrench hyphenated Canadianism in our national psyche?

This can only foster continued divisiveness. The hyphen must be laid to rest. Canadians want the right to be addressed as Canadians. We may not all have come over on the same ship, but we are all in the same boat now.

On census day, count me Canadian.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

TAXATION

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

Yesterday, a new study revealed that since this government came to power, our tax system has become more complex and less equitable. Today, we hear that 70 per cent of Canadian businesses made mistakes in their GST returns, this after the government had promised and guaranteed the tax would be easy to administer.

Our question to the Prime Minister is this: How can he claim the GST is easy to administer when 70 per cent of our businesses don't seem to be able to manage?

[*English*]

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, even the hon. Leader of the Opposition will admit that the changeover from the old flawed manufacturers' sales tax to the GST went far more smoothly than anyone had anticipated.

Even the Leader of the Opposition—I see him nodding his head—agrees with that.

It is true that in the quarterly filers, which represent small businesses, there were an estimated 50 or 60 per cent of returns that had some slight errors.

Let me point out to the Leader of the Opposition and to the House that 90 per cent of those errors were fixed and taken care of by the systems that this government put in place in consultation with the private sector prior to the implementation of the GST. All of those teething problems, in fact 90 per cent of them, have been able to be corrected as a result of the systems that were put in place in consultation with the private sector.

I believe that as we move into the second quarter, the situation will improve even more considerably.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): After the way that the minister was shot down by the Minister of Finance last week following his statement about taxes in Canada, instead of trying to lecture us, he should lecture his own minister and tell him what he should do.

Mr. Speaker, my question is again to the Prime Minister. The government keeps trying to say that the GST has not hurt the economy. But Manpower Temporary Services, a major forecaster of the job market, called 1991 the "slowest employment year in memory". It said today that the net hiring strength is now only one-third of what it was a year ago.

I want to ask the Prime Minister: When will we see policies that will give some hope to the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who want to work now, not next year?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, we have seen interest rates drop over 5 per cent in the last year, which is helping businesses recover from a recessionary period that we are going through.

We are on target. We expect recovery to start in earnest later this year and we will be back to a very sizeable growth rate next year. We are on target on that. We have confidence in that and we know the Canadian people will respond.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is at this moment, for this summer that students all the across the country are finding it almost impossible to find jobs.

• (1420)

Talk with students from New Brunswick, Quebec, southern Ontario or western Canada and you will find that they are all desperate.

The recession created by this government is not only denying them their jobs, it is denying them their future.

Does the Prime Minister not realize the desperate situation that is facing students who need summer jobs? Will the government commit additional resources to put Canada's young people back to work? They need jobs this summer. They want to go back to school come September.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, we are going through a recessionary period. There is no question about that.

We are coming out of it now. The latest report from businesses say that they expect the growth to start mid-summer and it will grow. We are confident that that is going to happen. We are confident that young people will be able to find opportunities for work this summer, maybe not as plentiful as in the past because we are coming out of a tough economic period.

There will be jobs available for them. If they look hard for them, they will find them.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of National Revenue who the other day admitted that this government has been clobbering Canadian taxpayers.

Yesterday, Global Economics, a private firm, underscored that admission and statistics from his own Department of National Revenue pointed out that personal income taxes have risen by 66 per cent since 1984 for a total of $25.5 billion.

During the same period, corporate taxes have been allowed to be reduced by 34 per cent. How can this minister justify his government's assault on individual Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the latter part of the hon. member's question was answered earlier as well as yesterday by my colleague, the Minister of State.

The beginning of the hon. member's question suggested that I was quoted as saying that Canadians are over-taxed.

Let me take this opportunity to make it very clear that at no time did I ever use the word "over-tax"—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Jelinek: I am not backtracking.

When I said that governments have gone about as far as they can go in taxation, I was referring to certain commodities, specifically gasoline as it relates to cross-border shopping.

I went on to say it is true that taxes on tobacco, booze and gasoline are the major culprit on those products and these are going to have to be dealt with by all levels of government.

That is what I said and that is what I stand by.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians took from the statement is that in fact they are over-taxed.

The Global Economics Review pointed out that fairness in taxation is equated with simplicity. Corporate taxes have become more simple. They have been reduced. Personal income taxes have increased. They have gone up.

Since the minister acknowledged that his government has moved too far in the area of taxation, and given the fundamental disagreement expressed by his cabinet colleagues, will he tell this House which taxes he is reviewing? What proposals are his cabinet colleagues putting forward that will make taxation more fair for Canadians?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, any transcripts of my comments in Winnipeg last week will prove that there was no word such as "over-taxed" used by myself.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Jelinek: What I did say that the government is reviewing are the over-all problems of cross-border shopping. I went on to say that taxation by all levels is just one very small problem in a very complex situation, which includes a variety of problems, including a lack of aggressive marketing, higher labour costs and distribution costs, and higher transportation costs.

As I have travelled across the country, I have had the majority of provinces support the leadership that this government has taken in trying to deal with—

* * *

HEALTH

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

At a time when we are looking for a consensus on what it means to be a Canadian, what it is this country offers to Canadians, we really need look no further than the medicare system that so many Canadians are proud of.

However, this week two different organizations made absolutely scathing attacks on this government's policies on health services. The first one was from the National Council of Welfare which said that if the current trend continues in funding for medical services, medicare will effectively be dead as a national health insurance system. The president of the Canadian Medical Association says that under the present formula, health care system in this country is "doomed" as a national system.

My question to the Prime Minister is this. Will he show real commitment to Canadian medicare by doing two things: first, restore federal funding for the health care system across this country to provinces and territories, and second, ensure that during the constitutional talks the government also discusses and makes sure there is a Canadian discussion on those values, such as medicare, which are a part of the character of this country.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, over the last number of years, instead of cash payments to provinces for shared cost responsibilities, there have been tax points given to provinces.

In the February budget the Minister of Finance made a commitment that he would review all transfer programs to provinces, in co-operation with the provinces. That commitment is being kept. We are looking at that to ensure that the very good medicare system that we have in this country is sustained. That is one of the reasons for this, but we are looking at all transfer payments, including post-secondary education and social services, to ensure that we have the best system in this country, to maintain it and to make it even better.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, if the government wants to ensure that we have the best system, restore the federal funding and we will have the best system.

I would suggest that the Prime Minister ask the people of Newfoundland, where they have had 20 per cent of their acute care beds cut back in health care, where 300 nurses have been laid off; in Nova Scotia, where funding for nursing homes is being cut, and in New Brunswick, where funding is being rolled back. That is where health care really counts, right there in the communities.

My question to the Prime Minister is this: The principle of universally accessible, publicly funded health care is a basic principle of Canadian character and living in this country. I want to ask the Prime Minister whether in the constitutional talks he will take the suggestions of my party for a social charter where we can ensure that future generations of Canadians will have the kind of health care that we have been able to have.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the New Democratic Party asked whether the discussions on the Constitution would deal with Canadian values. I think all of us recognize that in a country like ours, at a time like this, one cannot consider a constitution without dealing with the basic values of this country.

I personally think that would be a very useful dimension to the discussions which we have to undertake. She has made specific reference to a social charter and, naturally, we are prepared to consider her proposals for a social charter and, indeed, consider other constructive proposals by others in this House and in the country.

As the Prime Minister has made clear, while we have a duty which we intend to carry out to put forward specific proposals and clear options for constitutional change, we certainly anticipate that there will be amendments in the process because we do not want to have a situation which has either a closed process or results in closed minds on basic questions that the country has to deal with.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear that the government is considering a social charter. I think it is a very important part of what will form the foundation of our country. At the same time it is necessary to have funding for the essential services.

• (1430)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, my question is again directed to the Prime Minister. The government's cutbacks in medicare have led to user fees and deterrent fees.

Last April, the minister responsible for National Health and Welfare at the time stated that user fees were a concept that deserved consideration. My question to the Prime Minister is this: Does he endorse user fees? And if not, how does he intend to stop this trend?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the user fee issue was raised, if I am not mistaken, by the Quebec Minister of Social Affairs. The Minister of National Health and Welfare responded several days or several weeks later.

In fact, we are all in favour of having the most advanced, most modern and most generous medicare plan in the world. However, we have to pay for it. We will have to find the money, and that money comes from Canadian taxpayers. The NDP is asking us to lower taxes, but on the other hand, it is also asking us to upgrade services. You can't have both. The two will have to be reconciled at the national level and in the hon. member's mind as well.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister and concerns the Canada-Mexico treaty.

On May 22, the Minister of the Environment said that the government would not make an environmental assessment until after an agreement was signed. Mr. Speaker, it will be far too late. The environment and the economy must be integrated from the very beginning.

My question is this: Can the Prime Minister give us the assurance that non-governmental environmental experts will be included on the negotiating committee, from the very beginning?

[*English*]

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that this issue, which is fundamentally a trade discussion, is going to include other issues and of course some environmentalists will be there and consultation will take place.

The hon. member asks for what I would argue is a structure which would be totally unwieldly for us to conduct these negotiations.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the Prime Minister. If that structure is unwieldly then somebody better tell George Bush.

What is this government afraid of? The Americans have committed to appointing environmental activists to six trade policy committees. Furthermore they have detailed the exact agenda and the exact process by which environmental concerns are going to be set out. The Canadian public on the other hand has been given no such details. We have not even been given the terms of reference of the environmental impact assessment.

Why is this government not prepared to provide Canadians with the same set of standards of public disclosure and involvement as the American government is prepared to provide the American citizenry? This government may be a lame duck, but the Canadian people are not.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): From one old duck to another let me try and answer that, Mr. Speaker.

My hon. friend can be given the assurance that all of the required standards will be observed for the President to achieve the requirement of fast-tracking from the Congress. Certain commitments were required and the President made those to various Congressmen and Senators to be assured of their support in regard to the fast-tracking. In respect of Mexico, the United States has in the Texas panhandle some specific problems that have given rise to requirements that are more demanding of the United States in that area than they are of Canada. That being said, Canada will provide when the negotiations begin all of the safeguards in every jurisdiction to be undertaken for scrutiny, all of the safeguards.

An hon. member: Give us the same thing as the Americans.

Mr. Mulroney: My hon. friend says: "Give us the same thing as the Americans". We are different from the Americans. We are going to give Canadians a Canadian solution.

* * *

GREAT LAKES

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. It concerns the government's failure to reach an agreement with the United States to stop polluting the Great Lakes.

After months of delays and stalling by Canada, the Americans finally gave up on this government and announced their own action plan to stop poisoning the Great Lakes.

Why did the government back out of an agreement with the States to finally do something about cleaning up the Great Lakes?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, as I think most hon. members in this House know, the Canadian government has been working very closely with the American government and with the appropriate provincial and municipal governments, going back as far as 1972, to ensure that good progress is being made with respect to the clean up of the Great Lakes.

The problem, of course, is an immense one. It is a type of problem which has been accumulating in Canada and the Great Lakes as a result of economic activity for decades and decades. Anyone in this House or anyone in the country who thinks that the messes of the past can be cleaned up overnight is wrong.

I think we have made good progress. Most recently, as you know, Mr. Speaker, because you follow these issues very closely, we announced the establishment not so long ago of a $25 million Great Lakes Action Program. I think it is well under way to determining a pollution centre to be established.

We on this side of the House understand that there are no quick fixes to problems which have been building for decades and decades, but we as a government are very committed to ensuring that we proceed thoroughly and in an efficient manner to make sure that the problem is addressed now and in the future.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want water they can drink, swim in, fish and eat without getting sick, not pious pronouncements, promises and procrastination.

In the United States national leadership has got five states and private industry together on an action plan for the Great Lakes, while this government cannot even get together with one province.

Why did the government let its own instrument on the Great Lakes, its agreement with Ontario, lapse in March? Why has it done absolutely nothing to get a new agreement and get some action going again?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I can inform the House that in fact it is not accurate to say that this government is not proceeding in its consultations with the province of Ontario. It has been and continues to be so.

In the meantime, the announcement to which I have already referred, which was made in the presence of the minister from Ontario and which was the precursor to very intensive negotiations with the province of Ontario, will indeed lead to the kind of action the hon. member is seeking.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

On May 15, the Prime Minister told the House, in response to questions concerning the admission of former Iraqi Ambassador Al-Mashat to Canada, that the Clerk of the Privy Council, Paul Tellier, speaking for the Privy Council Office said, and I quote the Prime Minister who said: "Do not admit him". Notwithstanding that, he was admitted.

I want to ask the Prime Minister this: In view of the fact that documents made available to the committee studying this question last night now reveal that there is absolute—

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment. I indicated yesterday that there is a very difficult line to be drawn in questions arising out of a committee. There are comments, of course, in Beauchesne's that the proceedings of the committee ought not to be referred to.

There is other procedural law, especially from Great Britain, that may be able to assist this House. However, it seems to me that what the hon. member is asking is something which is immediately, right now, before the committee and that it is not appropriate to pursue the same subject here in Question Period.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can put the question directly to the Prime Minister.

Does the Prime Minister stand by his statement of May 15 that Paul Tellier, Clerk of the Privy Council, instructed that Al-Mashat not be admitted to Canada? Does he stand by that statement?

• (1440)

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, this is one of the dilemmas—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has put a question relating to a statement made by the right hon. Prime Minister, not in front of committee, but some time ago in the House.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could resolve the dilemma by telling my hon. friend that what I indicated in the House will, if he waits 15 or 20 minutes and goes to the committee that he has been attending, Mr. Tellier will be there this afternoon. I am sure all of the information will be provided and validated to his satisfaction.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, indeed we will be putting that question to Mr. Tellier this afternoon.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps under the circumstances the hon. member could put his question and I will listen very carefully to it.

Mr. Robinson: My supplementary question is also for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is responsible for the appointment of ministerial chiefs of staff. I want to ask the Prime Minister—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Robinson: This is a question relating directly to the responsibility of the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that the chief of staff to the then Secretary of State for External Affairs, David Daubney, has indicated that a memo was brought before him in which reference was made to the admission of ambassador—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member may or may not have a question relating to the appointment of chiefs of staff, but I have to ask the hon. member to keep in mind that under the present circumstances, with all of these proceedings taking place last night, this morning, again as I am told this afternoon, it seems to me that it is bringing into the Chamber the very things that are being dealt with on the floor of the committee.

If the hon. member has a question for the right hon. Prime Minister as to chiefs of staff, in general or in particular, I would like to hear it. But at least for the moment I do not want references to what is taking place in front of the committee being used as the preamble to or part of the question.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, without in any way referring to what took place in committee yesterday, is the Prime Minister prepared to demand the resignation of the chief of staff to the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs, David Daubney, given the incredible incompetence he displayed yesterday?

Mr. Speaker: I think the hon. member has just chosen another way to do exactly what I asked him to refrain from doing.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The National Council on Welfare reported today that federal cash payments for medicare and university education will soon end. The council asks for a new deal with the provinces before it is too late. As the Prime Minister knows, an attack on these transfer payments is in reality an attack on Canada's poor. The cry is genuine, the cry for help is real.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Is it not time that this government renewed its national responsibility and helped in the fight against poverty throughout all of Canada?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Certainly, Mr. Speaker. I guess one of the first things we can do to help the poor of this country is to get the deficit down and be able to lower taxes once we get the debts of the past paid. I think there is no question about that.

I answered this question a little earlier in Question Period in a question by the leader of the New Democratic Party. I said that the Minister of Finance in his February budget said he would be consulting, would be meeting and examining all transfer programs with the provinces, with a view to maintaining and in fact enhancing the program so that we can assure the people of Canada the best of health care and the best of social services and the best of post-secondary education.

That commitment was made in the budget in February and we are going to carry it out.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Prime Minister. The National Council of Welfare projects that federal cash payments to Quebec will end by 1995-96, less than five years from now.

Given our attempt on new constitutional arrangements, is this the right signal to be sending Quebec?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that statement is inaccurate and my hon. friend will see that the numbers mentioned today are not at all justified by government projections.

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

On March 19, this government exposed its true intentions when its members unanimously voted against a renewed commitment to medicare. True to form, the proportion of total health care costs paid by this government has declined by more than 6 per cent since 1987.

I would like very much to give the Prime Minister a second chance to answer a question he ignored.

Mr. Mulroney: Thanks.

Ms. Guarnieri: Your welcome. Is the Prime Minister courageous enough to abandon his government's tax point camouflaged cutbacks and restore federal health care contributions to traditional and necessary levels?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the hon. member should understand that provinces will be receiving more money this year than they did last year for health care costs. They have not increased at the rate the provinces would like to see them increase, but they are getting an increase in funding. Provinces will be receiving more money this year for health care than last.

Let us set the record straight. I will repeat to her exactly what I said earlier in answer to questions from her colleague and from the leader of the New Democratic Party. A commitment was made by this government in the February budget, which we plan to carry out, to have a complete study of transfer payments to the provinces. That will be carried out by the ministers of finance of the provinces and the Government of Canada.

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, as the American Congress looks north to improve its medicare system, this government is looking south for ways to destroy ours.

My supplementary is for the Prime Minister. The president of the Canadian Medical Association does not agree with his minister's viewpoint. The president tells us that if this government does not change its course, our medicare system will be in ruins within 10 years.

I ask the Prime Minister if his government will recognize that Canadians want the Tory fiscal knife out of the operating rooms of this country?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I read with interest today the headline: "United States urged to adopt Canada's health system". It must think we have a pretty good health system if it wants to adopt it.

I will repeat to the hon. member again, because I know I have to say things two or three times to sink into the Liberals, we are studying the transfer payments in co-operation with the provinces to assure the maintenance and the improvement of our services we provide to the people of Canada. That is a commitment and we are going to keep it.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

I would like to ask the minister if he would confirm that for the first time ever Canada has formally agreed to allow the regular transit of Trident nuclear submarines through internal sovereign Canadian waters at Dixon Entrance northwest of Prince Rupert?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is not entirely accurate in his statement about the Dixon Entrance and the submarines. What the Americans want to set up on their territory is a base for testing submarine communication/detection, not a submarine base as such.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I confirmed it this morning with people in the Department of External Affairs. I assume people working in the departments are working under government minister's supervision, but I confirmed that External Affairs and other departmental officials are working on the final wording for the agreement for the first time in Canadian history, to allow Trident nuclear submarines to come through internal sovereign Canadian waters. I would like the minister to understand that the Canadians I know are very much opposed to this. The Americans have claimed up until now that they have an all-American route to get to Back Island base, so would the minister confirm that this agreement has been agreed to by he and other ministers and by cabinet?

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, first, when the agreements already negotiated or now in negotiation with the Americans are implemented, the hon. member will realize that his fears are unfounded. At that time, I will be glad to discuss those agreements thoroughly with him.

[*English*]

TRADE

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. This is the second anniversary of China's Tiananmen massacre. The Prime Minister will recall the words of his former Secretary of State for External Affairs when he said with outrage in June of 1989: "Tiananmen Square and the subsequent campaign of repression has changed the relationship between Canada and China. The Chinese authorities have called for business as usual. This cannot be accepted".

Does the Prime Minister still stand by that commitment?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, not only do we stand by that commitment but we have conveyed the views of the Government of Canada in the strongest terms.

The *South China Post* in an editorial by Anthony Polski, who was the former *New York Times* correspondent and editor at *Far East Economic Review*, made the following comment that I think will interest my hon. friend on May 26: "—referred to speeches of unique historical and contemporary importance for the future of Hong Kong as related to Beijing. The speeches unequivocally affirmed the importance of human rights and a variety of other economic freedoms in Hong Kong, linked these freedoms inextricably with the economic prosperity of the territory and future healthy growth and sent a clear message to Beijing of its guarantees and responsibilities to affirm and preserve Hong Kong's unique system after the territory reverts in 1997.

The Prime Minister of Canada became one of the few heads of government or heads of state to visit Hong Kong as a principal destination. His visit was intended to affirm Canadian support for Hong Kong's autonomy as promised in the joint declaration of '84 and the visit reiterated Canada's strong historical commitments to Hong Kong".

In the process of doing that, I used the occasion of that visit and that series of speeches to respond in particular to the question raised by my hon. friend, and to convey very strongly the dismay of the Government of Canada in regard to developments in Beijing and to insist on the respect of human rights at all times as a fundamental of Canadian foreign policy.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, a few moments ago to a previous questioner, we heard the former Secretary of State for External Affairs refer to basic Canadian values that we value so much in this country. Yet the numbers speak louder than words.

Canada's imports with China increased by 17.7 per cent from 1989 to 1990 and our exports jumped by 44.4 per cent for the same period.

Will the Prime Minister not agree that Canada's substantial growth in trade with China last year is inconsistent with its claim that China must redress its abysmal record on human rights? Will he set specific human rights conditions for China to meet before continuing business as usual? Could we have that commitment?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend raises very specifically the question of the tie-in of human rights to the attitude of the Government of Canada. In a lead editorial in the *South China Morning Post* entitled "A friend in time of need", the editorialist said: "The Prime Minister did not need to mention Beijing by name when he said that any country which tried to achieve economic progress without recognizing human rights was doomed to mediocrity".

I find it passing strange, Mr. Speaker, that the Liberals raise an important question and then some of the members are disinclined to listen to the answer to the very important question raised by the hon. member.

We are seeking not only to enforce the linkage between human rights and economic association, but also to state directly to the Government of Beijing that that has been and will be the policy of the Government of Canada.

We have stipulated it very carefully and have conveyed it to the Government of Beijing. When I was as close to Chinese territory as one can come without being on the mainland last week, I conveyed unequivocally in a way that I think my hon. friend would approve, the indispensable relationship that Canadians make to democratic rights and freedoms, in the evolution of the PRC, the respect for those and economic co-operation for Canada.

TRADE

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Prime Minister.

Before he went away on his trip to the Orient, he said that one of the goals of the trip was to press for the elimination or reduction of the Japanese 8 per cent tariff on Canadian pine, spruce and fir.

This tariff continues to hurt the producers in my riding in the province of British Columbia. It appears that the Japanese have not agreed to the elimination or reduction of the tariff.

Can the Prime Minister tell us today whether there was any progress made at all on this important issue?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this is a most important question in British Columbia.

I pressed the Japanese government for the complete elimination of the 8 per cent tariff on certain Canadian wood products. The Prime Minister gave me the assurance of movement, which the Government of Canada did not accept at that time, but which we have moved to the MTN with a view to seeking the complete removal of what we view as a fundamentally discriminatory tax against Canadian producers.

Similar products from the United States enter Japan without this 8 per cent surcharge, and we want it eliminated for Canadian products.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC'S REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The Minister of National Health and Welfare took advantage of the absence of the Prime Minister to proceed to an in-house cabinet shuffle and give himself a new department that he called the Quebec regional development department. However, yesterday, in Quebec City, the minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs said that there would be no new department but only a new title for the minister. So I ask the Prime Minister who should arbitrate differences of opinions between ministers and which minister tells the truth? Is it only a new title or is there a new department?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): There is no need for an arbitrator, Mr. Speaker, because the positions of my friend and colleague and myself are the same.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister refused yesterday by his silence to denounce and condemn this unacceptable action taken in his absence by the Minister of Health, which was to intrude brutally upon Quebec's jurisdiction. Can the Prime Minister tell us that he will denounce and condemn this action?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): As I recall, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean was not the least shocked when federal funds were spent in his riding.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, the World University Service of Canada is an important partner in international development. Since last December, this non-governmental organization has serious financial problems. We know the Canadian International Development Agency is presently studying a proposal aimed at putting it back on track. My question is for the minister for External Relations. Could she tell us the situation in this regard and if she intends taking steps to clarify it?

Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations and Minister of State (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question which is certainly of interest for many members of this House, since WUSC has been for years an international development agency contributing to our excellent reputation and has been working in close collaboration with the CIDA. Since WUSC was placed under receivership last December, CIDA spared no effort to find a solution with its board of directors. I am pleased to announce today that I signed this morning an agreement for a redeemable contribution of $1.8 million that will allow WUSC to reclaim its position.

• (1500)

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Universality of health care is a stated government policy and promise' but what does it mean to natives and immigrants? For native youth it means the suicide rate is five to six times higher than for non–natives' and climbing. Suicide counselling is virtually non–existent.

Yesterday the Canadian Ethnocultural Council reminded MPs of the need for mental health programs for immigrants and refugees. Native leaders have asked for an inquiry on the issue of suicide among their people.

Can the minister explain why his government has omitted our first peoples and our newcomers from badly needed mental health programs, or is it merely a government oversight? Shall we see more deaths before the government acts?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Minister of State (Youth) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Minister of Health, is away today on government business. In view of the seriousness of the question I will transmit the question to my hon. colleague who, I am sure, will get back to the hon. member as quickly as possible.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Larry Chalmers, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, province of British Columbia.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, I just want to make my standard point of order about private members on this side not having a fair opportunity to ask questions.

All members are not created equal. Canadians are asking us to speak up on behalf of our constituents and we need the opportunity to do so. I just wanted to express that.

Point of Order

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, in response to the intervention by my hon. friend, I once again want to offer to the government House leader a willingness on behalf of the New Democratic Party to add half an hour to Question Period each day to allow more members to participate in questioning the government.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It is not the first time that this issue is raised. The Chair has taken note of the concerns expressed by both sides of the House and will continue to closely follow and study the issue and the situation.

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, during our discussions last year, I had offered an extra 15 minutes a day. The opposition turned it down.

More significantly, the fundamental question that has to be asked is: are members of Parliament equal in this House or are some more equal than others? The member of Parliament who raised the point of order said he felt like he should have an equal opportunity to question the government as any other ordinary member. That is the practice in the Mother of Parliaments. It is a practice I think we should look into. It can be achieved by having shorter questions, shorter answers, going back and forth from one side to the other as they do in the United Kingdom, and through other procedures.

The question is not whether there is enough time for Question Period, the question is: is there a fairness in the way questions are distributed between the two sides and in the way they are asked?

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, the hon. House leader is somewhat selective in his memory in terms of bringing facts to the floor of the House of Commons with regard to Question Period.

My colleague to the left has made two proposals on two separate days to extend the length of Question Period. I wish the record to show, on the Point of Order, that we would be more than willing to extend the hours of Question Period today in order to accommodate all members of Parliament on all sides of the House.

Point of Order

The hon. member opposite keeps referring to other Parliaments which have various question periods and procedures on question periods. I would like to bring to the attention of the hon. member opposite the words of a former very distinguished Speaker of this House, the Hon. James Jerome, where he said on April 14, 1975, with regard to Question Period:

> The question period is a unique feature of the Canadian House of Commons where the ministry is required to be accountable to the House on a daily basis without advance notice. It is an excellent feature of our parliament, and while we have much to learn from other governmental systems, the question period is one area in which we are in the forefront of the responsible government, and every effort must be made to preserve the excellence of this practice.

I remind the hon. member opposite that he ought not to try to intimidate members of Parliament, particularly members who sit in the Chair. That is unacceptable conduct for the government House leader.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please! since the hon. members seems to be willing to discuss this question, I am ready to show some tolerance. I recognize the hon. member for Kamloops and then the Government House leader.

[*English*]

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, as my hon. friend the Official Opposition House leader has indicated, the government House leader's memory is somewhat selective. On no occasion did he singularly offer to extend Question Period. If he had, on behalf of the New Democratic Party, we would have enthusiastically responded favourably. Once again I want to make it very clear that I think almost all of the opposition parties represented in the House have indicated a willingness to extend Question Period for half an hour every day to allow more members to participate.

I think we also have to recognize that backbenchers on the government side have an opportunity every week during caucus meetings to question cabinet ministers directly. We do not have that opportunity. We do not sit in the government's caucus. On a weekly basis they have an opportunity to raise questions, enter into discussions and so on. When we talk about equality of opportunity let us recognize that government backbenchers have an advantage that members of the opposition simply do not have.

Mr. Andre: I just want to respond very quickly. The hon. House leader of the Liberal Party read from Mr. James Jerome's description of Question Period. I was disappointed that he stopped before he read the rest of the declaration, because Mr. Jerome said: "It is inappropriate for questions to contain accusations or to be shouted. It is inappropriate to yell in the House. It is appropriate to ask questions seeking information and not to make representations or accusations".

Quoting Mr. Jerome is appropriate. I wish he would have quoted him completely and I wish we would return to that practice.

If Question Period were just the seeking of information, there might be some validity to the suggestion that backbenchers in the government have other opportunities. Question Period is the opportunity for making representations on behalf of constituents. The hon. House leader of the New Democratic Party will recognize that caucus is an inappropriate mechanism and is unfair in terms of backbenchers.

Again, the issue is not how long Question Period is, the issue is how fair Question Period is.

It has been suggested in the past by the House leader of the Liberal Party and by the House leader of the New Democratic Party that perhaps we need changes. I would welcome their active participation in the House committee on management so that we can incorporate the rules that Mr. Justice Jerome talked about, quite properly, and maybe we can make them the practice in this House as they have been in the past. We could have more than enough time for members on our side as well as for members on that side to have a fair and even chance. Perhaps we can do it in a way that is free of some of the excessive partisanship, the shouting, the screaming, the accusations and so on which bring this whole institution in disrepute to those who are watching.

• (1510)

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I see that the Government House leader has made his statement and is leaving right away. For the information of those who are listening to us, I think it is important to mention that a committee was commissioned by this Parliament to study parliamentary reform. The McGrath Committee, of which I had the honour to be a member, has made specific recommendations about the possibility for government backbenchers to speak in the House. And it was recommended at that time to allow shorter speeches in the first 15 minutes devoted to members' statements where precisely government members are recognized more often than opposition members. It is then that government backbenchers have the opportunity to express their points of view. The McGrath Committee has fully acknowledged that question periode is traditionnally reserved for opposition members. It is the only time when opposition members can just question to ministers.

Over time the Chair has shown a certain tolerance in exceptionally recognizing a few governement backbenchers. Now until the Tories came into office, this prerogative was always left to the sole discretion of Speaker who, would occasionnally recognize some governement backbenchers. Now, what has happened over time? Since the Conservatives came into office, all that was changed. Nowadays, the government whip or his delegate hand to the Speaker a list of government backbenchers who must be recognized during question period, or even during the 15-minute period for statements pursuant to S.O. 21.

With all due respect, I submit that this practice originated under this government, in an effort to control question period. It is a complete departure from our previous parliamentary practice, where question period was for opposition members who used that opportunity to question ministers. If the government whip decides that, from now on, this or that hon. member will be allowed to put questions to the ministers, obviously we will not have a question period anymore, but a big show half-orchestrated by the government. We think this already infringes upon the rights of opposition members. It limits in some ways the 45-minute question period available to us for questioning the government.

So, I respectfully submit that, every time the Speaker recognizes a government backbencher, he goes against this long-established parliamentary tradition, according to which question period is for opposition members only.

[*English*]

Mrs. Edna Anderson (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address this as a government private member. My constituents would like to see me ask and be able to ask questions in this House. According to *Beauchesne's* we may have one short sentence prior to the question and during a supplementary there will be no preamble. Adding another half hour to the time for Question Period is not going to address the rules and procedures that are in Beauchesne's. If we kept to those rules we would all have an opportunity to speak in this House.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I ask for the cooperation of both sides of the House. The management committee would seem to be a more appropriate forum to further discuss opinions that have been expressed this afternoon and that the Chair will take into account, obviously.

You know that the Speaker is the servant of the House and tries to accommodate the wishes and suggestions of all members regardless of who they are and which titles they have in this House.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 81—MONTREAL ECONOMY

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Allmand (p. 1111).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): When our proceedings were suspended at one o'clock, the hon. member for Saint-Léonard had just completed his remarks and we were about to start questions and comments.

The hon. member for Saint-Denis.

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of listening to this debate on a very important question since it started this morning. I listened to the remarks of the hon. member who, as usual, was able to describe in a few minutes the problems we encounter.

In the four minutes left to him, could the hon. member be kind enough to explain what difficulties people in Montreal had with two programs that are often mentioned but may not be as interesting as they are said to be, namely POWA and RRAP. I would like him to explain clearly for our listeners what those two acronyms mean.

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, I will begin with the RRAP, the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program. That program was designed to help owners renovate houses without rent increases, so we could have more rental units for low-income people.

That program was funded by all levels of government, federal, provincial and municipal. The federal government, under the previous Minister of Finance, cut funding under that program, and the provincial government followed suit. So, what is left of Montreal's municipal program is not enough, of course, and there is a serious housing problem in that city, specially with regard to low-cost housing.

Montreal was affected by the elimination of the RRAP because it was the only city which participated financially in that program. It is also a city where there were a lot of old apartments in need of repairs, particularly in the south-centre area and the east area.

So, if there is one city that was penalized when the Minister of Finance decided to eliminate that program, it is Montreal.

The POWA is another program that was cancelled. It was designed to help older workers who were losing their jobs because of plant closures in the shoe and clothing industry. That program was reintroduced in a different form, and that is where the problem comes from, Mr. Speaker.

The Program for Older Worker Adjusment must help older workers. In this particular case, namely the Montreal region—and I am pleased that the Minister of Transport, who implemented this program, is with us today—there is a rule according to which there must generally be more than 100 employees in a region of 500,000 people. It goes without saying that Montreal has a population in the millions, but the problem has to do with the fact that the majority of businesses that shut down employ less than 100 people, and that is where the problem lies for the majority of workers over 55 years of age who have worked in the industry for a number of years. Those people are therefore penalized. They receive no benefit through the POWA program. I do not want to make this a partisan issue, but I am confronted with this problem in my riding of Saint-Léonard and I am convinced that the hon. member for Saint-Denis also faces the same problem. Every day, there are constituents that urge us to change the regulations. I have submitted petitions to the House, among which 5,000 signatures from my riding alone, to have that section modified, because here in Canada, there are large as well as small businesses. When we talk about a minimum of 100 jobs, that means that only a few factories would qualified under that program.

• (1520)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to participate in this debate today.

Some might wonder why a member from the maritimes would wish to participate in a debate on Montreal. The problems that are raised by my hon. friends opposite are not dissimilar to the ones we have in Atlantic Canada.

I want to compliment the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce for bringing forward this issue with respect to the economic problems and unemployment in Montreal. However, I must confess that—notwithstanding the fact that he has devoted many, many years of service to the people of NDG and, indeed, to the city of Montreal—I really believe his motion, in which he suggested the government had abandoned the population through the obvious lack of political will to provide jobs and economic opportunities, et cetera, is quite misguided.

What he really means is that he regrets the government has not been sufficiently irresponsible as to spend endless amounts of money to create make-work jobs in the city of Montreal or anywhere else. What the motion says to me is that there is really a philosophical difference between this government and the government of which the hon. member was a very distinguished minis-

ter. This government is governing fiscally more responsibly than that which preceded it.

This government believes that the secret to prosperity is through economic strength. Indeed, what we have realized is the fact that the world is changing. Canada could bury its head in the sand and pretend that the world is not out there, or we can get with it. We can attempt to get on board with the economic changes that are happening, the changes in the global world and the economic interdependence of the various countries of the world. Canada is either going to be a part of that or is going to hide its head in the sand and miss out on the opportunities for true long-term prosperity, which includes long-term employment.

Look at what is happening with the unification of Germany and how quickly it has happened. Look at what is happening in Europe as we move, not only to 1992, but indeed to the years beyond. I do not believe that Canada can hide from that. I do not believe the solution to that problem is to do what the previous government did and say: "Spend, spend, spend, get everyone back on a payroll. It does not matter if there is a level of productivity associated with that, it does not matter if we have economic growth and change to meet the new demands of the world, but rather that we simply keep everybody on the payroll and we will not worry about who is going to pay the bills".

Unfortunately, we are now the inheritors of the bills left from years and years of that kind of approach.

We built a high standard of living in this country by doing three things. We artificially propped up our economy through tariffs and subsidies, subsidies that we are now paying for, through the interest on the debt. Second, we were able, for many, many years to benefit from our rich natural resources and the exploitation of those resources without necessarily learning to make the most effective use of those resources in terms of value-added activity. Third, as I have implied, we suffer from years of irresponsible governments which simply tried to keep the cycle moving by spending, whether or not we had the money to pay the bills. That has left us with an extraordinary deficit situation from which we are now burdened with a tremendous national debt.

We have to try to get things in line. We have to look to government to show true leadership in assessing our future strengths through accessing markets. That is why this government has shown such tremendous leaderships in terms of trade policy. It has recognized that if we can have access to the larger markets of the world, it will provide an opportunity for our manufacturing sectors to develop those markets which in turn will create more jobs for Canadians which will be substantive in the long term.

That does not come easy. We get access to the markets but then we also have to improve our own productivity. There is a job to be done at all levels, both in terms of management and indeed of the workers. Productivity is a key and it is critically important.

Perhaps one of the things we need to do is go back to some of the old values, values that I do not hear talked about a great deal in this House. However, they are values basic to life in Atlantic Canada. They are basic to the part of Atlantic Canada that I have the honour to represent in this House. I am talking about values like the belief that a person has to give a day's work if they want a day's pay. I am talking about values like self-reliance. Whatever happened to the day when people felt that if they had a problem it was their problem and they ought to do something? Every time a plant closes in this country people say: "Oh, what is the government going to do about it?" Or they say: "I don't have a job, why doesn't the government find me a job?"

Government has the responsibility to create a climate to assist in times of difficulty, and so on and so forth, but goodness gracious, at what point do we become the masters of our own destiny? At what point do we say that there is an incumbency upon us to be the ones who are prepared to do what we need to do for ourselves, to show initiative, to show energy, to show entrepreneurialism? On the other side that seems to be a dirty word, but on this side it is a very important one.

There is a role for government in achieving this competitiveness, which is the key to economic prosperity for the future. Obviously, as I have mentioned, the government has to provide access to markets through trade agreements. That is what we are doing. We have done that with the free trade agreement. It is not going to yield its effects in 24 hours or 36 hours, but rather is something that gives us the opportunity, which means that the doors are open. Obviously there are going to have to be adjustments in our manufacturing sector because, whether we like it or not, in some aspects we

simply are not competitive. Therefore, we have to move in the directions where we can be competitive.

We have to improve our research and development, our science and our technology capabilities, one of the areas where we have fallen down. Government has done its share in many respects, but the private sector has not. The government has to show leadership in encouraging the private sector to do its share with respect to research and development.

Third, we have to develop a highly skilled labour force. This has to be a focus. I was very encouraged by the remarks in the Speech from the Throne and their thrust on literacy and the relationship between skill levels in individuals and their ability to seek and achieve satisfactory employment. That is where this government, in my judgment, has shown excellent leadership.

I recall that the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce was a member of the C-21 committee. He had some reservations about the fact that the thrust of Bill C-21 was that there is a relationship between unemployment and returning fully and properly to the work force so that workers have the skills that enable them to do more than simply get a job that will tide them through to the next unemployment period, so they can find long-term opportunities, opportunities that will come as a result of the competitiveness approach of this government.

Of course, government has to create a good climate for business. It has to have a climate that makes it attractive for investment and, generally speaking, it has to give businesses the impression that they are welcome and that they are wanted and that the kind of long-term stability that comes from solid blue chip industries is something that makes our country an attractive one. This is one of the things that causes me great nervousness about the recent budget in Ontario, which is the height of irresponsibility, in my opinion. It seems to have been observed in that regard, indeed right around the globe one might say. So I think there is a role for government.

Finally, government has a responsibility to see that the infrastructure is there to make it possible for companies to do business coast to coast in this country. I am talking about communications and transportation infrastructure. I find it intriguing to see members from Montreal expressing some concerns in this regard because, quite frankly, in Atlantic Canada we have a lot of reservations about the quality of the infrastructure and the transportation infrastructure that exists for our benefit *vis-à-vis* the apparent national interest in ensuring the viability of the port of Montreal and the transportation systems that serve Montreal. I find it intriguing that people from Montreal would have reservations about that when we in Atlantic Canada have probably been stifled more by this single fact than anything else throughout history since Confederation.

However, the debate today is not on Atlantic Canada, it is on Montreal. Montreal, in my judgment, has excellent prospects. Now, there is one big cloud on the horizon. Let us face it, nothing will discourage investment—and it is investment that leads to jobs, not just government spending—like a sense of political instability. That is the cloud in my judgment that is hanging over the head not only of Montreal, not only of Quebec, but indeed the whole of Canada.

• (1530)

I think all members of this House have to stand together in recognizing that the key to our future prosperity in Montreal, Quebec, Atlantic Canada—throughout Canada—lies in having a government that shows sound financial management and the courage and economic vision to lead this country into the 21st century. Also it should have the ability and the courage to reunify our country as we work toward a renewed confederation that will be caring and will value self-reliance among its citizens, a confederation that will show respect for the people of all regions, all linguistic groups, all races of this country. It must be a system of government that will show regional balance, will not pit one region against the other and will give all equal opportunity to participate: quite simply a Canada that has room for all Canadians.

That kind of Canada under the leadership this government has provided will not only lead to economic prosperity for that great city of Montreal, but indeed for all parts of Canada.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was not present when I gave my speech this morning. It was obvious from his remarks that at no time did I suggest in support of the motion that the answer to the problems of Montreal were to spend, spend, spend, and that my only interest was in spending.

The hon. member himself says that he is against the spend, spend, spend solution and that he and his government are interested in bringing about an economic climate that will attract investment. That is interesting because that is exactly what I said in the House.

If he thinks that the economic climate is so important, why did he support his government in bringing in the GST, one of the greatest tax grabs in Canadian history, at a time when the country was going into a serious recession? If there is anything that has to do with economic climate, that is it.

Every economist in the country who had any sense condemned that move at that time, and so did I this morning in my speech. If he is interested in climate, how does he explain bringing in the GST at a time when the country was moving into a serious recession and we had over one million unemployed? The rate of unemployment was over 10 per cent and in Montreal it was near 15 per cent. That is one thing.

Then he says he is interested in creating infrastructures. So did I in my speech this morning. Year after year the Canadian Federation of Municipalities proposed a program to reinvigorate urban infrastructure, municipal infrastructure, with a tripartite federal-provincial-municipal program to rebuild sewers, roads, bridges and transportation facilities which we supported but that government over there turned down. It turned it down over and over again. So much for supporting infrastructure.

Finally, I want to ask the hon. member this. He condemns us for suggesting that jobs should be created, but in the Speech from the Throne given a few weeks ago his government promises 2.5 million jobs by the year 2000. It is interested in creating jobs too. The only odd thing about the Speech from the Throne is that it has a plan for the year 2000 and nothing for the years 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994 or 1995 when the recession is on now and people are interested in solutions now.

There are three questions I would like the hon. member to deal with.

Mr. McCreath: Mr. Speaker, I hope my hon. friend from NDG has left me enough time to deal with these issues. Needless to say, they are ones that I would be delighted to comment on. I will try to be brief, although I am not sure how much time is available.

First of all on the subject of GST and the recession, I find it extraordinary that my hon. friend along with his colleagues remain mired in this concept of a value added tax—something that exists in virtually every industrialized country of the world except the United States—as a basis for international competitiveness. They are still standing against that. They are opposing it.

I wonder, I wonder. We will never find out. They will not be on these benches in the near future.

It would be interesting to know if they would still stand by what they said during the debate, that they would abolish it. With respect to the concept that it was introduced at a time of recession, this is absolute nonsense.

This concept was introduced two or three years ago. The legislation came forth some time long before the recession began. I am sure my hon. friend opposite is not so naive as to think that you could put in place a massive tax reform and then, with the snap of your fingers, stop it.

On the idea of infrastructure, I was talking about the infrastructure of our national transportation system.

I have to tell you that I have 12 municipalities in my constituency and I would like nothing better than to have access to massive federal funds to assist them with their roads and sewers. But, guess what? The cupboard is bare. Why are the cupboards bare? Because from 1974 to 1984 we had a government that increased spending annually by 13.8 per cent. You cannot spend what you have not got.

My hon. friend ought to take a little lesson in history. He would find out that when this government gets things back under control, together with its sound economic planning, we are going to have jobs, 2.5 million of them as the Speech from the Throne said by the year 2000. It will be there. You wait for it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for South Shore is a great preacher. He speaks loud and clear. He thinks people understand him well. As for me, I would like to ask him a question: What does he think of his government's economic policies? Because we must look at the results. And the results of his government's policies, my friend, are that in Montreal the unemployment rate is at 15 per cent; in the Maritimes, it is between 15 to 20 per cent; in the Gaspé Peninsula, it is close to 20 per cent, and in the Lac Saint-Jean area, it is 17 per cent. Is that what you call good economic policies? That is what I would like to know. How can you boast of your economic policies when the unemployment rate has never been so high in the last five years?

[*English*]

Mr. McCreath: Mr. Speaker, I know the time is short, but I must say the economic policies of this government were good enough to get my hon. friend from Longueuil re-elected in 1988, something he seems to have forgotten.

Nevertheless, I am sure he recalls in the early 1980s when the Liberals were in power. The world goes through cycles of recession and boom. When the recession hit and they tried to spend their way out of it, we had interest rates of 20 per cent, an extraordinary inflation rate and a very high unemployment rate.

It is interesting to note two things about this recession. First, it has lasted a shorter time than the one did then. Second, we were not crushed with the interest rates and the inflation rates that were delivered to us by the approach taken by my friends opposite in 1982.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, the member for South Shore said that are philosophical differences between his party and our party. There sure are.

Our philosophy is that we help those Canadians who need help the most. His party's philosophy is if someone is down and out, you kick him further in the gutter. That is his party's philosophy.

He talks about German unification, that it is not going as smoothly as he said in this House, and this is just from speaking to members of Parliament from Germany a week ago. I do not know what German unification has to do with the starving and hungry people in Montreal who we are debating here today.

The honeymoon is over. After seven years in government, after seven budgets and countless throne speeches, that party can no longer blame previous governments for the people who are hungry, the unemployed, et cetera. We do not buy that any more and Canadians are not buying that.

He knows, and I remind him again, that when his party took over the coffers had $177 billion in public debt. Today it is close to $400 billion. That was not created by the Liberals. That was created by his party.

I would like to ask him about the food banks. I just talked to Gerard Kennedy this morning, director of the Daily Bread food bank in my riding. He is also the national spokesperson of the Canadian Association of Food Banks.

• (1540)

I will share this. On a national basis, in 1990 the Canadian Association of Food Banks statistics reveal that 496,000 people per month were using food banks; half a million people per month. In 1989 this figure was only 378,000. Can he blame that on the Liberals? He cannot blame that on the Liberals. That is happening on an annual basis while his party is in power. He should analyse his government's programs. Why are they not working? I wanted him to answer that but he shouted, he ranted, he raved and then he left the House. That is how the Tories do business. That is how the Tories care for the hungry in Montreal, in Vancouver, in Toronto and across this land.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, it is sad to have to face a debate like this in Canada in 1991. We have in this country tremendous resources. We have tremendous skills and tremendous capacity. We have people throughout our country who want to make a contribution to Canada and yet in many of our major cities and small towns we see people at the start of this decade facing poverty, experiencing unemployment and who consequently have a tremendous sense of despair and anger in many cases. I hope people have not entirely given up hope for their future and for the future of their country.

It is very easy as we look at the city of Montreal to see why people at this time might be losing hope. In our party we have had an economic recovery group which has been touring the country and visiting various parts of Canada, various communities across the country. The most recent place we visited was Montreal. I know Montreal as a place of joy, happiness and excitement because it is a place from which my wife comes. It is a

place I know personally. It is a place with a *joie de vivre* that one cannot help but be impressed by.

I found that day of listening to social groups and popular groups in Montreal to be one of the saddest in our cross country tour because despite the magnificent buildings and the proud history of that city there is a devastating reality which many people in Montreal are feeling today.

It is a reality which they should not have to feel. It is a reality which should not be acceptable to us in this House of Commons. It should not be acceptable to government ministers or to members of the governing party who come from the city of Montreal. There should be a sense of crisis, a sense of response and a sense of caring. It is very, very difficult to feel.

[*Translation*]

There is in Montreal, Mr. Speaker, an organization called Sun Youth. Its role is to provide some $50 worth of food per month to seniors. Every Monday morning, more than 1,000 men and women stand in line to receive a meagre food surplus. For them it is enormous.

Two classes of seniors benefit from the help of Sun Youth. First, the over 65 who receive the income supplement given by the federal government. To get this supplement, they must be single and their income must be less than $10,000 a year. If they are married, the combined income should not exceed $13,500 a year. The Conservative government is really generous.

The other class of people helped by Sun Youth is the 60-65 who are on welfare. They are often poorer than the other ones. For them, there is no federal income supplement.

Yesterday, says *The Gazette*, some people fought and others fainted when standing in line. Sun Youth rents 200 chairs to sit people. Others must wait outside, standing. These are old and often sick men and women.

In the province of Quebec, 360,000 people receive a guaranteed income supplement. The vast majority of them live in Montreal.

Moreover, in some areas, like South Center, for example, South West, the Mont-Royal Plateau, Saint-Michel and Villeray, unemployment reaches more than 20 per cent. Some Montrealers describe the situation as similar in many ways to the economy of developing countries. It is not rosy.

Montreal has 374 food help organizations.

• (1550)

Less than half of these organizations existed 20 years ago. Their number has increased steadily. Before, they were limited to Montreal, but gradually they are moving to the suburbs, Laval in particular.

Unemployment in Montreal has increased by five points since last year. The manufacturing sector has been especially hard hit.

The Conservative government is telling us that it is generous in its assistance to Quebec and that it is looking after Montreal properly. The province of Quebec has a quarter of the Canadian population, yet it has also 32 per cent of its poor people!

The Quebec government was saying in its last budget that the cuts in established programs financing made by the Conservative government will cost the province $1.7 billion. The same is true for Ontario. Next year, it will be $2 billion more for Quebec. Cuts bring cuts. Provincial subsidies to municipal government must be reduced.

The debt of the City of Montreal has increased substantially this year, partly because of the recession. The main contributors to that debt are the subway extension and the building of water treatment facilities. The budget for green spaces has also been increased. All that is the bread and butter of Quebecers. The madness of the Conservative government is threatening such essential spending.

Meanwhile, the City of Montreal and its people are working as hard as they can to revitalize their economy and to find solutions to their problems. Several neighbourhoods that are quite affected by the economic downslide have created committees striving for economic recovery. Budgets are used to the maximum. Advertizing campaigns praise the very real assets of Montreal. But those incredible efforts will have been in vain if the federal government keeps on frustrating them and

making believe, as it did recently in the Gaspé Peninsula, that it is helping the disadvantaged areas.

I have recently gone to Montreal with the NDP tour for economic recovery. I have met many individuals and groups. The CNTU handed me an analytical document explaining the solutions to the problems resulting from the recession. In that document, the CNTU states that the government and I quote: "has no real political will to build on the dynamism of the regions" in spite of the local initiatives undertaken.

Clearly the conservative government is not listening to the people. Otherwise, it would understand that real solutions exist. Montreal will soon celebrate its 350th anniversary. It will take a lot more than fine words like those expressed in the Speech from the Throne to help Montreal men and women in their efforts to boost their economy.

[*English*]

One has to take steps that are concrete. One has to do more than talk. One has to recognize the reality of the problems that face the city of Montreal. These problems were pointed out by André McNicholl, the Superintendent of Welfare Services for the city of Montreal last month, when he indicated that no less than 13.2 per cent of all Montreal residents now depend on welfare assistance. That means at least one-quarter of the city's residents are either living on welfare or unemployment insurance.

That is shameful in Canada in 1991. And yet the reality is, as we can see from the figures which deal with investment for Montreal, that its investment has fallen significantly in the aftermath of the free trade deal.

The Minister of Finance likes to get up and talk about how foreign investment has increased in 1990. What he does not indicate is that in Canada, in Quebec and specifically in Montreal, over-all investment has decreased. In the greater Montreal area, for instance, construction investment has decreased from approximately $3.4 billion in 1989 to $2.75 billion in 1990. That is the reality; decreases in investment and increases in unemployment. The only expanding sectors in the city of Montreal are food banks. That is where the expansion is taking place.

This is a sad commentary, not just on the failure of this government, but on the unfairness which this government and previous governments have built into the structure of our society, that the largest city in the province of Quebec should be suffering this double dilemma of increased poverty and increased unemployment. This is what is likely to condemn our country in the future to constitutional crisis after crisis because these crises do not just come about because of constitutional concerns, they have their roots in the fact that 25 per cent of Montrealers are either on welfare or unemployment insurance.

• (1600)

The only way that we will put this country right, put this country back together again, is to address these problems, to act concretely, to listen to the local solutions which the many popular groups are putting forward, to provide funding for those solutions at the national level and by showing that we in all of Canada care about Montreal and its reality. We must be able to demonstrate to all Quebecers that our country is going to be a united and fair country in the future.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by congratulating the member on his fine speech. As a Montrealer I want to say that I appreciate his comments with respect to our city.

I want to ask him this. For several years the Canadian Federation of Municipalities has suggested a tripartite program, a fund which would be contributed to by the federal government, the provincial governments and the municipalities to renew decaying urban infrastructure. I think they started to recommend such a program as far back as 1985.

The purpose of the recommendation was to renew decaying urban infrastructure, such things as roads, sewage systems, water treatment systems, anti-pollution systems, garbage treatment programs in cities, ports, airports, public transportations systems and so on, but also to create a lot of jobs.

When I raised this today in the debate one of the Conservative members who spoke accused me of simply putting forward suggestions that involve spend, spend, spend, throwing money at problems. It seems to me that when you spend money in this way you are renewing the infrastructure of a city which in turn provides a climate for investment and for economic growth.

I served with the hon. member on the committee looking at the free trade agreement and other committees that deal with economic matters, and he has a reputation on economic matters. What is his view? It seems to me that such a program would be extremely helpful to Montreal.

Montreal is a city with many decaying aspects in its infrastructure. It just cannot afford to go ahead without the help of the provincial and federal governments. Not only would we create a lot of jobs, but we would help Montreal renew itself and provide an environment and a climate for further investment.

By the way, the government has rejected that program time and time again. However, I do not think it is fair to simply describe it as another suggestion of throwing money at a problem. I would like to have the hon. member's assessment and the assessment of his party with respect to such a program to help our cities in this country.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, this suggestion of infrastructure renewal is something which we took very seriously when it was first put forward by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. It was something which we endorsed as part of our platform during the last election campaign.

At this stage, with over 10 per cent unemployment, it makes tremendous sense to undertake that kind of investment in our future economic growth. That is the key point. What we are talking about here is not expenditure in the sense of money which goes out and leaves nothing behind. Instead, we are talking about expenditure which is really an investment in future economic growth.

When a large company makes such an investment, for instance, in a new factory, or a new port facility or something like that, new transportation items which it is going to utilize, we do not say to that company: "You're being wasteful. You're spending". We say to that company: "Well, of course, that makes sense. If you are going to get an economic benefit out of that, this makes sense". And this is what will come.

One of the most noted economists in the United States, Robert Reich, has recently written in *The Atlantic* an answer to the question: "How do you become competitive in the future global economy?" You do it by investing in things that will help your future growth, such as investment in infrastructure.

This is what the New Democratic Party government in Ontario has been doing with its new policy of investment in infrastructure to fight the recession. I think it will benefit Ontario. It could certainly benefit Montreal as well.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague for his excellent speech. I think he understands well the situation of Montreal. I would like to know what he thinks of what the mayor of that city suggested in his submission, on behalf of the city of Montreal, during the hearings of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission. The mayor proposed "a way to the future for all of Quebec and also for Montreal, in which certain tools should be totally and exclusively in the hands of the state of Quebec". The tools and the skills that the mayor of Montreal favours are the following: education, manpower, professional training, immigration, language, culture, health, social services, environment and urban development.

These requests were made by the mayor of Montreal after extensive consultation with public interest groups, groups from Montreal and, I believe, active at the local level, and which have examined all of these issues. Therefore, I would like to know what the hon. member thinks of the proposal made by the mayor which has, of course, been approved by the city council, and also by the main interest groups in Montreal.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, I think that those areas underlined by the mayor are doubtless important to the future of a city like Montreal. I think it must also be recognized that Mr. Doré made a real effort to consult public interest groups, community groups and local organizations.

I think this may be the problem with this government, the fact that it does not listen to public groups, to local organizations, and to community organizations because those groups that we met in Montreal two weeks ago have talked to us about education, training and environmental projects, as well as projects aimed at improving the infrastructure of the city of Montreal. Those are projects which can create jobs for Montrealers, and which represent an investment in the future of Montreal.

• (1610)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The honourable Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of International Trade.

Mr. André Plourde (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, first, I must say that I am very happy to take part in this debate, today. As a former businessman, I know Montreal, even if I come from a rural area, Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues described to you the strategies adopted by the government to develop the economic potential of the Montreal area. As for me, I would like to draw your attention on the measures taken by the government to develop international activities in Montreal.

The government believes that the development of international activities in Montreal is an excellent way to revitalize the regional economy. According to this logic, the government has decided to establish in Montreal the headquarters of the Canadian Space Agency to increase the stimulation of the existing potential, both in the related industrial activities and in the presence of Montreal in international networks.

Already, in 1986, the Picard Report had stressed that Montreal had the required qualifications to become an international city, including its bilingual and bicultural character. Montreal was at that time home for two prestigious international organizations, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA). Since then, it welcomed the International Society of Aeronautical Telecommunications (ISAT). Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the Picard Report mentioned a positive factor for Montreal, and that is Canada's membership in organizations such as the Commonwealth and *La Francophonie*, which has helped several companies reach out to the world.

Mr. Speaker, the Picard Report recommended that all levels of government recognize the importance of international organizations and facilitate their establishment in Montreal. The Canadian government recognized this objective and committed itself to making Montreal an important world centre which would have branches of governmental and non-governmental organizations dealing with international affairs, as well as to developing and promoting other international activities in Montreal. To this end, the government worked on devising incentives which would attract such organisations and facilitate their operations.

As a first step, the government, jointly with the Quebec government and the City of Montreal, is helping the *Société du centre de conférences internationales*, a non-profit organization, to conduct studies on the feasibility of creating an international city and to make concrete proposals for the development of international activities in Montreal. The international city would bring together, under one roof, the ICAO headquarters, an international conference centre and other international activities or organizations.

Mr. Speaker, the government is waiting for a report on these studies before announcing a final decision about this project. The ICAO will decide on a possible move at its next plenary session in September 1992.

I would like to stress, Mr. Speaker, that the government signed last year an agreement with the ICAO in which we committed ourselves to providing better working conditions to this organization and its employees.

The federal government has recently contributed to the installation of three international organizations in Montreal. Last year, it created the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, which it put in Montreal and provided with a $15 million budget over 5 years. Under the direction of Mr. Ed Broadbent, whom hon. members know well, this organisation will contribute to the strengthening of democratic institutions and programs in the world by promoting research, sponsoring conferences and bringing technical assistance and financial help to local initiatives in the Third World.

It has also contributed $10 million to the establishment in Montreal of the permanent secretary of the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol on the Ozone Layer. This is the second United Nations organization, after the ICAO, to establish in Canada. It is an office composed of approximately twenty persons; its task is to administer an international fund which could grow to $240 millions in the next three years.

It also contributed financially to the establishment in Montreal of the head office of the International Centre of Films for Children and Young People (ICFCYP). This is an international association created under the United Nations auspices. It produces and distributes films which can promote a better understanding among nations.

As in the case of projects developed jointly by the private sector and the federal and other governments, the government supports a joint initiative of the Metropolitan Montreal Chamber of Commerce and the EDI Council of Canada. This initiative concerns the establishment of an office in Montreal for the realization of a program for the promotion and training on EDI and the management of activities pertaining to the creation of an EDI international agency. EDI is a process of electronic data exchange which helps firms to save a lot of money and to be more efficient and faster in their exchanges. In this matter, like England and the Netherlands, the government supports the development of these kinds of activities in Montreal. It helped establish a non-profit corporation, under a board of directors whose members are prominent in the trade and transportation sector in Montreal, including the Port of Montreal and shipping, railway and trucking companies, for the purpose of introducing an EDI system that will meet the needs of the transportation industry and related sectors. The results of this initiative will be an important part of the process of setting up the EDI Institute.

Although the list of federal initiatives in the international field in Montreal is a long one, there are four more measures I must mention:

First, support for establishing an institute for creativity and design research will promote, stimulate and enhance the development of skills Canadian and excellence of international calibre in various design disciplines.

Second, support for institutions specializing training such as the Telecommunications Executive Management Institute of Canada (TEMIC), established in Montreal in 1986. The institute has attracted over 200 managers from 70 countries who acquired telecommunications skills, thanks to co-operation between the private sector, including Bell Canada, Teleglobe, Northern Telecom, and the government.

Third, support for the International Aviation Management Training Institute (IAMTI) which after four years has 1,200 graduates in 120 countries.

Fourth, the patent legislation (Bill C-22) passed by Parliament to promote research and development in the pharmaceutical industry. As a result of this legislation, many pharmaceutical companies located in Montreal have started to expand their facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that these examples have demonstrated the Canadian government's commitment to implementing a concrete policy for developing and promoting international activities in Montreal. In fact, the government is very much aware of the need to include both business, educational institutions, and international governmental and non-governmental organizations in these activities. Only by fostering joint action by both the private and public sectors, Mr. Speaker, can the government contribute to the long-term economic development in the Montreal area.

• (1620)

Today, Mr. Speaker, Montreal should be able to develop adequately its high-technology sector and to strengthen its traditional industry. The most frequent issues preventing Montreal from reaching these objectives without the governement intervention are, among others, the shortage of a highly skilled work force, the lack of investment in research and development, the absence of risk capital to start up small high-technology businesses and a weak partnership from universities, industries, financial institutions in particular. Various governments have already recognized the weaknesses of Montreal, particularly in the east and the south-west of the city, where special programs have been implemented. It is the reason why, in concluding, Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform my colleagues of the official opposition and the others members of this Parliament that, on my suggestion, the Quebec Conservative caucus will be held in Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, in the beautiful city of Rivière-du-Loup, in August. I asked the executive of the Quebec caucus to put on the agenda a discussion of Montreal and its regions, not only by the members from Montreal and the surrounding areas, but also by all the members from the province of Quebec. With my background as a businessman, I consider Montreal to be the heart and the engine of the economy of the province of Quebec.

Starting from there, Mr. Speaker, if we are able to find solutions that will help Montreal create jobs, then we will also get into the context of the rural world symposium that was held in Montreal in the beginning of February. We will then keep our youth from leaving for Montreal. We will be able to keep them in the regions.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciated the hon. member's comments. I know his intentions are good, and I have no doubts about the Ministers' intents and that of the Government, but unfortunately the programs under way are not working. That is why Montreal has the highest unemployment rate of all Canadian cities. That is why the number of Montrealers living in poverty is also the highest in Canada. So there are good programs. The minister mentioned Canadair. It is working very well, but in East-Montreal, as well as in the southwestern part, the unemployment rate is up to 25 per cent. We have to try something else.

Even in the Speech from the Throne, the government promised to create jobs for of the year 2000. I suggest the development of a program creating jobs for 1991 and 1992, and I wish the government will be able to do it, to move forward on the program mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. I ask the member to tell me this: Does he not agree that we should try something else, new things, for Montreal, because the situation is very bad. Morale is very bad right now in Montreal and we ought to use our imaginations to develop programs which will really change the situation.

Mr. André Plourde (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-grâce. I know he too believe in the economic development of Montreal and I know he knows that if the city's economic development is successful the province as a whole will benefit from it. But I would also like to remind him of this last week, the Minister of Health, who is also responsible for economic development in Quebec, was accused of creating a department for Economic Development in Quebec. That is when this House became a proper madhouse. The federal governement was occured of trying to interfere in Quebec's affairs.

And I know that my honourable colleague for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce knows full well that in June of 1988, the Quebec Premier, Robert Bourassa, and the Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, signed in the City of Montreal an economic development agreement 850 million dollars over five years, not to mention programs from other departments as well, Mr. Speaker. It was strictly for economic development. As an ex-Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, I can tell you that the federal funds are but not those of Quebec as yet.

So we want something new. Yes, something different will have to be done. We do not want the federal government to interfere anymore in the affairs of the Quebec government, whether it is education, industry, immigration or what have you. I have nothing against the Constitution, but I am fed up with hearing about it, Mr. Speaker.

When I decided to campaign in 1984, I wanted to be a member of the House of Commons in order to talk about the construction sector. That is what I told my constituents. We are now in 1991, and we are still discussing the Constitution. I keep on saying to the people in my riding that other members are there for that job and that I personally talk about construction. And for as long as I will be here, that is what I will do. If, in the fall of 1992, the province of Quebec decides to part from Canada and opts for sovereignty, by way of a referendum or another process, or if Quebec decides to accept the offers that the federal government or the other provinces will have made to it and if it is decided that responsibility for economic development must remain in Quebec, then, Mr. Speaker, I will respect that decision.

But right now, in 1991, on June 4 to be more precise, I would like to have the support of the official opposition to say that, as far as Quebec's economic development is concerned, the money available must be spent as soon as possible.

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup for his excellent speech. My friend—at least, he used to be and I still consider him as such—dealing mainly with international trade, of course he praised the federal government efforts in obtaining international recognition for Montreal. But, as we know, what we find the most in Montreal are service industries which do not generate many jobs. Manufacturing companies, on the other hand, provide a lot of employment. That is where we are up against serious problems.

A typical example of this can be found in my riding, with Pratt & Whitney. It has laid off about 1,000 workers so far. While the federal government is boasting and saying that it wants to develop the aeronautical and aerospace industry in Montreal, it appears that the Industrial Development Fund for Western Canada is negotiating arrangements with the federal government and Pratt & Whitney to relocate Montreal plants in Western Canada.

So, when they try and make us believe that they are serious about wanting Montreal to become a development is centre in the field of aeronautics and aerospace technology, believe me, it is a load of rubbish. In fact, it is quite a different story. All that kind of work is being shipped out of the greater Montreal area. That is what is really happening! Check it out for yourselves.

Another big problem is lack of consultation. Here is another striking example. When the former Minister of Transport decided to apply the axe to VIA Rail—and I was not against that—many jobs were lost in the Montreal region due to the way it was done. The Quebec government and the city of Montreal should have been consulted first to find out what they thought of VIA Rail. I might have been interested to involve some commuter trains. The Quebec government also should have been involved because when you unilaterally decide to close down a business of that significance for the transport industry while ignoring Quebec and the municipality, well, you may well destroy what could have been built. Everybody could have been involved in this decision, which would have probably saved billions of dollars and also jobs in the Montreal region.

• (1630)

Now, what the government is doing basically is to act on its own, as the NDP member was saying earlier. And every time the federal government is taking some action there is no consultation process. Therefore, because of this lack of consultation Montreal has now a 15 per cent level of unemployment.

A little money now and then for the sake of showing that things are being done for regional development does not mean that real action is being taken. It is by consulting—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry, but in all fairness, I have to interrupt the hon. member in order to allow his colleague to answer.

Mr. Plourde: Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the hon. member for Longueuil, talks a lot about consultation and seems to be very familiar with that matter. I have just made an announcement in this House regarding the Quebec summer caucus meeting of the Conservative Party, to be held in Rivière-du-Loup, August 23, 24 and 25 and I have invited all opposition members to present us with some suggestions. That is what consultation is all about.

If he wants to help Montreal and the surrounding area, well, he should let us know what needs to be done. We have ideas of our own, but we would also welcome theirs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Resuming debate. The hon. member for Mount Royal has ten minutes.

[*English*]

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I suggest the hon. member read *Hansard*. He will find some wonderful ideas for his caucus meeting.

I am really quite pleased to speak to a very important proceeding put forward by my colleague from NDG. I thank him most sincerely for having brought to light a serious situation in Canada, in particular in the capital of unemployment in this country, Montreal. I would suggest that people read the enlightened debate that he has made. It is fulsome and carries much important information in that regard.

It is a sad time as well for me because I would like to have had the time to address both the failure of this government's general economic thrust and its national outlook, as well as the situation in the riding of Mount Royal to give the local picture. While these situations may be seen as separate, the experience directly translates from one level to the other.

I do welcome, however, the opportunity to reflect the concerns and the anxieties being felt by my constituents in Mount Royal about the sad state of the country, about the sad state of the economy, about how it is affecting them wherever they live, whatever their businesses are, no matter what their background, the economic status, the level of education, their mother tongue, their country of origin, no matter what they look like, no matter where they live in their homes, in their apartment buildings, and in the worst case, in the street.

They are seeing reality every day on the streets of Mount Royal riding, in community centres and in the food banks. They are seeing images of hunger, of tremendous social needs going unmet. I would like to present some very interesting, yet disturbing statistics in a few moments.

Meanwhile, this very insensitive government, concerned only with the bottom line of its economic budget, moves uncaringly along and says: "We can do no more. Our hands are tied. The deficit is too important. We just can't afford it". I say the question now has become: "We just can't afford not to help".

National problems are also local problems. The people of Mount Royal riding, like the people of all of Canada, know that this government has an economic performance record that is very sad. They know that old saying: "Tory times are tough times".

If we look at what the headlines have been in the last few days—

[*Translation*]

—they say that "Ottawa has taken out of the pockets of families $1,530 more since 1980". The Conservative government got that money from the pockets of the average Canadian family through new taxes since 1984, which represents a more rapid increase than in any other large developed country, according to the data from a new study.

Since 1984, the growth of the net share of federal taxes has represented a draw of $1,530 for an average family of 2.3 persons. This growth is due to the increase in income taxes, the surtaxes, the sales and excise taxes, to the rise of premiums for the Unemployment Insurance and the Pension Plans, and to the lowering of family allowances and old age pensions. These numbers take into account the federal sales tax refunds and the individual child tax credits. And I point out that even Otto Jelinek, the Minister of National Revenue, has suggested that high taxes are one of the reasons Canadians go shopping in the United States, whereas Mr. Mazankowski, the Minister of Finance, denied that Canadians are overtaxed and warned taxpayers that they better not expect any tax decreases as long as the government do not succeed in curbing the deficit. But they had much time to curb that deficit during the good years, from 1984 to 1990.

[*English*]

The worst recession in the industrial world is taking place and it has been a made-in-Canada recession. The national debt has been doubled and, of course, it is our fault. The middle class is suffering from higher taxes, including the GST, while the government somehow claims that the GST has saved them money. Well, I know what it saves them. Headlines and research have shown us that it saves them on paper clips and mascara—not exactly bread and butter. What the government did at the time it did it was absolutely unconscionable. That is what brought on an increased recession.

As I have said, we are living in a made-in-Canada recession with high interest rates and a high dollar causing more plants to close or to move south. All the plant closures leave even more people inadequately trained for new jobs with no government plans for retraining. Unemployment is inordinately high, particularly among the youth. More families are being turned into the streets every day because they cannot make mortgage payments or even rent their own apartments. Food for many families is becoming a luxury. Food banks are busier than they should ever be, I spoke to the issue of the food banks in my own riding.

Official unemployment is over 14 per cent in Montreal in 1991, up from 10.4 per cent in 1990. This comes from the CSN findings taken in May 1991. With respect to people looking for work, the unemployed have increased from 346,000 in March 1990 to 486,000 people in Quebec in March 1991, and 250,000 in the city of Montreal alone.

It is an absolutely unconscionable critique of this government which is well founded and well documented.

Tens of thousands are on social welfare in the city of Montreal and in my own riding. Yet there has been no talk from this government of job creation, of an industrial strategy, of child care, of regional development, of any new partnership, or of any programs that would renew the municipal infrastructure and make Montreal more liveable in many ways and create more jobs.

The members opposite continue to support this government which calls itself a successful financial manager. It is certainly not a very successful human manager, if it cares to target itself in any way.

The situation in my own riding is very desperate. This is a valuable opportunity to let people know some of the realities being faced every day in the Mount Royal riding in our province of Quebec which the conference board says has been the hardest hit of any province in this recession. Headlines have proclaimed Montreal the unemployment capital of Canada.

Let me first highlight some of the characteristics of my riding which, by no means, fits the image many people have, and certainly does not fit the Quebec or Canadian averages in terms of population make-up, or its socio-economic structure. I am talking about a population of close to 100,000 which includes a significant immigration population from the world over: southeast Asia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, the Caribbean, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, seniors, single parent families, two parent families, employed and unemployed.

• (1640)

It is very interesting. We have a very skewed riding population.

[*Translation*]

The group of 65 and more represents 17.4 per cent in Côte-des-Neiges, 18.4 per cent in Snowdon, 24 per cent in Côte-Saint-Luc—Hampstead, and 10 per cent in the whole province of Quebec. That should be taken into consideration.

Single parent families headed by a woman represent 18 per cent in Côte-des-Neiges, 19 per cent in Snowdon, 11 per cent in Côte-Saint-Luc—Hampstead, 16 per cent in Mount Royal and 14,4 per cent in the province of Quebec.

[*English*]

I go on and these are the findings of DSC, *Département de santé communautaire de l'Hôpital Sainte-Justine* which have just been deposited in April of this year.

If you look at:

[*Translation*]

—ethnic origin other than French and British, it is 44,3 per cent in Côte-des-Neiges, 61.7 per cent in Snowdon, 70.7 per cent in Côte-Saint-Luc—Hampstead, 31.6 per cent in Outremont—Mount Royal and 10.5 per cent in Quebec. Does that tell you something?

The proportion of immigrant population born outside Montreal and outside Quebec, is 41 per cent in Côte-des Neiges, 53 per cent in Snowdon, 37 per cent in Côte-Saint-Luc—Hampstead and 25 per cent in Mount Royal. It is 8.2 per cent for the province of Quebec.

The distribution of people who did not complete their ninth year as follows: 14 per cent in Côte-des Neiges, 19.4 per cent in Snowdon, 14 per cent in Côte-Saint-Luc—Hampstead and 8 per cent in Mount Royal. It is 23 per cent for the province of Quebec.

Unemployment figures are really incredible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please! I have to remind the hon. member that she has had the floor for ten minutes. Unless her party indicates to me that she has twenty minutes, I will have to interrupt her at this point.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Longueuil has the floor.

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I started earlier to talk about consultation. You know, the lack of consultation is the biggest problem that businesses have in Quebec.

At the provincial level, we have the Department of Industry and Trade, the CRIQ and the QIDC. At the federal level, we have the Department of Industry, Science and Technology, the Federal Business Development Bank and numerous other programs. Provincial programs do not apply the same criteria as federal programs. From a federal point of view, the regions are Quebec, Ontario, Western Canada and the Maritimes. From a provincial point of view, the regions are Gaspésie, Lac Saint-Jean, etc.

Because of that, business people looking for help encounter serious difficulties, to a point where they finally get discouraged. This is one of the main reasons why Montreal cannot develop itself. It is one of the reasons why small and medium firms in Montreal eventually give up, in the first place—

Mr. Corbeil: We need to discuss,—

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Yes, as the Minister of Transport just said, we need to discuss, but he was among those who refused—it is a well known fact—when I was a member of the Conservative Party, to organize in Metropolitan Montreal a caucus which task would have been to hold consultations on the city's development. He refused to do that. Why? Because he wanted to be the only one able to make gifts to firms. That is what happened then.

It is today's Minister of Transport who is responsible for the area, and it is the same minister who refused that Conservatives meet together in a caucus in Montreal to work with the Metropolitan Montreal Chamber of Commerce and others. This is why I had to ask a question—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. I certainly want to be tolerant but I must remind the hon. members that when they have the floor in a questions and comments period, they must ask questions to the previous speaker or make comments on his or her speech. Please keep that rule in mind. I'm sorry but I must add that it is not the time to make a speech. It is a period for questions or comments. You have taken two minutes, almost three, out of a period of five. If you want an answer, please ask the question.

Does the hon. member for Mount Royal have any comment in reply to the hon. member for Longueuil?

[*English*]

Mrs. Finestone: Mr. Speaker, I find that the inappropriate intervention of this member also indicates his inappropriate understanding of the city of Montreal, of the ethnic origin of many of our people and of the problems that we live with on a daily basis. He is only concerned about the state of the nation, not the state of the people.

I would like to point out to him that I have 10,156 beneficiaries on social welfare in my area. The level of poverty of children is one out of five. They are hungry. We have food banks that feed them. The unemployment level for the young people is inordinately high, at 25 per cent. With respect to the age spectrum in my riding, with the large number of children who are a part of the social welfare and benefit package and the number of elderly in my province, the housing policy that this government has put into place is totally disgraceful. Only 17 per cent of the people in the Montreal area can afford to buy a home on their own.

Fifty per cent has been cut by this government to the co-op program; 40 per cent has been cut to social housing for the elderly; 40 per cent has been cut for single parents and for families. There have been cuts to the CMHC that are totally unconscionable. CHIP is gone, COSP is gone and rental rehabilitation housing programs are gone. In my area we had to close down four huge apartment buildings because they were full of cockroaches and rats and the toilet bowls were broken. We have crack shops where the young people are now being exposed to drugs. Juvenile crime is up.

Why is it? It is because you have not put money into infrastructure or into rebuilding the housing in the area and we have a huge immigrant population still flowing in: 35,000 Vietnamese now live in this area and more and more are coming. Do you think they want to live in such a dangerous environment?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, I am puzzled, because, from what I hear from government members, the situation is very cheerful. So, tell me, if things go so well, why is everything so bad?

Last Friday, May 24, I think, members from my caucus and myself had an excellent meeting in Montreal with our friends—and I call them my friends—, from the *Conseil central de Montréal* of the *Confédération des syndicats nationaux*. We enjoyed a warm welcome. Regardless of our political ideas about the future of the Confederation and other matters, we met with reprentatives from a dozen unions. They pointed very clearly to us that they were planning a meeting with members of the provincial Parti Québécois, with members of the Quebec Liberal Party and, give the devil his due, with a few friends from the Bloc, but they were still waiting for an answer from the Quebec Conservative caucus.

• (1650)

Because I like accuracy I just double-checked with our same friends of the *Conseil central de Montreal*, who told us—I will be courteous, I will not give the names of the hon. members, but I think you take my word, these were a few names—"Yes, yes, plan it for next fall, we will see what we can do at that time." These are the people who set up a very important organization called *L'offensive*

contre la récession, to fight against poverty in same areas of Montreal.

I look at the minister responsible for the Montreal area and I will never forget the very wise words uttered, when I was a young parliamentarian, by Jean Marchand, a great trade unionist who had a thorough understanding of Quebec, who was not from Montreal and who kept saying all the time: "Montreal is the engine of Quebec." Some parts of Montreal are even worse off than the City as a whole. They are the parts we should think about in particular.

In keeping with the high level of the debate I would like to see, if my colleagues allow, I must say that I had the impression of hearing the same thing from the previous speaker. He is not from Quebec City, he is from Rivière-du-Loup—Kamouraska. Here is a man, a Conservative member, who is going to organize a caucus meeting of Conservative members from Quebec, where you will be, Mr. Speaker, in Rivière-du-Loup—an area which I invite people to visit—and who says he thought it would be a good thing to have a special workshop on Montreal, in fact he demanded it. This is unbelievable, it takes someone from Rivière-du-Loup—Kamouraska to make up members from Montreal. He understood that when Montreal is not doing well, the whole of Quebec isn't either.

It somewhat reminds me of a very popular folksong that we used to sing in Quebec when I was young: "*Tout va très bien, madame la marquise, tout va très bien, tout va très bien.*" Don't worry, everything is fine, except that I should tell you that there is 13.1 per cent unemployment in Montreal, the highest unemployment rate in all the Canadian cities. Everything is fine, seems to be saying the minister responsible. Everything is fine, Madam, don't worry. Except that there is another small fire: 22 per cent of the people live in poverty in some part of Montreal. But, don't worry, Madam, everything is fine!

Well, it is not what the people of the *Conseil central des syndicats nationaux de Montréal* told us. It is not what they experience every day. It is not, Mr. Minister-in-charge, what I see in my riding. In the municipality of Saint-Jean-de-la-Croix, people are now saying: "We live in Saint-Jean-de-la-Misère." I say: "Listen, we have had enough of this depression, this discouragement." But it is not easy to go and tell that to people who are losing their jobs and who are saying: "I heard the minister say: 'Don't worry, we have great big plans for high technology projects, jobs that will pay well." But how do you help these people, who cannot even apply for the POWA, the Program for Older Worker Adjustment, and who are probably undergoing a painful experience because they are too old and uneducated. So it is very difficult to put them back in the workforce, when they were looking for assistance programs, for ways to help the company they were working for.

And people are asking: What do you want from us with those high interest rates? Those are not my words, they are the words of our friends from the CNTU and the Conseil central des syndicats nationaux de Montréal, which are complaining bout high interest rates, unemployment, POWA, unemployment insurance reform and tax reform. They are saying that even if they would like to believe in what the Canada-United States agreement brought or could bring, the only thing they have noticed, despite their competent statisticians and researchers, was that thousands of jobs have been directly lost because of the Free Trade Agreement. The agreement has not yet been absorbed, and already it is evident that they are trying to put at risk the manufacturing industry, which is to be found in the poorer areas of Montreal. They are not the most lucrative jobs, but try telling that to the people of Saint-Édouard, Sainte-Cécile, Parc Extension, in Montreal. Try telling that to the new immigrants who work from early in the morning through late at night in small plants just because they want to work—I say that for those who form the majority in Quebec—and they now see these plants closing one after the other.

I can see the other Minister, the Minister of Multiculturalism. I know he is sensitive to these matters, to the needs of these new immigrants who do not hold the better jobs and who have no education. It is not enough to say: "Not to worry, everything is fine, because some high technology jobs have been created." We clearly need these jobs, but what of all those who are discouraged and who, day by day, are moving nearer to family separation?

The minister should come and visit Montreal because some parts of the city have no idea of what is going on elsewhere in Montreal. The *Petite patrie* is not *Ville d'Anjou*. It is not, with all due respect to some of my colleagues, the district of Saint-Léonard, that of my

collegue, the Chief Opposition Whip, the member for Saint-Léonard.

In some neighbourhoods, even if you announce big new and important programs, it is so sad! The minister should go there to really feel the pulse.

But first of all, to be more down-to-earth, you should force your Montreal and provincial caucus to meet our friends from the CNTU. The last caucus did not—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I must interrupt the hon. member for Saint-Denis unless there is unanimous consent of the House.

Questions and comments for a period of five minutes. The hon. member for Gander—Grand Falls.

[*English*]

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. gentleman a question. I recall back in the late 1960s when the hon. member was the parliamentary secretary to the then federal minister of regional economic expansion, or I think perhaps it was the department of economic expansion for Canada, the Hon. Don Jamieson. I am wondering what advice the hon. member would have for the Government of Canada, or for anyone who is trying to tackle this incredibly big problem experienced in his riding and in the city of Montreal.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): I thank my colleague first, for his good memory and second, for his question.

As we say, critics are easy when they are not followed by positive suggestions. Now, I will give you a brief example. Then I will leave it for the minister to reflect upon. It is a bit in answer to your question.

• (1700)

In my constituency, we have tried something that exists nowhere else. It fulfills a dream I always had. I realized that after all, federal, provincial as well as municipal representatives are all elected by the same people. So, we created what is called a consultation committee. Its the in thing nowadays. Two of our members are provincial ministers, two are federal MPs, three are municipal councillors—those are the only ones I will name, that is Mr. Bielo, Mrs. Blanc, Mr. Berthelet, who is President of the Montreal Municipal Council, Minister Sirros, Minister Trépanier, my colleague André Ouellet and myself. We get together and we talk of what happened to RRAP projects.

So we do work here and we try to ask questions. It is up to the local government first to show that the various levels of government can work together. It was in a way Don Jamieson's approach. He never undertook anything before making sure first and foremost that he had the full, total and complete cooperation of the members opposite. When there were some problems, Don would say: we are going to try to do something by phone. I wonder how often people are on the phone. They must not be on the phone often, since I am told that now in Quebec city everybody is tearing up its clothes at the national assembly since Mr. Benoît Bouchard has announced the establishment of a new department. This is a rather unexpected statement, probably to tell people from Gaspe: I am going to pay you a visit but, please do not throw rocks at me, I have great news for you. Then instead of some concrete announcement, they get a new minister! Well it was not the way Don Jamieson used to do things, nor was it Otto Lang's way although he was a tough and disciplined man. But it was probably what I call—

[*English*]

—the golden age of what Canada knows. I must recognize that it is more difficult today.

[*Translation*]

But there is one thing I have to acknowledge: there has not been, first and foremost, that kind of consultation— I see people smiling on the other side. Let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker. You first have to be able to recognize that there is a problem, you cannot spend all your time saying: There is no problem, just a few poor people here and there, but look at what the future holds for us, with all that high technology, et cetera. Yes, that is true. We do need well-paid jobs for our young people. But what do we do in the meantime? You simply refuse to admit that there is a problem out there.

The minister keeps talking about when the Liberals were in office. I challenge anyone of those who will speak after me to stop using that phrase. Let me tell you what I hear in my riding, and I will conclude with these words. Each time you use that argument, if I could rise, I would prove to you that sincerity still does pay in politics. Stop saying: "In the days of the Liberals!" I see my leader who will take part in the debate. Well, he too can show humility when people keep telling him: "Yes, but in the days of the Liberals." We have been judged in 1984

by a team saying that they could do better. It is a difficult admission to make for a politician, is it not?

And we have been judged again in 1988. So, stop using this argument that is not a valid one, that makes yourself ridiculous when you say—

An hon. member: You are a former serviceman!

Mr. Prud'homme: Yes, I am a former serviceman. I am a man of discipline. But then, you were supposed— Here comes the minister with his tired old refrain— He is not able to recognize that there is a problem, so he will keep singing: "Don't worry, be happy. The situation is disastrous in Montreal, but don't worry, except for that everything is fine, I keep an eye open for problems with the new minister" who is not really a minister, who appointed himself but will get demoted—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. Resuming debate. The hon. member for Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis.

[*English*]

Hon. Bob Layton (Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to join in this debate to discuss the economic development challenge in Montreal, and to join the other speakers who have recorded the concerns we all have for a full and equal share on the part of *Montrealais* in this economic recovery program.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce asks this government to create jobs in Montreal. Here is our response. Mr. Speaker, this government spent more than $32 million during the last year to do precisely that. Did my colleague mention it in his motion? I do not think so.

It bears repeating that between April 1, 1990 and March 31, 1991, this government spent more than $32 million, $32,076,850 to be specific, in order to create jobs in the city of Montreal, and 7,925 people benefitted from this help. Part of this money was used to protect jobs, which is more or less like creating new ones. If a job is at risk and the government steps in to protect it, it is like job creation.

[*English*]

Work sharing is a godsend for a company that is staring disaster in the face and will have to lay off and thus lose valued skilled workers in order to survive. The work sharing program, by shortening the work week by one to three days, lets workers keep their jobs, thereby keeping up their skills.

I can speak from personal experience in the riding of Lachine that the work sharing program is working. With the aid of the Government of Canada two of our major corporations, Jenkins Incorporated and one other, have applied for and received the support they needed to keep those jobs alive.

Job creation, as any employer knows, always happens when there are workers around with the right skills or people with the ability to learn the job quickly and then relearn it when some new technology or method comes along that radically changes the nature of the job, rendering the old skills obsolete.

[*Translation*]

I am talking about people who can adjust, Mr. Speaker, people who can read, count and understand a manual or remember complex instructions, people who are part of today's culture and who can learn the required skills when they are needed. Those are the people who would really create jobs, people who can adjust. The 8,000 Montrealers or so who got help from the government last year all have skills or had to learn some in order to play an active role in the work force.

Those who had practically no useful skills were registered in a government job training program. Now, thanks to training funded by our government, those Montrealers are on their way to self-sufficiency again.

[*English*]

The training costs for about 100 unemployed, unskilled people anywhere in the country can run close to $1 million, or on a per capita basis roughly $8,500 to $10,000 per individual trainee. I mention this to point out how much it costs to properly train an unskilled, unemployed person for work. In fact, re-employment training is so expensive that it requires the involvement of many partners to make it viable.

The government funds skills training programs for the unemployed.

• (1710)

The government also wants to encourage employers to fund training and retraining for their workers who may be at risk or falling behind in productivity.

This morning in Lachine, I learned that there was a meeting of some 80 employers, industrial and commercial companies, with the school authority, together with the support of the Government of Canada, for the very purpose of organizing these very courses to bring those basic skills into the work place.

I am proud that there is this initiative, and I am sure it is being repeated and will be repeated right across the country. The government wants to encourage employers to fund training and retraining for their workers who may be at risk of falling behind in productivity.

That is why in the Speech from the Throne the government vowed to begin the effort now to quadruple the training provided by employers to their employees.

[*Translation*]

Our training programs help the unemployed to acquire basic and vocational skills which they need to find a job. Employers can also help their staff to keep their skills up to date and prevent them from loosing their job.

[*English*]

Survival skills include communication, mathematics and job search techniques, basic skills that you and I acquired long ago and now take for granted. Deprived of these basic skills, one is bound to lose his or her self-esteem. We have a particular example of this among the management and executive professional class in the west of Montreal.

There is a self-help program, Executives Available, which has put together the self-assistance and encouragement that allows those people who have been without work and losing confidence to come back into the work force with a new sense of confidence.

As all of us know, the loss of self-esteem usually cancels or depreciates one's ability and desire to compete in today's fast changing job market.

Basic training skills therefore start the unemployed person back on the road to recovery. That is why this training is so vital to our re-employment strategy. That is why re-employment training can cost $10,000 per trainee.

The re-learning of basic survival skills is often slow and time consuming, eating up training dollars before the occupational training takes place. It is why we made the unemployment insurance system more flexible and why we are using UI moneys to help claimants require skills through training and get back to work faster.

Our reform of the Unemployment Insurance Act, Bill C-21, so actively resisted by opposition members has become an integral part of our effort to create jobs through training. That is what Canadians say they want, work and not welfare.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-21 was generally perceived as a measure intended to change the rules governing benefits. That is only half the truth. The bill really contained provisions to eliminate certain factors likely to deter the unemployed to go back to work. It did justice to families whose parents are working, to older workers and others, by giving them access to unemployment benefits.

[*English*]

Equally important are measures that brought the UI program into line with the labour market of the 1990s, a labour market which is very different from the one that existed when UI was first set up.

The nature of and causes of unemployment today are very different from those of 10, 20 and 30 years ago. At one time, temporary passive income support made sense for someone out of work because unemployment was something they could simply wait out.

Today, that passive approach can easily be a ticket to permanent unemployment.

Today people are out of work even when jobs are available because their skills just do not match the demands of the marketplace. No amount of waiting will change that.

If UI is to continue to function effectively as a safety net, people need to be able to use it more constructively as a tool for re-employment through training and counselling that will help them re-enter a changing workplace.

The Labour Force Development Strategy announced in 1989 is a strategy that places a major emphasis on skills development, counselling and employment training. It designates some $550 million a year for 60,000 UI recipients who previously were not eligible for job training.

The LFDS is an internationally proven formula for strengthening a country's labour force and contains measures geared specifically to help communities such as the one the hon. member represents. These measures include strengthening the Community Futures Program and the Industrial Adjustment Service.

Both programs are receiving additional funding under LFDS. Community Futures Program will see its 1991 budget increased from $50 million to $198 million, while Industrial Adjustment Service's allocation is being doubled from $15 million to $30 million.

These programs cost a lot of money but in human terms, skills training for the unemployed appears on the credit side of any social ledger, yielding benefits not in dollars, but in human achievement.

[*Translation*]

If it were possible to represent the well-being using a balance sheet, the lack of retraining would surely appear under the liabilities, because it results in prolonged unemployment, in lost productivity, in increasing dissatisfaction, and in the wasting of human resources.

That is a terrible perspective for our fragile economy, which is already undermined by the shortages of manpower and by the very limited training possibilities offered by the private sector.

[*English*]

We must improve the climate of the labour market by building a stronger learning culture and providing more training opportunities for those who need it most. The training of workers helps Canada's economy by easing skills shortages. Training the unemployed offsets the costly side effects of unemployment, such as crime, disease, substance abuse and family and mental breakdown.

With respect to training workers, Canada needs a training compact between workers and employers. The private sector knows better than government where and how training should be provided and yet formal training is currently offered by only one quarter of Canada's businesses.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, that is why we have devoted more money to vocational training and development than any other Canadian government before us. We did so when we became aware of the difficult economic climate in the world.

[*English*]

I am confident that the training and adjustment programs this government is delivering in Montreal and across the country will be of long-term benefit to Montrealers and Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to put a question to the hon. member, especially since he was a minister in 1986, when the Conservative government set up a committee to study the economic development of Montreal.

• (1720)

[*English*]

I have here an article from *The Gazette* of Montreal, dated November 25, 1986. A group, known as the Consultative Committee on the Development of the Montreal Region, made up of members of the city, business, labour, art and the administrative circle selected by the Progressive Conservative government, were told to prepare a strategic blueprint for development of the regional economy. It came up with 86 recommendations for the ten cabinet ministerial mandate to come up with solutions to Montreal's economic woes.

Obviously, those ten ministers that were supposed to be in charge of the economic development of Montreal did not do their job since Montrealers are poorer and poorer everyday. You only have to take a look at press clippings from newspapers like *La Presse*, *The Gazette* and *Le Journal de Montréal* that talk about 188 000 unemployed in Montreal, that talk about 615 000 people linving in poor households, that talk about an economic slump in the Montreal area, and especially in the city of Montreal.

I ask the hon. member: Why didn't this government implement the recommandations contained in the Picard Report? Secondly, why did the Conservative government put an end to the cooperative housing assistance program? If there is one area where it is important to help the poor people, the low income families, the senior citizens looking for an affordable housing, it is certainly in East Montreal. But the Conservative government completely gave up the social housing construction, completely gave up the co-operative housing program. Why this lack of concern from the Conservative government?

[*English*]

Mr. Layton: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague raises the question of the ministerial committee that was formed by our government to look at the problems which developed in Montreal when the recovery economically in the Montreal region did not match what was happening in other provinces across the country. It was quite readily recognized that Montreal was losing its lead role in a number of sectors.

I was proud to be part of that ministerial committee. I know that the council we asked for advice, under Mr. Picard, performed a very special service to the city of Montreal with its many recommendations. Its primary theme was that we had at least four or five pillars on which we should continue to build Montreal's vocation, the international role of Montreal being the first. Montreal, including the nearby communities, should be recognized as an access to the international world with the many international institutions which exist there already. We should be recognized without question.

Second, I represent a community that is very much a part of the transportation activities which centre in Canada. Whether it be by air, by rail or by road, Montreal is and will continue to be the centre and the source of leadership in this field.

Third, the communications sector. Major telephone, radio and other activities centre in Montreal. Fourth, the biotechnological field. Montreal was recognized as having a basic force in all of these sectors and our government has reinforced this with many initiatives.

In a review in which I participated in Montreal some months ago, many if not almost all of the recommendations of the Picard commission had been put into effect. As to the suggestion made by my colleague in his second question that Montreal is not responding to the needs in housing to the limit that a government in association with the provincial governments and the municipal government should, this government has worked to assure the development of all kinds of housing accommodations. It is never as much as a society needs but it is a long step in that direction.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Chartrand (Verdun—Saint-Paul): Mr. Speaker, just a comment on what the hon. member for Lachine—Lac Saint-Louis said. You know, people say that you cannot always blame the Liberal Party for its past wrongdoings and that is why people changed governments. But that fellow who was there in the 1970, with all the programs that he set up for Montreal and the Quebec region, did nothing more than put plasters on wounds, because he said: "It is good for elections. Once we win seats in Montreal, all will be forgotten.

Suddenly, we realize, in Montreal, that people lack training and need special programs for economic development—

Now, I hear the hon. member for Saint-Denis. He is like his friend, the president of the CNTU. He had better sit with his friends of the Bloc québécois, with the extremists, because, you know, there is a hot line between the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie and the CNTU. So, the member for Saint-Denis, instead of shouting and getting elected on promises that will never be kept, could perhaps sit with them and have a hot line and find himself a job for the future.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, what we want to do is to train people and help them to pull through by themselves. It is not the government, we cannot perform miracles. I look at the Liberal Party members in front of us who just applauded their leader. They believe that spending millions of dollars will solve the problem. The hon. member from Lachine could tell us that, as a government, what we are doing is using money for training, and we can make it available to the regions, Montreal as well as the others, and that is what we are going to do.

It is so easy to say: "It's Mulroney's fault, it's all his fault". But for once there is a prime minister who has the guts to stand up. In the hardest of times, he dared stand up and show the people in Quebec, especially the Montreal area, that the government was ready to help, but first of all they had to help themselves. This is what we have been doing for seven years, and what we will continue to do in the years to come.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleagues from

Montreal and those from the Quebec caucus who have taken the initiative in this debate, which I consider to be very important at this point in time.

The economic situation in Quebec, particularly in Montreal, is utterly disastrous, since Montreal is the engine of economic development in Quebec. And the situation there is getting worse and worse. Presently, the unemployment rate in Montreal is quite unacceptable. It's no joke to realize that there are proportionally more unemployed in Montreal than in any other town in Quebec. And, relatively speaking, there are more unemployed persons in Montreal, than there are in St. John's, Halifax, Moncton or in Saint John. There is more unemployment in Montreal than in any other Canadian city which has a relatively big population.

Unemployment is not the only concern in Montreal. For many years, the social climate has been deteriorating at a tremendous speed. In Montreal only, more that 615,000 persons are living under the poverty line, 200,000 more than in the Atlantic provinces. But nothing is done about it.

This afternoon, the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel was talking about a committee chaired by Mr. Picard a couple of years ago. There was a lot said about it. No decision was ever taken to really try to find a solution to the problem. Montreal, which was about the most interesting city in Canada just under a generation ago is losing ground every day. It is disastrous for the country as a whole because if Montreal becomes a disaster zone, what will happen with the rest of the province? When there is unemployment elsewhere, one goes to Montreal to find a job. That is the last hope of the unemployed. When Montreal has nothing to offer, especially for French-speaking people, they are forced to go elsewhere in the country. And the proportion of francophones in Quebec could be lowered.

For my part, Mr. Speaker, I really wanted to speak on the subject today because we must get very serious about this problem. There is an extremely important problem with Montreal's infrastructures. We must solve them now, at least partly. All the old part and the east side of Montreal should still benefit from home renovation programs. These investments are made by simple people, people who are quite modest. If the government is there to help them, they buy materials, they hire plumbers and carpenters and they restore a house that may be 50 or 75 years old. They put it back in shape while preserving Montreal's very special character.

• (1730)

The present government has completely suspended these programs, giving as an excuse that it must save money. Community-based housing programs have been dropped altogether. And we forget that these are decisions which, in the short term, are appalling and which will also have impacts in the long term. Because it will no longer exist, that which is the heart of Montreal will disappear and only the suburbs will remain. The special character of Montreal will also disappear, and the only thing left will be the suburbs. The city that Canadians looked at enviously will exist no more.

Today, what was Canada's metropolis has become it's unemployment metropolis. Consequently, my party thinks that we must shake up the government. The situation has never been as bad and it has never aroused so little interest.

The federal Liberals are always blamed, even if the Conservative government came into office seven years ago. When we formed the government, there were programs to ensure that Montreal had its place in Canada.

An hon. member: Go tell that to the Montrealers!

Mr. Chrétien: I certainly will tell them, and with pleasure. Members rise today to talk about Canadair! How many of them were on this side, on the opposition side, when we decided to get Canadair back? How many of them then said that we would be destroying the private sector if we nationalized Canadair? What have we done for Canadair? Yes, we acquired Canadair when it had only 1,500 employees left. The government bought it because the private sector was getting out of the Canadian aeronautics in Canada. We not only had to buy Canadair but also De Havilland in Toronto because the private sector was getting out. That cost us enormous amounts of money.

At Canadair, we spent one billion on research and development for the sole development of the Challenger. Now, the Conservatives are taking the credit because—

Mr. Prud'homme: They are boasting!

Mr. Chrétien: Yes, they are boasting about it, as the hon. member for Saint-Denis instead of said, recognizing that if the Liberal governement had not saved

Canadair a few years back, they would have nothing to announce.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: The high technology industry as well as the whole aeronautical industry would have disappeared from Montreal and all of Canada.

We are happy today that Canadair is still around but we must plan ahead. Back then, those same hon. members who were in the opposition were saying that communists were taking over because we were interfering in the economy to try to save for Canadians and especially a high technology industry for Montreal. That has allowed us to preserve all those industries in Montreal-West that today win contracts all over the world because we have kept an aeronautical industry in Canada. And those were decisions for Canada and especially for Montreal.

It has been the same thing for Canadair. Today we would like the government to take an interest in another project as we have. The transport industry has always been the key to Montreal's development. Today, efforts are being made to bring into Canada and into America a new technology to link cities with high-speed trains but, the government is not lifting a finger to try and help what could become a high-tech industry in America.

I call up on the government to deal with this problem seriously and without delay because if Bombardier could become— the one to introduce in America this intercity high speed fast transportation system. It could be the kind of development the province of Quebec and the city of Montreal should have. Of course it might cost money, but if we are unable to choose high-tech sectors and to promote them for the benefit of the Canadian, Quebec and Montreal économies then things will go down hill in Montreal. And that is why today we decided to intervene and attract the government's attention. Who do they have on the other side to speak for Montreal? They have a minister from Montreal who keeps saying there is no problem at all. As the hon. member for Saint-Denis said earlier: Don't worry, be happy.

Unemployment like we never saw before. Poverty— those government members do not look very comfortable, and they have every reason to feel that way.

Take last weekend. Quebec members met people from the CNTU and other unions. They aren't afraid of meeting people who are not necessarily our political friends. I don't think Gérard Larose is one of my political friends. However, when it's time to think about the workers and to think about dealing with poverty, we must get together with the people who want to change things in Montreal.

Today, people realize that this government's policies have been absolutely devastating for Montreal and the province of Quebec. High interest rates and a high dollar.

An hon. member: Remember 1982!

Mr. Chrétien: The hon. member has 1982 on the brain.

In 1982, Montreal was not Canada's unemployment capital. In 1982, we had members and ministers who were strong and worthy representatives of Montreal. Not the silent types they have now on the other side.

[*English*]

In 1982, here in this House when there was a problem for Montreal, it was not the trained seals that were getting up. It was competent members and ministers who had at heart the best interests of Montreal. They were under Trudeau.

The people are leaving Montreal because this government has absolutely no policy for Montreal.

Now, what we see in Canada—Montreal used to be a proud city—

[*Translation*]

A city with pride—that was Montreal. Today, there is—

[*English*]

—there is more unemployment in St. John's, Newfoundland, Saint John, New Brunswick, Halifax, Moncton, Winnipeg and in every city of Canada. It is not the time for us to get up and speak about that problem.

It is not the time to tell this government it is going down. It says it is nice to Quebecers, and so on. Where is the beef?

[*Translation*]

Premier Bourassa himself said at the last economic conference he attended that since the Conservatives came to power, Quebec's percentage of economic development funding had dropped. They make good speeches in which they tell Quebec: We love you. When are the

Tory members and ministers going to put their money where their mouth is? When?

Today, in Montreal, 20,000 school children go to school every morning without breakfast. When will the government deal with this problem and try to find a solution? The minister has breakfast every morning. That is pretty obvious.

There are students who won't have jobs this summer, and our members say this will be disastrous. We know what a summer job means to a student. If he doesn't have one, he will join the ranks of the unemployed, not just for the summer but for years, maybe. If he can't find a job this summer in Montreal or somewhere else, what will happen? He won't go back to university in the fall. And what will happen to us when we have to deal with the increasing problems of the twenty-first century, if we don't have a population that is well educated and prepared to compete?

I want the government to realize there are thousands of opportunities in Montreal for investment by the public sector. In government we have to be able to take the long view, not just consider short-term gain. Why not create the kind of programs municipalities have been asking for? One-third federal, one-third provincial and one-third municipal. This is investment, and investment creates jobs.

• (1740)

There are in Montreal areas that need to be developed. Why should we give up these home renovation programs or senior citizen's housing programs.

An hon. member: The cooperation with the provincial government!

Mr. Chrétien: The provincial government is ready to participate in these programs. Everybody but the Conservative government wants to do his part.

Mr. Speaker, the situation in Montreal is disastrous. There will not be a lot of members of your party coming back here after the next election, because you didn't do your homework as you should have. You made a lot of empty promises, but you forgot about the most important thing for the people of the City of Montreal and the region: the bread and butter.

That is why, we are here Mr. Speaker, and why with this motion we are voicing the disastrous policies of the Conservatives who have created this situation in Montreal.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Denis Pronovost (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I have just heard the eloquent speech made by the leader of the opposition who has given us his point of view concerning the economic development of Montreal. Yet, if past deeds foretell what is to come, he could perhaps try to explain to the people of Montreal his own record as hon. member for Saint-Maurice.

In 1963, the present leader of the opposition was elected as hon. member for Saint-Maurice. At that time, Shawinigan, which is the heart of the county, was one of the most prosperous towns in Canada. It was a rich city with several multinationals and many jobs.

In 1986, Mr. Speaker, 23 years later, when the leader of the opposition resigned as hon. member for Saint-Maurice, Shawinigan had become one of the poorest towns in Quebec and in Canada. How can he justify his work as member for Saint-Maurice and come here today lecture us on the art of solving the economic problems of Montreal? Mr. Speaker, I believe that the citizens of Canada have the right to know that the member for Saint-Maurice, during all those years from 1963 to 1986, brought the economy of Shawinigan crashing down, and the town has never recovered since. How can he tell us today that he will solve the problems of Montreal, when he not only was unable to solve those of Shawinigan, but also left the economic fabric of that town in tatters?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): First of all the first thing we have to fix is the fiddle of the hon. member for Saint-Maurice; we'll do that at the next election.

Second, he talks about Schefferville which the Prime Minister has completely shut down, but he doesn't talk about Shawinigan.

Third, I must admit that the population of Shawinigan has diminished because people have moved to the outskirts, though the population of the riding has continued to rise. But if the hon. member has one ounce of—, he will know there are economic difficulties in that area, because petrochemicals have replaced electrochemistry, and that causes a problem. But let us not forget the jobs that were created in Shawinigan and Shawinigan South with the establishment of the Taxation Data Centre, where 1,500 people work today. If the federal govern-

ment had not been there to step in, there would be no Centre, no national parks, none of the other programs which were established when the hon. member, who was one of my organizers at the time, used to travel round the riding praising the good work of the hon. member for Saint-Maurice.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for Saint-Denis has 30 seconds left.

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Could the hon. leader of the Opposition repeat to the minister who claims to be the minister responsible for Montreal that the first prerequisite when you want to solve a problem is to recognize that there is a problem. Yet the minister insists that there is none. There is no solution because there is no problem. Would the hon. leader of the Opposition care to comment?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I recognize the leader of the opposition so he can conclude briefly.

Mr. Chrétien: I think the hon. member for Saint-Denis is absolutely right, the biggest problem the city of Montreal seems to have right now in Ottawa is the minister himself. He does not even want to meet with people from Montreal—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. It being 5.45 o'clock p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the Business of Supply pursuant to Standing Order 81(14).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Call in the members.

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

(*Division No. 10*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand	Anawak
Angus	Arseneault
Assad	Baker
Barrett	Bellemare
Berger	Black
Blondin	Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Boudria	Brewin
Butland	Caccia
Callbeck	Catterall
Chrétien	Clancy
Comuzzi	Copps
Crawford	Dingwall
Edmonston	Ferguson
Finestone	Fisher
Flis	Fontana
Foster	Funk
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gardiner	Gauthier
Gray (Windsor West)	Guarnieri
Harb	Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Heap
Hopkins	Jordan
Karpoff	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kristiansen	Lapierre
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lee	MacAulay
MacLaren	MacLellan
MacWilliam	Maheu
Manley	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	McGuire
Mifflin	Milliken
Mitchell	Nault
Nunziata	Ouellet
Pagtakhan	Parent
Parker	Peterson
Proud	Prud'homme
Rideout	Riis
Rompkey	Simmons
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)	Speller
Stewart	Stupich
Taylor	Tobin
Vanclief	Volpe
Waddell	Walker
Wappel	Whittaker
Wood	Young (Acadie—Bathurst)
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—93	

NAYS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Beatty	Belsher
Bernier	Bertrand

Bird	Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blais
Blenkarn	Bosley
Boyer	Brightwell
Browes	Cadieux
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)	Cardiff
Casey	Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)	Charest
Chartrand	Clark (Yellowhead)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Clifford
Cole	Collins
Cooper	Corbeil
Corbett	Couture
Crosbie (St. John's West)	Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling	de Cotret
Della Noce	Desjardins
Dick	Dobbie
Domm	Dorin
Duplessis	Edwards
Fee	Feltham
Ferland	Fontaine
Fretz	Friesen
Gibeau	Greene
Grey (Beaver River)	Guilbault
Halliday	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes	Hicks
Hockin	Hogue
Horner	Horning
Hudon	James
Jelinek	Johnson
Joncas	Jourdenais
Kempling	Koury
Landry	Langlois
Layton	Lewis
Littlechild	Loiselle
Lopez	MacDougall (Timiskaming)
MacKay	Malone
Marin	Mayer
McCreath	McDermid
McLean	Merrithew
Monteith	Moore
Nicholson	O'Kurley
Plourde	Porter
Pronovost	Redway
Reid	Reimer
Ricard	Richardson
Robitaille	Roy-Arcelin
Saint-Julien	Schneider
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)	Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Shields	Siddon
Sobeski	Soetens
Sparrow	Stevenson
Tardif	Thacker
Thompson	Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Turner (Halton—Peel)
Valcourt	Van De Walle
Venne	Vézina
Vien	Vincent
Weiner	Wenman
White	Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)	
Winegard	Worthy—131

.PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

• (1810)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion lost.

Government Orders

AIRPORT TRANSFER (MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS) ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Monday, June 3, consideration of the motion of Mr. Corbeil that Bill C–15, an act to provide for certain matters respecting official languages, employees' pensions and labour relationships in connection with the transfer of certain airports, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. If you would seek it, I am sure you would find unanimous consent that the vote we just took be applied in reverse to the next vote.

[*Translation*]

I will repeat it in French, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that my idea is properly conveyed. If there is unanimous consent, the result of the vote which has taken place will be applied to the next one, but in the reverse order.

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. We won't give our consent because we intend to vote with the government on the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Since there is no unanimous consent, we will proceed with the vote.

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

(*Division No. 11*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Beatty	Belsher
Bernier	Bertrand
Bird	Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blais
Blenkarn	Bosley
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)	Boyer
Brightwell	Browes
Cadieux	Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Cardiff	Casey
Chadwick	Champagne (Champlain)
Charest	Chartrand
Clark (Yellowhead)	Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Clifford	Cole
Collins	Cooper
Corbeil	Corbett
Couture	Crosbie (St. John's West)
Crosby (Halifax West)	Darling
de Cotret	Della Noce
Desjardins	Dick
Dobbie	Domm
Dorin	Duplessis
Edwards	Fee
Feltham	Ferland
Fontaine	Fretz
Friesen	Gibeau

Greene
Guilbault
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Lewis
Loiselle
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Mayer
McDermid
Merrithew
Moore
O'Kurley
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Thacker
Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vézina
Vincent
Wenman
Wilbee
Assiniboia)
Worthy—134

Grey (Beaver River)
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Horner
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Landry
Lapierre
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Littlechild
Lopez
MacKay
Marin
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Nicholson
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Valcourt
Venne
Vien
Weiner
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—
Winegard

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Assad
Barrett
Berger
Blondin
Brewin
Caccia
Catterall
Clancy
Copps
Dingwall
Ferguson
Fisher
Fontana
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Guarnieri
Harvard
Heap
Jordan
Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
Marleau
McGuire
Milliken
Nault
Ouellet
Parent

Anawak
Arseneault
Baker
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Callbeck
Chrétien
Comuzzi
Crawford
Edmonston
Finestone
Flis
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Gray (Windsor West)
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hopkins
Karpoff
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kristiansen
Lee
MacLaren
MacWilliam
Manley
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
Mifflin
Mitchell
Nunziata
Pagtakhan
Parker

Peterson
Prud'homme
Riis
Simmons
Speller
Stupich
Tobin
Volpe
Walker
Whittaker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

Proud
Rideout
Rompkey
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Waddell
Wappel
Wood
Young (Beaches —Woodbine)—90

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to, and bill read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 37, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business, as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS MOTIONS

[*Translation*]

COAT OF ARMS OF CANADA

AMENDMENT TO MOTTO

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moves:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of sending a petition to Her Majesty the Queen for a grant of arms to amend the motto on the Coat of Arms of Canada to read: *A Mari usque ad Mare usque ad Mare.*

He said: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for letting me the first one to discuss the motion that I have moved.

Before starting my speech, I would like to bring to your attention a spelling mistake in the wording of the motion in the *Order Paper*, as well as *in the Projected Order of Business*. Indeed, in the new motto that I propose *A Mari usque ad Mare usque ad Mare*, the second and third "Mare" should be spelled M-A-R-E and not M-A-R-I.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the coat of arms of Canada bear the motto *A Mari usque ad Mare*, which symbolizes the vastness of our country, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Since its adoption in 1921, this motto has been a reminder to all Canadians that the vastness of their country is truly remarkable and that even if our country is so large, it is united through a single and unique nation called Canada.

However, if this motto was meant to establish a symbolic link between all Canadians, and if it was meant to be a reflection of our geography, it nevertheless as one serious flaw, in that it ignores the geography and the residents of the North.

[*English*]

What I want to do today is give some background information on the motto, my reasons for presenting this motion and a few other supporting points.

The first official use came in 1906 when the phrase was engraved on the head of the mace of the legislative assembly of the new province of Saskatchewan. At that time Under-Secretary of State Joseph Pope became familiar with the future motto and took a liking to it.

In 1919 Pope was named to a committee appointed by the federal government to recommend a new design for the arms of Canada. Although no motto was included on the old shield, one was to be included in the new arms. The coat of arms and the motto were approved by Order in Council on April 21, 1921, and by Royal proclamation on November 21, 1921.

The territorial evolution of Canada helps us to understand the origins of the motto and, let us hope, will provide a harbinger of a new motto. Obviously the present motto reflects an east-west bias which tends to ignore Canada's north. However, an overview of the territorial evolution of the north reveals that continual changes were made to boundaries before 1912 and may help explain why a more accurate motto was not devised sooner.

Given the state of flux of the boundaries and the area's relative state of isolation and sparse population, it probably was not politically expedient to adopt the motto which is truly reflective of our country's history and geography.

The coat of arms and the motto recognize Canada's evolution to a certain point. The shield of the coat of arms displays the arms of England, Scotland, Ireland and France and to symbolize the nation's founding races, underneath the four quarters on a white field is a sprig of three maple leafs to indicate the new nation of many peoples.

There is one very noticeable exception, the first nations. Neither the shield nor the motto directly refer to them. Why not accept the motion proposed as a sign of recognition of Canada's first nations.

You may say that sums up in a nutshell why we should accept this motion, but I want to explain why I presented the motion in particular. My background as a teacher of Canadian history in the secondary school system in the province of New Brunswick has given me an insight into some of the problems we face here in Canada.

• (1830)

I also have an aboriginal population in my riding and there are a number of native reserves throughout New Brunswick. I have had the occasion of meeting with those groups time and time again.

In my background as a history teacher I have come to the conclusion that, and in many discussions in class with students from my region, from the riding of Restigouche—Chaleur, it has also been pointed out, it seemed to be an oversight. We have a coat of arms, a Canadian motto that says from sea to sea only.

Basically, it was meetings in the classroom, meetings with native groups in New Brunswick, in my riding more specifically, that brought this to a point. As a history teacher I didn't expect to be a member of Parliament some day and be in a position to maybe influence the changing of this motto, but here I am. That is one of the promises that I made to myself. If ever I got into a position to be able to influence such a change, then I would bring it up. This is why I have decided to present this motion today.

With regard to the changing of the motto, since becoming a member of Parliament I have noticed that the Prime Minister of Canada, the right hon. Brian Mulroney, has made a number of speeches in the House where he has, and rightly so, a number of times referred to the phrase: "from coast to coast to coast", again re-emphasizing the current use.

I have noticed the Leader of the Opposition has used it and the leader of the third party has used it. I have noticed that it has become common practice for ministers of the Crown to use it. What I am trying to do today is perhaps make it legal to a certain extent. In some respects it could be seen as a matter of housekeeping.

I think it is more important than that. The implementation of this new motto would send a positive message to northern residents at little or no cost to the federal government, and would help foster national unity. When we look at the question of national unity, specifically the question of the aboriginals, the question of aboriginals in respect to last summer even, we know that they have many problems which have never been addressed properly. It would at least be a gesture of good faith to approve this change in the motto.

I believe that it would also be a psychological link, a symbol similar to some of the symbols we have had in the past, symbols such as John A. Macdonald's national policy. The Broadcast Act for a while talked about Canadian unity, so there was that linkage. There is the Official Languages Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These have all become very important symbolic and psychological links binding Canadians from all regions.

I would hope that acceptance of this motion would be considered as very important, would be considered as sending a message to the north that: "You are part of this great country". We want that fact to be legally recognized.

It has certainly become common practice for members in their speeches to use "from sea to sea to sea" or "from coast to coast to coast". I would hope that the members on the other side and the members of the third party would see fit to recognize that.

I would say, because of its common use and because of the influence of the north now, our great country, that it would certainly be unacceptable to keep the *status quo*. We should recognize the geographical reality of the north, as well as the members of our first nations and other northern residents. In fact, if we were not to recognize this fact it might send a negative message to them.

I think it is very important that we do recognize that a change in our motto is necessary.

[*Translation*]

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that the adoption of a new motto would obviously be perceived as a recognition of the importance of the Canadian North and of the First Nations, as well as of all the residents of that region. I believe that the government should spare no efforts to give to Canadians a motto that is a true reflection of the country and of its regions.

At a time when Canada faces a serious identity crisis, this initiative could help in a significant way to preserve national unity. *A Mari Usque Ad Mare Usque Ad Mare.*

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq):

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

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure to speak to this motion put forward by my hon. colleague. I think it is something that needs to be recognized within this House of Commons and within this great country.

Very often the people today in this House, as my colleague stated earlier, have been saying "from coast to coast to coast"—whether it is the right hon. Prime Minister or other members of his government or our illustrious Leader of the Official Opposition or the Leader of the New Democratic Party. So, I think it is incumbent upon all members of this House to use either "from sea to sea to sea" or "coast to coast to coast" because it has to be recognized that Canada is surrounded by three oceans—the Pacific Ocean, the Arctic Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean, of which the Arctic coast has the longest shoreline. Surely that alone should be enough to make people realize that there are three coasts to recognize.

Often when I am listening or watching CBC Radio or CBC Television I get bothered when the commentator says: "from coast to coast". I always want to phone and remind them that they have to mention the third coast. Now, it may very well be that they are talking about the Atlantic coast and the Arctic coast, or the Pacific coast and the Arctic coast, but I think it would be even better if they said: "coast to coast to coast".

When "from sea to sea" was first used it may have indeed been accurate, but it is no longer. In 1898 Yukon was carved out of the Northwest Territories. After the creation of the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1905, the present boundaries of the Northwest Territo-

ries were finalized. So it was not until 1905 that we could start using "coast to coast to coast".

Canada's Arctic territory is second only in size to that of the U.S.S.R. Together, Yukon and the Northwest Territories comprise 40 per cent of the area of Canada. Almost half of the population of Canada's northern region are aboriginal people, and more in the Northwest Territories where roughly 50 per cent in the Western Arctic and about 85 per cent in the Eastern Arctic are aboriginal people, and fewer in the Yukon.

When my colleague was talking about the founding nations, the first nations, he was indeed right in saying that the area that is occupied by the majority of aboriginal people—in this case the Northwest Territories—should be recognized as a very real part of Canada. The north is unique and everybody has to recognize this. It is a unique and distinct region of Canada, politically, socially, culturally and economically.

• (1840)

It is always offensive to those of us who come from the north when we are forgotten in Canada's national symbols. In this case again it may have been accurate back in 1898 to say "coast to coast", but it is not the case any more. Therefore, we should be recognized as part of the great country of Canada.

As well as my colleague from the Western Arctic, I am constantly trying to remind members of this House of Commons and the rest of Canada about the existence of the north, of the Inuit, the Dene or other people who occupy the Northwest Territories as well as Yukon.

Canada's north has always occupied a strategic military position. Northerners and particularly aboriginal people, by virtue of their residency in the north, have proved and sustained Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic. Recently the significance of Arctic and global environmental issues have been recognized.

Over the past few years scientific, social, cultural and political exchanges have multiplied between Canada's northern territories and other circumpolar nations. A circumpolar environmental protection agreement will be signed in Finland later this month.

The circumpolar dimension of Canada's foreign policy is becoming increasingly important. It is extremely important that Canada's symbols recognize all of Canada's component parts and peoples. The northern territories and the Arctic Ocean are integral parts of Canada; the northern residents are a very real part of Canada and consider themselves very Canadian. We deserve to be acknowledged in this great country.

It is time to change our motto. It is appropriate at this important stage of Canadian constitutional renewal to embrace all parts of this country and all Canadians. Supporting the motion of my hon. colleague would be a significant national reconciliation initiative by this federal Parliament.

This is not a partisan issue. What is under discussion here is the recognition of a simple geographic and political fact as well as a symbolic one.

I ask hon. members on all sides to support this motion and to recognize the north and the Arctic Ocean, and I urge the House to acknowledge that Canada stretches from sea to sea to sea.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise in this afternoon's debate on Motion No. 387, a motion by our hon. colleague for Restigouche which asks this House to affirm its intention to alter the motto of the Coat of Arms of Canada from *A Mari usque ad Mare* to *A Mari usque ad Mare usque ad Mare*.

First of all I want to thank the member for Restigouche for bringing to my attention the coat of arms, which perhaps I had not recognized as often as I should. Now that I have become involved with this, I see it on your chair, on our money, on our letterheads and almost everywhere we look here. I do compliment the member for that and thank him.

I view this debate as an opportunity, not only to discuss the merits of my hon. colleague's proposal, but also an opportunity for the House early in a new session of Parliament where the very future of Canada will be shaped to discuss the symbols of the country, the symbols which are common to all Canadians.

Let me turn specifically to the motion. Our colleague would wish to alter the motto of Canada. Our colleague would wish to alter that motto to reflect our geographic reality, the reality of which every member in this House is justifiably proud. This great land of ours runs from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the 49th parallel to the

North Pole, and the waters of three of the world's great oceans wash on our shores.

There are very few nations in the world, very few, that can claim the geographic bounty and beauty of Canada. There are very few nations that can claim the richness brought on by the very size of the land mass of our Canada. There are even fewer nations that can claim the richness of a population whose origins stem from virtually every corner of the globe.

Canada is truly a blessed land. Those who would say we are not, the nay sayers who say this country should be torn asunder fail to acknowledge the bounty, the richness, the prosperity and the promise that has been, that is and that will be our Canada.

Our hon. colleague from Restigouche asked us to change a motto which we have had formally since November 21, 1921. Those words in English, "from sea to sea", are inextricably linked.

Not only is the motto of Canada on our coat of arms, it is also linked to the vision of the Fathers of Confederation in the 1860s.

We take for granted many things about our country. That seems to be a characteristic of the way we see ourselves. We do have a motto. It is "from sea to sea", but do we know its roots? We must understand that it is not a statement of just geography but a statement of promise and hope.

The motto which we celebrate is not just a series of words. The motto "from sea to sea" is derived from the 72nd Psalm, A Song for Solomon.

Something else is derived from that 72nd Psalm, and is the very title of our country. We are the Dominion of Canada and when the Fathers of Confederation were grappling with what to call the very first British colonies to achieve true, responsible self-determination, there were many problems.

Some wished to call it the kingdom of Canada. Others did not know what we should be called, but clearly not "a republic" or "a kingdom".

In those days inspiration was found in Psalm 72. I will read from it: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."

The 72nd Psalm speaks about the righteousness of rulers and Divine Province's guidance of rulers. The 72nd Psalm speaks about the beauty of the earth, its majesty, its wealth and how it sustains us.

Let me quote from the third verse: "The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness." The 72nd Psalm speaks of hope of a people in other lands.

When my hon. colleague wishes to change our motto on the crest of our coat of arms by adding a third "sea" in order to express a geographic reality, he is proposing to not only alter words, but to alter the deep-seated thoughts and principles.

He proposes to alter the very idea of our name and of our title as a land.

There is a very clear relationship between our title, the Dominion of Canada, and the motto "from sea to sea". We should not alter it. I find it particularly apt that the Fathers of Confederation would have gone to the 72nd Psalm.

In 1867, we were a land of just one sea. We were a small country. We were made up of four, small, isolated colonies huddling on the North American land mass confronting a powerful neighbour, the United States of America in its most expansionist era.

Canada was made up of four small colonies without even a railroad linking them; four colonies which stopped at what is today Thunder Bay; four colonies which were 200 or 300 miles from the St. Lawrence watershed.

Yet the promise and hope of the Fathers of Confederation, Macdonald, Cartier and Tupper was the future of Canada. Those leaders, from the day of Confederation, strove without rest to shape what I proudly say is the world's greatest country.

Those leaders dared to think larger. Those leaders, within three years, dared to acquire responsibility for virtually all of what would become the land mass of Canada. From four isolated colonies our Fathers of Confederation dared to shape Canada.

I know that there are many in society today who think that history is bunk. I certainly do not believe that. I do not believe a people can know where they wish to go until they know where they have been.

I think we need to know more about the symbols of Canada. I think we need to know more about the things which tie us together. We should not think of them

merely as conveniences, as a trademark or as a commercial brand name that we can change from time to time.

Our coat of arms, our motto, is not a brand name. It is not a commercial logo. It is one of the proudest symbols of one of the world's proudest countries.

My hon. colleague from Restigouche feels that we must reflect the north of our country, and I respect that but we must reflect our diversity. We do not extend just from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Our country is larger than that, but our motto is not derived from a mere Latin Translation of a geography. It is derived from a biblical text which speaks about a people and their aspirations.

That is why I feel it is not a simple matter of changing a few words. I am not even going to discuss the costs in doing that, but there are obvious costs.

I do not feel comfortable in supporting the motion of my colleague from Restigouche. I think he has missed the mark about what this motto is about and what Canadian symbols are about.

• (1850)

These are difficult times in Canada. We need to look back and look forward at the same time, to benefit and build on what we do the best and to rectify that which may have kept us apart.

I think symbols like our flag, our motto, our coat of arms and our basic parliamentary system of government are things which are special to all Canadians and I do not think we should tinker with them on the spur of the moment. We should think very seriously about their origins and their meaning before we do anything to change our symbols. I know this proposal to change the motto has been made before. I have heard leaders from our north make similar statements and I really understand and appreciate their concerns. They think that too many Canadians only think in terms of that narrow band where most of us live, which runs east to west.

That may be so in some instances but there are so many other ways to recognize the importance of the north; to recognize the majesty, the grandeur of all of Canada, its riches and prosperity. Our motto is not a statement of geography alone. It is a statement of commitment and what our hon. friend from Restigouche proposes would mean changing for the wrong reason that statement of promising commitment.

It has been a great pleasure this afternoon to participate in this debate on an important symbol of Canada and I only hope that the spirit of co-operation and fair debate that we are seeing will transfer into our work this autumn on reshaping our Canadian federation for the next century.

I think we are like the Fathers of Confederation. We are our heirs Parents of Confederation. The challenge of the past is handed to us. It is now for us to take up the torch and to shape the Canada for our children and for our children's children.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to take part in the debate today on the motion of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur in which he asks the House to change the Canadian motto which is now "from sea to sea" to "from sea to sea to sea".

Mr. Speaker, I have here the Projected Order of Business for today and I read motion M-387. Being of Italian origin, I would like to correct a small error that has been bothering me and, unless I am mistaken, that would improve the Latin version. You will agree with me, Mr. Speaker, as you are well informed in this matter, it is: *ad Mare* and not *ad Mari*. I would appreciate to see the correction. It should read: *ad Mare ad Mare* and not *ad Mari*, unless my colleague has made the correction, because it is difficult to pick up visually. *Mare* also comes both from Latin and Italian, it is the same. We all know it translates the word ocean.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker, I find the whole thing perfectly acceptable if the member has made the correction, but I might have missed this part of his speech.

Mr. Speaker, it seems appropriate, at the beginning of this new session of Parliament, to have the opportunity to debate a motion concerning such a fundamental point in a country as its motto.

During the last few weeks, my colleague the right hon. member for Yellowhead, who was here a few minutes ago, has been criss-crossing the country to try to establish a consensus among its citizens and its leaders, a consensus on the need to build a new Canada, a Canada

of the 21th century, a Canada corresponding to the demands and aspirations of today's generation.

Mr. Speaker, 125 years ago, the Fathers of Confederation were almost in the same situation thus we are now. They were the leaders of four little colonies of British North America, four little colonies who banded together because they realized that this way, they could prosper, develop and build the society they were dreaming of. We are facing the same challenges today, Mr. Speaker. We must get together in order to shape our country for tomorrow. We must get together to shape a country united, strong and free. Mr. Speaker, what our hon. colleague for Restigouche—Chaleur wants is to change something that is fundamental to our country since we became the Dominion of Canada.

The motto of our country and its name come from the seventy-second psalm, the psalm of Salomon. They are taken from the eight verse that says: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth". Mr. Speaker, that verse is so full of promises and hope.

"Dominion", Mr. Speaker, is such a noble word. Through its roots, it brings us dignity and legitimacy. In that verse, we see all the great hopes the Fathers of Confederation shared. To them, the phrase "from sea to sea" was a metaphor for their dreams and their hopes, not only a geographic description.

They had settled along the Atlantic coast and on both sides of the St. Lawrence River. However, Mr. Speaker, the Fathers of Confederation dreamt of a country extending from coast to coast and lived in the land of the Great River. They wanted a country that stretched to the furthest shores.

Such was, Mr. Speaker, the challenge facing the Fathers of Confederation: to give shape to a huge country in the northern part of this continent.

I do not think that we should change our motto simply because this huge country of ours has three oceans off its shores instead of two. This is not the place to discuss such trivial issues, nor is this is the way to go about it.

What we are talking about here, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why we, in this House, would want to change the motto of this great country, the reason why we would want to change our Coat of Arms.

This brings me to raise a very important question in the context of today's debate. Our motto is neither a brand name nor a slogan a cereal company tested on consumers. Our motto reflects the image we have of ourselves. Our Coat of Arms reflects who we are and where we come from. Let me tell you a few things about the Coat of Arms of Canada, Mr. Speaker. We do not have to go out of this Chamber to look at it. It is all around us. There is even one right above your head. It is everywhere in this room.

Some argue that our Coat of Arms is outdated, a survival from the past. I disagree. I think that our Coat of Arms is as current today as it was on that day, in November 1921, when the late King George V proclaimed the Coat of Arms of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, our Coat of Arms shows our main roots. There is the fleur-de-lis from France, the royal heart from Ireland, the unicorn from Scotland, the lion from England and, in a conspicuous place, three maples leaves on a white field. Only a few Canadians probably know that when our Coat of Arms was proclaimed in 1921, red and white were proclaimed to be the colours of Canada.

So, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me extremely accurate and appropriate that the flag of our great country, our Maple Leaf, be red and white. Those are our historical colours, the colours of Canada.

I am not sure, Mr. Speaker, that all Canadians understand the origin of our motto and what inspired it. I am not sure either that they understand the symbolic nature of our flag.

That is rather disturbing. When I go to the United States, I am immediately amazed at how Americans, young and old, readily understand the symbols of their great republic. Almost everyone understand their motto *E Pluribus Unum*—Out of many, one. Most of them could tell you the story of Betsy Ross, and of the designing of their beautiful star-spangled banner.

Mr. Speaker, Americans do know about *E pluribus unum*. In Canada, it seems that we have been somewhat reluctant to instill in our children and citizens a deep understanding and appreciation of Canada and a sense of patriotism.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think we should change our fundamental symbols without giving the matter proper consideration. Before we change them, we should first learn to know them.

• (1900)

Mr. Speaker, we did not get a truly Canadian flag until 1965. The quest for a Canadian flag started in 1925, 40 years before we finally got our flag. In 1946, the hon. Paul Martin, was Secretary of State when the first bill on Canadian citizenship making us real Canadian citizens was presented. Mr. Martin, whose son sits in front of me, promised a Canadian flag and a national anthem. But we had to wait 20 more years to have a flag that would be really ours.

Mr. Speaker, we now have all of that, a flag, a national anthem, our Canadian citizenship, a Coat of Arms and a motto. All members of this House are proud of those symbols. I am not at all convinced that the time has come for us to change something as fundamental as our motto.

Mr. Speaker, I know that I have only one minute left. I will try to be brief. I know that many people have proposed a new motto, "from coast to coast to coast", to reflect Canada's geographic reality. Northerners think that our motto does not take into account their beautiful Arctic Ocean. There are many other ways, besides changing our proud motto on the Coat of Arms of Canada, to recognize the geographic majesty of this country of ours, to make Canadians better understand what we have in common, what keeps us together. We are all proud, Mr. Speaker, of our Coat of Arms and, above all, we are proud to be Canadians.

[*English*]

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to the private member's bill brought forward by my colleague from Restigouche to have the coat of arms changed.

I see this particular private member's bill as one being very useful and very valuable in bringing to the Canadian conscience the fact that there is a third sea and that sea is one that is actualized by the people that live there and the diversity that exists there. It is recognition that the north is a growing, viable, political, constitutional entity, that it is not just an extension of the federal government of Canada. It is not just an extension that could be considered a colony and a distant land in the years leading to the year 2000; it is in fact an area of Canada that is to be admired for its very difficult climate at times, but also for its diversity and the people who live there.

In reference to my hon. colleague from Restigouche's private member's bill, the change would be stated as sea, to sea, to sea, or, as many others would put it, coast to coast to coast. If you include the third coast, you are doing what we want to do in Canada these days, which is to express equality and inclusiveness in our efforts to bring this country together.

We are not excluded. It is known that Her Majesty has been to that sea and visited the people in the early 1970s. I am sure that when the petition is brought to Her Majesty, she will recognize the viability of this particular private member's bill and because she has been there and shaken hands and looked into the faces of these people, she will know that this is something that needs to be done.

This particular coat of arms has not been in existence since the beginning of Confederation but only since 1921. Had we not taken the steps to change the previous flag, we would still be in a rather static state of having the old flag. But we endured a tremendous amount of debate and friction and we now have the new maple leaf Canada flag, which is something of which we are very proud.

In fact, there is room for improvement, there is room for change and I do not see why not.

In 1974 I went as a young person to that particular sea. I went as a young person with three children. I went to teach in the community of Tuktoyaktut which is a predominantly Inuvialuit community. I thought I would never see the sun again. It was the longest winter of my life but I learned to love that land. Every day, that I taught in that school I looked out the window and what did I see? I saw the Arctic Ocean from my classroom. In the fall, what did I see? I saw the beluga whale when I was standing on top of a Bombardier with my three children. I could see the beluga whale swimming in that see.

What did I see in the early seventies? I saw the first ship pull into the Beaufort Sea for Dome Petroleum, which created a great amount of activity. What else did I see? I experienced in that community on the third sea the first Inuit circumpolar meeting in that area which was attended by many prominent Canadians, including Justice Berger. It was there in 1974 that, in my aboriginal

language, I made my presentation on the Mackenzie Valley pipeline hearings to Mr. Berger.

The third sea is a reality to me. It is not a distant land. It is not a foreign colony. It is not something that I just talk about or read about in purple prose. It has the leadership.

We also have the Inuvialuit who settled their land claims. The Inuvialuit land claims agreement has allowed those people a certain amount of autonomy. It has allowed them to build institutions for the future. It has allowed them the opportunities for investment. It has allowed them some degree of autonomy with regard to the land they operate on and the kind of activities they engage in.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at that land and see it every day, this motion is not just changing a particular motto. It is reflecting in the symbols of this country a reality. What are symbols for? Symbols are to reflect and represent something that is true, something that represents this country, like the Constitution.

I have said many times that the Constitution is like a mirror. If we look into it we should be able to see ourselves. If we look at the symbols of our country, including this particular motto, and see "sea to sea", we do not just see the word "sea" but the reality of those people who live there, the people who have stood on those shores, the traders and the whalers who came there decades ago, centuries ago and mixed with the aboriginal people who live there, who worked and lived with those people and traded with those people and knew that particular sea.

It is not just a word. It is in fact a reality. It is something more than just words on a piece of paper. The symbolism placed on things that represent Canada, our country, are important for all of its people.

We have to look at a renewal. We talk about restructuring federalism. If we can restructure federalism why can we not restructure the symbols of this country? This is one of them.

Have those who oppose changing this motto stood on the shores of that sea? Have they shaken the hands of those people as Her Majesty has done herself, as the governor generals of the past have also done? That brings a completely different perspective to the whole thing.

I spent three years of my working life in that community on the shores of that sea with those people. I watched the beluga whales swimming in that particular place. I watched the harvesting of the beluga by the Inuvialuit people. I taught their children. I know their culture and I know their reality and the pride they have in belonging to this country.

What about Arctic sovereignty? We talk about it as if it is a concept. It was a reality for the high Arctic exiles. Those are the people that were relocated from Kuujjuaq up to Grise Fiord to maintain Arctic sovereignty. This is the debate that is much disputed on the shores of the seas. Think of the polar expedition and where it goes. It crosses that sea. That is the reality.

When you think about Canada, you perhaps think about the area below the 49th parallel.

• (1910)

Well, the reality for those of us who live in the north is that we recognize that sea, we recognize the reality of that sea. We who are from the north feel that we are off the national grid when it comes to transportation, when it comes to many forms of communications and when it comes to the constitutional grid. We have to beg for a place at the table, for constitutional consultation.

However, if we do take a conscious step, as my colleague has, to make the difference, to say that the symbols of Canada are inclusive, that they are not exclusive, they do not alienate, they do not isolate, they include people. The people of that third sea need that recognition. It is the recognition of the north and recognition of the people who are there.

If laws were made not to be changed we would not be here. This is part of what we do. That is the reality of our lot in life. We amend laws because with the changing of time we need to do that, with the changing of needs we need to do that. That is the reality of what we do.

I hope it would be to the benefit of all. We live in a shrinking world which has to express and accommodate the cultural diversity of different peoples. This is the reality of Canada. We have many peoples, we have a beautiful country that is worth preserving.

I have travelled almost every part of this country and when I go home, when I fly over the delta which is part of my constituency, it is an overwhelming feeling that I have for my people and for that land. It is the love of the land which is inextricably intertwined with who we are. That is the way the people on the third sea live and realize their goals and aspirations.

I pay tribute to those people. They have lived under the most adverse climate throughout the years. They have had aspirations like every other Canadian. However, it is more expensive to live in the north. If we can change one symbol to reflect a reality, a beautiful reality, then we will be doing something to unite this country.

Mr. Speaker, if you would allow me, I would like unanimous consent to have the question now put to this particular private member's bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Does the House give unanimous consent?

An hon. member: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): There not being unanimous consent, and since there are no further members who wish to speak, the time set aside for private members' business has now expired. Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 95(1) the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

It being 7.12 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 7.12 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 5, 1991

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

KOREAN WAR VETERANS

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian men and women who represented Canada so well in the Persian Gulf war will receive their volunteer service medals from the Canadian government on June 22, 1991.

These well-deserved medals will be presented the day before the Canadian Korean Veterans Day celebrations on June 23. This year's celebration will commemorate the 41st anniversary of the Korean war.

When is the Canadian government going to present distinctly Canadian medals to the men and women from every Canadian province and every territory who served voluntarily on behalf of Canada in the Korean war?

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT WEEK

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, this week is National Environment Week across Canada.

I would like to quote from Canada's *Green Plan for a healthy environment*, which says that although the environment is every individual's responsibility, this responsibility should be reflected in concerted efforts at all levels of society.

National Environment Week emphasizes the partnership concept, and this year more than ever before, groups at every level of our society have joined the government in a nation-wide campaign for commitment and action.

By working together with our partners to make every week environment week, we can build a healthy and prosperous future for this country, Mr. Speaker.

In Quebec and Beauce, people are becoming more and more environment-conscious. This government's efforts are admirable, but every individual must be committed to protecting the environment.

* * *

[*English*]

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce says that on employment equity the government should first get its own House in order.

The case in point remains Dr. Chander Grover who was fired because he dared to file a complaint of discrimination against the National Research Council.

After dragging out the ordeal to inflict the most damaging psychological and financial punishment possible, the NRC reversed Grover's dismissal when the outcry from the visible minority community became too loud to ignore. However, there was no repentance and no victory because NRC still had many weapons in its bureaucratic armoury.

Grover is now a technician supervised by a boss lacking his international prestige while another less qualified than he does what was Grover's life work.

To challenge this would be insubordination; to accept would be to capitulate to racism.

For the Public Service, that is good enough for government. The Chamber of Commerce has a point.

* * *

CANADIAN SCOUT PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Mr. Terry Clifford (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, to millions of people around the world scouting represents a movement which has improved their way of life.

Scouting, rooted in the belief in God and in one's own country, teaches young people everywhere to do their best and always be prepared.

As a former Queen's Scout, I am delighted to announce the formation of the Canadian Scout Parliamentary Union, thanks to an initiative which began with our colleagues in Korea, and other Parliaments across this world that have joined together.

I would like to urge my colleagues from both sides of the House to join those founding members from Peterborough, Okanagan Centre, Fraser Valley West and London—Middlesex by stepping forward to assist in the formation of this union.

Some 265,000 Canadians involved in scouting will enjoy and need the support of this Parliament in what is going to happen in the future of scouting in the world.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, the environment is important to you and it is important to me. No doubt you would agree that Canadians must be concerned about the environmental and social implications of large energy projects not only in this country, but everywhere in our global community.

One large project currently planned is in Thailand. This project proposes the construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Mun River, the largest tributary of the Mekong River.

The Thai public has demanded by way of petition and personal representation to World Bank officials in its country, that a moratorium be put on this project. The numbers of people to be displaced and resettled are in dispute. Basic data and analysis by the Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand have not been released, despite repeated requests by villagers, citizen's groups and concerned academics.

Fertile land and fishing will be destroyed. I call on our Minister of Finance, as Canada's Governor to the World Bank, to vote against extending a loan to Thailand for this project until the public in Thailand has had its concerns met.

* * *

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, I respectfully request and urge the Standing Committee on House Management review the Question Period process. Canadians are sending a message loud and clear that they want the politicians to change. They are demanding that private members speak out on behalf of their constituents and no longer act in a strict partisan fashion, and that includes during Question Period.

We take pride in the fact that we are a democratic country of equal opportunity and access, but our own House of Commons Question Period is undemocratic and not all MPs enjoy equal opportunity. A minority of members have a better opportunity to represent their constituents than others.

The Canadians I represent deserve the same opportunity to be represented as any other Canadians. Just because I sit on this side of the House does not mean my constituents do not have problems and concerns they want addressed, but it does not mean that I always agree with the government.

As usual, the Canadian people are ahead of the politicians. All I ask the committee to do is to ensure that all members of the House of Commons have an equal opportunity to represent their constituents.

* * *

HONG KONG VETERANS

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of the House concerns over the Prime Minister's recent statements regarding compensation for Hong Kong prisoners of war.

Despite the Prime Minister's announcement that Canada extinguished its rights to any further claims to compensation, I wish to draw to the attention of the House, sections 130 and 131 of the Third Geneva Convention which specifically prohibit one government from entering into an agreement with another government that would wilfully deprive its citizens of the rights

to undertake legal action for liability pursuant to the terms of the Geneva Convention.

The Prime Minister's statement is in no way consistent with the tenets of international law or Canada's position on human rights. The Prime Minister should understand that Japan's apology for its violations of the Geneva Convention has only added legitimacy to support the claims of the Hong Kong war veterans of Canada, and that his unfounded statements in regard to the matter have done a great disservice to those veterans who suffered the brutal atrocities of war in the service of their country.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRIBUTE TO PIERRE FOURNELLE

Mr. Jacques Vien (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, last Sunday, I attended a ceremony to name a municipal park in honour of Mr. Pierre Fournelle, a resident of Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts.

Mr. Fournelle has done volunteer work for 34 years in the riding of Laurentides, mostly in the field of amateur sport. His excellent work and endless dedication are impressive.

The fact that so many sports, including baseball and minor hockey, are popular in our region is largely due to the activities of Mr. Fournelle.

And, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Fournelle's commitment reaches above and beyond the boundaries of the riding of Laurentides, since he is also involved in a number of sports federations at the regional and provincial level.

I want to offer my sincere thanks to Mr. Fournelle for the many years he has dedicated his fellow citizens. He truly deserves to be held in high esteem.

* * *

• (1410)

[*English*]

CPR

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, 50,000 Canadians will die from heart attacks this year. Many of them will die suddenly and with family members and friends looking on helplessly. This is an unnecessary tragedy, given that there are life saving techniques available to all who care to learn them.

CPR teaches one how to recognize heart attack signals and how to perform the technique should a victim's heart stop before an ambulance arrives.

[*Translation*]

I urge all my colleagues in the House of Commons and the other place to attend the CPR information sessions to be held here on the Hill on Monday, June 10, from 11 a.m to 2 p.m.

[*English*]

I urge all my colleagues to attend the CPR information sessions being held on Parliament Hill on Monday, June 10 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Let us all learn how to save a life.

* * *

CROSS-BORDER SHOPPING

Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, *Canada Customs: A Pivotal Role at the Border* headlines the second edition of the cross-border report.

Canada Customs officials, our front line troops, assume a pivotal role in the cross-border shopping puzzle. First, there is the role of protection: protecting our interests through their enforcement and border control activities.

However, Canada Customs are asked to balance security with efficiency, the support of national priorities, the facilitation of trade activities, and the movement of travellers. In particular, what this means is the collection of the applicable duties and taxes from all citizens re-entering Canada with purchases and, at the same time, moving the traffic through the border points.

In the end, all members will agree that Canada cannot afford long line-ups at the border. We are losing valuable American tourist revenue, as well as duty and taxes through wave-throughs.

This may mean more efficient use of technology and current work forces, more personnel, the trial of express lanes, and/or something else.

The objective must be the collection of all applicable duties and taxes in the absence of excessive line-ups at the border.

Our Canada Custom officials are a valuable front line force in our efforts to address cross-border traffic volume. We need new initiatives to help them make headway on this matter.

Stay tuned, Mr. Speaker and colleagues, for the next edition of the cross-border report.

* * *

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, today is World Environment Day, a date on the calendar first proclaimed by the United Nations in 1972 and celebrated each subsequent year since on June 5.

World Environment Day not only highlights the many necessary and essential works undertaken by the United Nations in the area of environment but also reminds us that all peoples of the world share a common home and a responsibility for its healthy upkeep.

It is no coincidence that Canadians observe National Environment Week in the same time frame. Not only does our National Environment Week focus on promoting environmental awareness among Canadians and an appreciation of our unique and beautiful country, but it also serves as a vivid reminder that we are all accountable stewards of the earth.

While there is still much work to be done in dealing with the world's serious environmental problems, let us take advantage of World Environment Day and National Environment Week to celebrate what we have accomplished so far and reflect on what we can do in the future to make Canada the most environmentally friendly place on the planet.

* * *

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WELFARE

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday the National Council of Welfare issued a report on the financing of medicare and post-secondary education in Canada. The report did not mince words.

It said that if federal funding cuts were allowed to stand, medicare would be effectively dead as a national health care system. What could be clearer than that statement? Certainly not the Prime Minister's response that the report was inaccurate and the numbers mentioned were not justified by government projections, and certainly not the Prime Minister's waffling on the introduction of user fees.

The Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada, the Canadian Council on Social Development and the Canadian Medical Association have all stated that medicare is threatened by these unilateral funding cuts which will amount to $62.4 billion by the end of this century.

Canadians are greatly concerned about medicare and its future.

At the provincial health ministers' meeting on June 19 the government must announce two actions: first, the unilateral federal funding cuts to medicare will be reversed and, second, the federal government will ensure that neither user fees nor extra billings will be introduced in any province.

* * *

INGLEWOOD LIBRARY

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, in 1891 in the community of Inglewood, Ontario a public library opened. The Inglewood Mechanics Institute Library that year had 178 volumes and 104 members.

Over the years the number of books grew as the library changed locations from a public hall to a hardware store, to a church, to an ice cream parlour. Today, the library is part of the town of Caledon library system and it gives me great pleasure to rise in my place and salute a hundred years of learning, literature, knowledge and progress in this community in my riding.

It is also an honour to thank a century of people who volunteered their time and energy to see that the printed word in Inglewood, Ontario was treasured and shared.

* * *

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENT WEEK

Mr. Brian O'Kurley (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, Canadian Environment Week from June 2 to June 8 is a time for optimism. This is because it involves partnerships among government, industry, environmental groups, labour, health, youth, native groups, church organizations, and many others.

At the community level and at the national level all these partners work toward the common goal of increasing Canada's year-round involvement in safeguarding our environment.

On June 7, the Minister of Environment Canada will be presenting environmental achievement awards that celebrate the effort and commitment of Canadians from all walks of life who work to protect and restore our environment. These groups and individuals remind us of our responsibility to care for our environment, and indeed for our planet. These achievements prove that as individuals and as groups we can make a difference, and the awards that they receive confirm that Canada values the health of its environment.

Let us hope that these award winners will be an inspiration for others to join the environmental team. They symbolize both our national commitment to a sustainable environment and the esteem in which this nation holds those Canadians who lead us toward achieving that commitment.

I also want to mention the thousands of other unsung heroes and heroines—

Mr. Speaker: I am afraid the hon. member's time has expired.

* * *

PORT OF HALIFAX

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, once again I rise in this House to plead for assistance to the port of Halifax.

For months, ever since the cancellation of the At and East subsidy in 1989, I and my colleagues have been begging the government to help this once great port to survive.

Two weeks ago the Minister of Transport told me that he would see that CN did "what was right". One week ago the minister told me he would do everything in his power to alleviate Halifax's problem.

It took nearly two years to get any response to our questions at all. How much longer must we wait for action?

Essentially the problems for the port are twofold: uncompetitive freight rates and an unfair tax structure. Halifax had been a thriving port since its founding 242 years ago. It has taken this government a scant seven years to put the port in jeopardy.

Why will the government not act and act now?

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Yesterday Uniroyal-Goodrich said it was making fast tracks for the United States. We are about to lose another 2,000 good manufacturing jobs in Canada.

I want to ask the Prime Minister: When will he realize the damage that the free trade agreement, an agreement without safeguards, is causing to the manufacturing sector in Canada?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member relates directly the Uniroyal potential closure to the free trade agreement.

Two months ago Uniroyal closed a tire plant in Wisconsin with 1,300 jobs. Was that because of the free trade agreement?

An hon. member: No, of course not. It is world-wide overcapacity.

Mr. Hockin: We have in Canada $600 million worth of new investment in tire manufacturing in Napanee. We have further new investments in CAMI in Ingersoll. We have further investments in Chrysler. We have Freightliner. We are getting our fair share of the automotive business and the tire business.

However, in this particular case overcapacity had to lead to that announcement yesterday.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I want to repeat my question. It seems the Prime Minister isn't interested in these problems, so we will ask others to respond.

Yesterday, we had a debate on the truly critical economic crisis Montreal is facing. Today, we realize the situation is critical all across Canada, but the government doesn't seem to realize this. The Prime Minister doesn't even bother to answer our questions, but we will keep on asking them, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the Prime Minister is this: When will he acknowledge that this agreement is a disaster for Canada? And when will he announce the workers adjustment program which he promised during the 1988 election campaign?

• (1420)

[*English*]

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I can hardly wait to respond to the hon. member.

Last year, Canada's balance of trade with the United States was at $17 billion, compared to the year before the trade agreement at $14 billion.

In fact, our balance of trade has improved as a result of the free trade agreement. It has not declined.

Another figure the hon. member should realize—this affects Montreal, Ontario and the manufacturing heartland of central Canada—is that in 1982 when his government, a government of which he was a part, was in power we had 97,000 jobs in the automotive sector.

Today, at the end of the last fiscal year, December 1990, we had 143,000 jobs in the automotive sector. The free trade agreement is helping maintain jobs even in difficult, recessionary times.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, one Uniroyal worker with 16 years of experience said: "The words I have for the Prime Minister, you could not print in the paper."

These people are skilled workers. They are men and women with experience who face a desperate situation today. The Prime Minister does not dare to get up in the House to give them—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: I know the hon. Leader of the Opposition would not want to make personal imputations respecting the right hon. Prime Minister or anybody else.

The Leader of the Opposition will put his question.

Mr. Chrétien: I would like to know when the government will announce the programs of adjustment that was promised to the Canadian people in 1988, or are we to expect from the government the same type of answer that we got yesterday from the Minister of State for Privatization who, when talking to the students, said: "If they look hard for jobs, they will find them."

Is that the type of government that unemployed people are looking for in Canada today?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for the question.

In view of the seriousness of it, he will I am sure be delighted to read the headline in the *Financial Post* which says: "Housing sales—"

Mr. Ouellet: Why didn't you answer the first question?

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, can the Liberals make up their minds?

They ask a question. I am ready to answer and they heckle because they do not want to hear good news. I have good news.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister will finish his answer.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, it is generally agreed that housing starts are an important indicator of economic growth. *The Financial Post* reported, on the front page, that housing sales surged ahead for the fourth month in a row in April, prompting an industry official to proclaim that the economic recovery is here to stay. Canada's rejuvenated housing market chalked up 65.4 per cent sales last month, the biggest annual jump and the most units sold in the National Real Estate Board's 35 year history. That is important economic news.

A final point that will interest my friend, reported a few hours ago, is that manufacturing plants increased their shipments in March. That news, along with the report by Informetrica, adds evidence that the year long recession is losing steam. Economic researchers at Informetrica say the chances of a—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment.

In the Speech from the Throne, this government spoke at length to the realization of a learning society, a globally competitive society. However, because of this government's mismanagement of the economy, this summer students are being denied a rightful opportunity to a summer job, that very important first chance.

Why does the minister and his government believe that a globally competitive society is achieved by having thousands of young people sitting at home all summer?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Minister of State (Youth) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague knows, the programs for summer employment that were in place last year are still in place this year. Budgets have been increased and employment centres for students have been re-opened again this summer, 409 of them. I am informed that the offers of employment and the responses to employment are comparable to that of last year at the moment.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the same minister.

The answer offers no consolation to the thousands of unemployed Canadians who already face, with increasing tuition fees and spiralling education costs, an increasing debt load, and now the frightening unemployment rate.

Can this minister tell Canadians why this government chose to decrease funding to the seed program at a time when students desperately need this government's help? Why do the minister and this government continue to frustrate and demoralize young Canadians, this generation?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Minister of State (Youth) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, if anybody is trying to demoralize anybody, it is the hon. member by the bias of his questions.

The Challenge program has not been decreased, it has been increased. To quote Tom Sampson, Co-ordinator of Student Services for the Canada Employment Centre, he said: "Considering the depth of the recession, the unemployment situation is not as bad as predicted." The jobs are there, the offers are there and the centres are meeting the demand in a comparable way to last year.

* * *

ARCTIC SOVEREIGNTY

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

For a number of years now we have been discussing in the Arctic the infringement on Canadian territory by the United States in terms of issuing oil and gas drilling leases on Canadian territory.

Once again, this year, May 20, 1991, the Department of the Interior says that under sale 124, it is going to issue oil and gas drilling licences in the Beaufort Sea in Canadian territory.

Just four years ago. in 1987, this same issue arose. What has this government done in four years to establish Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic north?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the Leader of the NDP that there were issues relating to two proposals: one, the drilling in the Beaufort, and, two, ANWR. She will know from the presentation made by President Bush regarding the National Energy Strategy that those issues are included within the NES.

I want to indicate to her that as recently as two days ago I was able to speak to Secretary Watkins at the International Energy Agency and raise these issues with him directly.

• (1430)

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Just a few years ago this government was prepared to spend billions of dollars on nuclear submarines to protect Arctic sovereignty. Rather than just speaking to people, when is the government going to stand up for the interests of Canada?

This report from the Department of the Interior of the United States says that it will issue leases in Canadian waters, if it is in the U.S. interest. What about the Canadian interest and what is this government doing specifically to stand up to the U.S. government and say

that this is unacceptable and Canadian sovereignty is just that, it is Canadian sovereignty.

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the NDP asks what will we do directly. I have already indicated to her how direct we had been. Additionally, I can point out to her that through the Canadian Embassy and directly through Ambassador Burney these issues have been raised, and also directly with various officials in the United States regarding both Canada's position on the Beaufort as well as the position that we have taken on ANWR.

I say to the hon. member that our position from 1987 has not changed. Canada's position on sovereignty has not changed. The United States government can have whatever position it wants. Our position has not changed on that sovereignty question.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, for the Prime Minister. Clearly there are serious issues. These are not new issues. They did not arise on May 20 of this year. These issues have been going on for years, and what gains have Canadians made.

The Canadian interests are being threatened by exactly the topic that the minister raised, and that is ANWR, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, where the Senate just two weeks ago voted to allow drilling in that Arctic refuge. This will mean that the 200,000 Porcupine caribou herd will be jeopardized for 200 days of oil, as will the lives of the Gwitch'in people of Yukon and Alaska.

I ask the Prime Minister: Is he willing to intervene directly to protect Canadian sovereignty in this issue, to speak to President Bush and say this is unacceptable to Canada, to have drilling in ANWR, and it is unacceptable to Canada for the United States to sell off bits of Canada piece by piece?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the question of ANWR came forward when the United States government asked a number of both its oil companies and American citizens as to the future of their energy policy, which came forward then in what is known as the national energy strategy for the United States. In it was the ANWR proposal.

The hon. Leader of the NDP should know what the Canadian position has been on ANWR. She should also know, for example with respect to the Porcupine herd that Canada has been protective of that herd. Having said that, Canada as well has given, for example, export licences in the Beaufort and the very area of which she speaks. We are obviously trying to develop a regime whereby Canada's interests are protected and also where proper oil and gas exploration and development can take place.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. On May 15 the Prime Minister said in this House in response to questions concerning his office's involvement in the Al-Mashat case, and I would like to quote: "Mr. Tellier, speaking for the Privy Council Office, said do not admit him".

I want to ask the Prime Minister: Does he still stand by that statement?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I was asked the question on May 15. I responded to two different questions on May 15, I believe.

Yesterday Mr. Tellier was interrogated by members of the opposition when he appeared before the committee. His response to that question was: "There is absolutely nothing wrong with the Prime Minister's statement. The Prime Minister's statement—"

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question was in order. I am concerned about where the answer was going because I did the very best I could yesterday to indicate that we ought not to be debating in this place what is actually being debated in the committee. I think I have to say to the right hon. Prime Minister that the position I took with members of the opposition yesterday will have to apply to the right hon. Prime Minister today.

The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre may have a supplementary. I hope that he will be as careful in phrasing it as he was the first question.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, considering that I did not receive an answer from the Prime Minister, I will repeat it.

On May 15, he made a statement—

Mr. Speaker: I think, in fairness, the hon. member will want to remember that it was the Speaker who interrupted the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister was trying to give an answer. I did not allow him to give the answer he was wanting to give.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, if there is no answer to that question, may I ask a supplementary?

In interviews given to journalists, the Clerk of the Privy Council said that there was never any decision not to admit Mr. Al-Mashat, but simply a decision not to fast-track Mr. Al-Mashat. That is in direct contradiction to the statement made on May 15, when the Prime Minister said: "Do not admit him".

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre has just referred to what he says is a comment made to journalists.

Mr. Tobin: Outside the committee room.

Mr. Speaker: However, the hon. member has also described the statement as opposed to another statement made on May 15 in the House.

Mr. Tobin: In the House.

Mr. Speaker: I will allow the hon. member to say: "In view of the statement made outside the House" and ask if the Prime Minister has any comment. The Prime Minister can comment if he wishes. But it is not appropriate for the hon. member to prejudge what the statement outside the House and in the House amounted to.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I will attempt to follow the guidelines you have just established.

I will ask the Prime Minister this. On May 15, and I would like to quote directly from *Hansard* of that day, he said:

> Mr. Tellier, speaking for the Privy Council Office, said: "do not admit him". Notwithstanding that, he was admitted. That was in violation of the procedures of the Government of Canada.

In view of what was said yesterday, does the Prime Minister now withdraw that statement, or do we have to assume there is an inherent contradiction between himself and the Clerk of the Privy Council?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, why would my hon. friend say that when, if he read the transcript a few pages later—

Mr. Ouellet: He was there.

Mr. Mulroney: My hon. friend says that he was there. In fairness, if he was there, he should then report to the House that when Mr. Tellier was asked whether the statement made by the Prime Minister on May 15 was accurate, he said: "It is 100 per cent accurate".

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and his ministers have repeatedly assured Canadians that all of the facts about the Al-Mashat case would be made public. Does the Prime Minister still stand by those assurances?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, under the rules, that is repeating a question that was answered, and answered in the affirmative. The answer still stands.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member may have a supplementary.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, since the answer was in the affirmative, and we know that a group of ministers met on May 13 to discuss the Al-Mashat matter, but ministers and public servants alike refuse to discuss what occurred, citing cabinet secrecy—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is asking what took place in conversations between cabinet ministers. It has always been the rule that that question is out of order.

Mr. Wappel: My question is not what took place. Will the Prime Minister please fulfil his government's promise and instruct his ministers and public servants to publicly discuss the details of the May 13 meeting.

• (1440)

Mr. Speaker: I have to commend the hon. member for imagination, but it is still out of order.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, on May 15 in this House the Prime Minister said that the Clerk of the Privy Council, Paul Tellier,

speaking for the Privy Council Office, said, "do not admit Al-Mashat. Notwithstanding that, he was admitted. The visa ought not to have been issued".

Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that yesterday the same Clerk of the Privy Council said—

Mr. Speaker: Just a minute. The hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway has heard my concerns about this line of questioning. I am trying to do everything I can to ensure that an appropriate question can be asked, but the hon. member is now reaching right back into the committee.

I will hear the question and I will listen to it carefully.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, the Clerk of the Privy Council yesterday stated outside the committee that in fact neither he nor anybody in the Privy Council Office at any point said that a visa should not be issued to Al-Mashat.

My question to the Prime Minister is straightforward. Who was telling the truth, the Prime Minister or the Clerk of the Privy—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

An hon. member: Next question.

Mr. Speaker: That question is an allegation of dishonesty by one person or another and I am not going to allow it. The hon. member may have a supplementary and I would ask again that the hon. member be careful.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, the two statements are on the record. I want to ask the Prime Minister this. In view of the clear contradiction, is the Prime Minister prepared to appear before the standing committee on external affairs and come clean with Canadians about his involvement in this matter.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: That question is a clear accusation and I am not allowing it.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, I must say on behalf of the opposition, it puzzles us that we cannot ask specific questions about statements made by the Prime Minister in the House which appear to be at odds with the truth.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Some hon. members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: I would say to the hon. member for Hamilton East that that is completely improper. I know that given her experience in the House she would not want to proceed in that way. If the hon. member has a question I will listen to it.

* * *

MEDICARE

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is on another matter.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member would put her question.

Ms. Copps: While the American Congress is promoting the potential benefits of medicare, the Canadian government is in the process of destroying it.

My question is for the Prime Minister. As a result of cuts in transfer payments to the provinces, the death of medicare is being forecast by groups such as the National Council of Welfare.

Is he aware that as a result of his government's cuts this year, the provinces will be deprived of financing equivalent to 10,000 hospital beds across the country? Is he aware of the fact that at least 10,000 Canadians will be made to wait this year for health care because of his government's cutbacks to the provinces?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, as usual the member for Hamilton East is wrong.

An hon. member: Again.

An hon. member: Her record is unbroken.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Money given to the provinces this year is more than it was last year, except that the way we provide the money could be different. We have less money in terms of cash payments and more money in transfer payments. I believe the National Council has not emphasized this enough in terms of the tax transfers.

This began in 1977 when guess who was in power?

An hon. member: Tell us.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): That government decided at that time to give more flexibility to the provinces by transferring more tax payments to the provinces rather than cash money.

That is exactly what we do. I hope that the Leader of the Opposition will not change his mind today as he did yesterday or last week.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, the National Council of Welfare was created by this government, and it has clearly proved that you are going to cut $7 billion at the expense of the patients of this country.

I have a question for this minister: Will he acknowledge that starting this year, 10,000 hospital beds will be cut in Canada because of his policies? Can he go on claiming he supports universality of health care, when he knows his own government is undermining that principle?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I find it very difficult to make sense of this question but I will try.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps everybody could put clear questions and the ministers will, of course, try to answer them directly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Hamilton East ought to know that as far as health services are concerned, the number of beds in our hospitals is the exclusive responsibility of the provinces and is determined by the provinces.

This year, the federal government will provide more funding than it did last year. Once again, I want to hear the hon. member for Hamilton East say she is against Quebec exercising its own jurisdiction over this area.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

At a time when 825,000 Quebecers are out of work, 500,000 draw unemployment insurance and 325,000 are on welfare, is the minister aware that the *Conseil des affaires sociales du Québec* has just made specific recommendations to the Government of Quebec and his own government, the Canadian government? And what kind of concrete action does he intend to take within the next few weeks to get Quebec out of his critical economic situation caused by his government's ill-conceived economic policies?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, it takes a lot of nerve to rise in the House and point an accusing finger at a government that has to spend literally tens of billions of dollars just to pay off the interest on a debt that the hon. member and his Liberal colleagues left us. It takes a lot of nerve!

Mr. Speaker, I suggest the hon. member look at the last Budget very carefully. He will find in that Budget, brought down by my colleague, the Minister of Finance, a prescription for the economic ills of Quebec and the entire country. Let him read the Budget! I am sure he will learn something.

• (1450)

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, it is not important for me to read this budget, but for the Canadian people to do so. As a matter of fact, the Quebec Social Affairs Council read the budget and so did the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CNTU). Both disagree totally with this government's economic policies.

I am going to put the question again to the minister. He knows the CNTU has made seven concrete proposals to undo the economic damage done by this government. The last time I brought this up, he replied he had not read the document. I hope he has read it now. So, which of the CNTU's recommendations is he prepared to implement immediately?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, if I could get the attention of the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel. The Liberals' logic is hard to follow, but we will give it a try. Last week, the hon. member accused the federal government of interference in provincial matters. And the last I heard, social affairs came under the Quebec government's jurisdiction. That is the "snowplough" principle in action, Mr. Speaker: a step forward and a step backward.

[*English*]

TRADE

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the minister of trade I would like to address this question to the Prime Minister.

This morning I had occasion to speak to Mr. Lloyd Spalter who is the executive vice president of Uniroyal Goodrich in Akron, Ohio about the closure planned at the Kitchener plant. I find it interesting I have to phone the United States about Canadian jobs. In my conversation with the executive vice-president, he informed me that one of the plants will close for sure and another one may close. He also informed me that during the 1989 strike at this plant, Uniroyal Goodrich had no problem at all in supplying the Canadian market under another brand name of American manufacture.

What is the Prime Minister going to do to save Canadian jobs and protect us from rapacious practices by Americans who, under the free trade agreement, can do anything they want with the Canadian market whether they are on strike or not?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, one thing the Prime Minister of this country is going to do is keep the auto pact in place and keep the free trade agreement in place.

I would suggest to the hon. member that he should read the press release issued in Canada by the president, Mr. Schaub, who says that there is over-capacity in the industry of about 30 per cent—

Mr. Tobin: What the hell does that have to do with it?

Mr. Hockin: Mr. Speaker, does the hon. member want to listen to the answer?

An hon. member: No, he doesn't. He wants to bash the Americans.

Mr. Hockin: The Canadian president said there is 30 per cent over-capacity in the industry. He has a plant which was built in 1913 and what he wants to do is take this plant and see if it can be rationalized. He is not sure it can. Therefore he made the announcement yesterday.

This country has been witness to a tremendous increase in investments in the last two years as a result of the free trade agreement. We have gone from a $2.5 billion deficit to a $4 billion surplus in terms of net investment. That is what the trade agreement will bring. That is why the tire industry and the auto industry will improve and it is already improving.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, let us look at what else this Canadian president said in the past when Michelin bought out Uniroyal Goodrich in 1989. Uniroyal promised that there would be no jobs lost in the Kitchener operations. Now Michelin is clearly shutting down competition after this merger.

Will the government launch an investigation under the competition bureau of this elimination of competition and of this broken promise that no jobs would be lost.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the workers in that plant do not want an inquiry, what they want are the jobs.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the minister could reply to the question.

Mr. Hockin: Mr. Speaker, now that the hon. member agrees that there should not be an inquiry, let me address exactly what is going to happen.

We have spoken to the president of that company. We are going to work with him in co-operation with Employment and Immigration and put together an adjustment package. We are also going to see if we can help in any way to consolidate the operations and see if it can have a longer life. At present in the tire industry there are production lines seven days a week, three shifts a day. This particular operation was five days a week and was not operating at full capacity.

As a result, we are going to see if we can put together one line which would be three shifts, seven days, and see if we can continue even with that plant. But if there is downsizing, we have the best—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

* * *

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

I have talked to several business leaders in Markham who are very concerned about the delay they are experiencing in receiving their GST refunds. Arthur Boas of Cabletest International of Markham finally received his January cheque just a few days ago.

When the GST was introduced, the minister made a commitment to send the refund within 21 days. Revenue Canada officials have said they are short of staff and that business owners should phone their MPs. This is ridiculous.

Does the minister realize how this backlog of refunds is really hurting many small businesses? What specific plans does he have to clear up this situation?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member bringing these specific problems to my attention. I will instruct my officials to immediately look into the matter and investigate the specific allegations if they are proven to be correct. I can assure the hon. member that it is not acceptable for Revenue Canada employees to tell businesses to call members of Parliament.

Further to that, as I have said in this House on previous occasions, in the early stages we had problems with the rebate program. We have taken corrective action in bringing in a streamlined process. I can assure the House and announce to this House that as of May 30, the vast majority of all rebates and refunds have taken place.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, with over 13 per cent unemployment in Kitchener-Waterloo, the area is reeling after the announcement yesterday that Uniroyal Goodrich was going to lay off 2,100 workers.

It was just last year that Michelin took over Uniroyal Goodrich for $1.5 billion.

Why did this government not act at that time, to ensure that Canadian production and Canadian workers would not be the first victims of this takeover?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had been watching television last night when they were interviewing workers as they left the Uniroyal plant, virtually every worker said that this 1913 plant did not have a long life and they were not totally surprised by this answer.

• (1500)

We must not just complain about history. We must put in place a good worker adjustment program. Worker adjustment programs can work in Kitchener. I have in my hand investments in 10 different operations in Kitchener alone which are planned in the next six months. The economy in Kitchener will be affected by this closure. There is no doubt about that. We are going to work with them in retraining.

A great many openings will be coming. I have 10 construction projects alone which I would like the hon. member to take a look at. More important, when Michelin took over this operation, it closed two Michelin tire plants in France a year ago. In other words, there is huge over capacity. The workers at Uniroyal realize that and we are going to be there to help them as they go through this transition.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, this minister is standing here applauding or at least not opposing the shutting down of plants and the loss of jobs for Canadian workers. Canadian workers are fed up with being the first ones to be fired.

Mr. Mulroney: Come on, come on.

Mr. Peterson: The Prime Minister says: "Come on". This government did not act at the time of the takeover to protect Canadian jobs. Furthermore, its policies of high interest rates and high dollar and its made-in-Canada recession are helping to drive these jobs south.

Are these jobs just part of the government's plan to deindustrialize Canada? Will the minister please assume his responsibilities for these lost jobs, ensure the retraining of these workers and assure them new jobs?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I cannot really discern a question in that oration, but let me just tell the hon. member that manufacturing shipments are up in Canada, automobile sales are up, housing starts are up. The economy is coming back. We have a new huge investment in Chrysler, a new huge investment in CAMI and a new huge investment in Freightliner. We have job opportunities for those workers. We believe in looking to the future and helping them adjust for the future.

Mr. Speaker: I have a question of privilege from the hon. member for Scarborough West.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege concerning my question in the Question Period and the outcome of your ruling on that matter. I do so with some trepidation because of the respect I have for the Chair and the knowledge that the Chair has about the rules.

Mr. Speaker: I am going to hear the hon. member and I understand perfectly that the matter is not raised with any disrespect to the Chair. The hon. member will also know that it is a difficult point of procedural law. I shall hear the hon. member.

Mr. Wappel: It is precisely for that reason that I raise it; that I may have guidance in the future for my conduct in Question Period.

I know the Speaker will review the "blues", but I think he will find that what I said in the preamble to my supplementary was, and I quote: "We know that a group of ministers met on May 13 to discuss the Al-Mashat matter". I did not say that it was a cabinet meeting.

I may be wrong but I do not believe that every time cabinet ministers get together, shall we say, to have a cup of coffee, walk their dogs or play a game of racket ball, it constitutes a cabinet meeting.

My question was very specific because of the difficulties this House is having *vis-à-vis* the committee hearings. It was about a meeting that cabinet ministers had. I went on then to point out that certain people were claiming cabinet secrecy. It may very well be that if the government wished to stand up—I am not going to give the answer—and say something about that meeting and explain it, that is fine.

I think a check in *Hansard* will show that there is no evidence before the House and no statement in *Hansard* that any particular meeting on May 13 was a cabinet meeting.

Accordingly, since there is no evidence to that effect, I would respectfully suggest that I should have been allowed to complete the question and therefore my privileges as a member were impugned.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member on the same point.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, I believe it is important for you to render a ruling with regard to the issue of cabinet secrecy or cabinet confidentiality.

Must the privilege be claimed before it becomes effective? Is it up to the Speaker of the House to determine when the privilege should attach, or is there a pre-set of guidelines or criteria to determine when cabinet confidentiality or cabinet secrecy applies?

The reason why this issue becomes relevant is with regard to the Al-Mashat matter. It has been established that on May 13 there was a meeting and at that meeting there were a number of civil servants. There were also a number of cabinet ministers present at that particular meeting. They discussed the Al-Mashat matter.

Does the mere fact of a gathering or a meeting of cabinet ministers lead to the notion of cabinet confidentiality or cabinet secrecy? Was it a meeting of cabinet? Was it a subcommittee of cabinet? Does the mere meeting of two or more ministers constitute a cabinet meeting and therefore allow the claim of privilege?

I believe it is an important issue. When my hon. friend and colleague put the question, the privilege was not claimed. The Speaker appeared to conclude that cabinet confidentiality or secrecy would apply because there was a meeting of cabinet ministers. I would seek direction on that point because it is urgent as far as the Al-Mashat hearings are concerned.

Mr. Speaker: I will hear the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway in just a moment. I am expecting to hear some arguments from him.

First of all, I want to thank the hon. member for Scarborough West and the hon. member for York South—Weston for being specific and explicit in this matter. I assure you the Chair is aware of the importance of the matter to all members of the House. I will consider very carefully the representations that have been made. I think I have the point clearly and I will try

to get back and report to the House very quickly, as soon as I possibly can.

The hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order of which I gave the Chair notice immediately following the exchange with the Prime Minister during Question Period.

I want to raise the following point of order with respect to that exchange in yesterday's proceedings as well.

I am very concerned that the Speaker appears to be suggesting that matters which have been raised in a parliamentary committee, no matter how important the issues are or what issues are raised which directly affect Canadians, cannot be pursued in this House.

I want to ask the Chair to reflect very carefully and to provide guidance to this House on the implications of what appears to be that ruling. If that is the case, it would mean that a whole range of issues which members explore in considerable detail, in some cases with witnesses before committee, could not in fact be pursued in this place.

They are reported on widely. Yesterday's proceedings of the Standing Committee on External Affairs were reported on extensively concerning the item which I wish to address to the Prime Minister. The suggestion was made that in this House on May 15 the Prime Minister had made certain statements. The Prime Minister yesterday said in response to a question: "Well, go to the committee and the Clerk of the Privy Council will pursue that issue and will, I am sure, back me up."

I went to the committee. I asked the questions in the committee of the Clerk of the Privy Council and he said—

Mr. Speaker: Let us not get into the context of what happened in the committee at the moment. It is not necessary.

Point of Order

I have the hon. member's point. It is a serious question and I accept it as such. I would ask the hon. member to let me look at the "blues" for today and as soon as I have them, I will come back and let the hon. member, who will then also have the "blues", perhaps address me further and I will try to give some guidance.

I appreciate the reason for putting the question and I accept fully that it is a serious one.

• (1510)

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, the only caveat is that I certainly will come back at the earliest possible occasion to pursue this matter. I may not be in the House tomorrow, but I will certainly pursue it at the earliest possible occasion. It is an important and serious issue.

Mr. Speaker: I want it made very clear to all hon. members that I take the matters raised as serious.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I raise a point of order with a great deal of hesitation this afternoon. I do believe the government House leader acted inappropriately during Question Period.

Mr. Speaker, I want to draw your attention and the House's attention to Beauchesne's fifth edition, citation 369. It says:

> —point of order raised during the oral Question Period ought to be taken up after the oral Question Period, unless the Speaker considers it to be an extremely grave matter.

I think we would all agree that this is the usual approach that we have all followed, that when we have a concern on a point of order which ought to be raised during Question Period, we hold off until after.

Today, under the guise of responding to a question, the government House Leader said: "Under the rules, that has been answered." That is obviously a point of order that ought to have been raised at the appropriate time. Perhaps you, Mr. Speaker, and the government House leader could have a chat about that so he would act appropriately during Question Period.

Mr. Speaker: I will take a look at the exchange. The government House leader was the only minister rising in response to questions. However, I will look at the exchange and consider what the hon. member has said.

The hon. government House leader may wish to address me.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see the hon. House leader of the New Democratic Party reading Beauchesne's concerning Question Period. I hope he reads it all and counsels his members accordingly in terms of what is a proper question and what is not.

Clearly, one of the citations state that questions should not be repeated. I was simply making the point that it was a repetition of the question and I repeated the answer. The answer was "yes" as it was the previous time it was asked.

Mr. Speaker, your comments in terms of the other two points of order are appropriate and I agree with those comments. I think they need to be looked into.

I would just like to, very briefly, make a couple of points. One concerns what constitutes a question. Citation 411(2) in Beauchesne's sixth edition says:

> A question may not:
>
> (2) seek information about matters which are in their nature secret, such as decisions of proceedings of Cabinet—

Discussions between cabinet ministers are by their nature secret and discussions between ministers and officials are by their nature secret. I think it is in keeping with the citation to suggest that those questions ought not to be asked. Mr. Speaker, you can appreciate the difficulty it creates if members are going to stand up and ask: "Now what did you discuss with your colleagues at this meeting and that meeting and so on?" They are by their nature secret, as are formal cabinet meetings. However, any time one of my colleagues discusses matters within our administrative responsibility, we are discussing matters which are by their nature secret and ought not to be questions, according to Beauchesne's—which, I repeat, should be enforced.

As for the question of whether the proceedings of a committee should be a matter for questions in the House, raised by the hon. member for Burnaby-Kingsway on a point of order, 411(3) says:

> A question may not:
>
> (3) seek information about proceedings in a committee which has not yet made its report to the House.

The reason for that citation should obviously be clear. This matter is fairly complex. There are a number of documents and people involved and so on. In committee the complexity can be explored. At the end of the day, when all the information has been deduced before committee, conclusions can be reached. That is the appropriate forum. To extract out of context one or two items to bring forward to the House is certainly not to serve the purposes of elucidation and clarity for the benefit of the public, but rather to serve other purposes.

In that context, that is a very good explanation of why this citation is in Beauchesne's and why it was entirely appropriate that the citation be enforced in this instance. Members should not use this forum as a mechanism for extracting from the committee those items they find to be to their partisan advantage to be brought forward in the House.

I do not think that serves the public purpose or the public's ability to know the true situation or the facts. It is also not in keeping with what Question Period is supposed to be, namely the opportunity for the opposition to seek information that cannot be obtained in other more appropriate mechanisms such as letter writing, proceedings in committee and so on.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the points of order which have been raised by both my colleague from Burnaby and the government House leader.

The government House leader suggested to the House that when cabinet ministers have discussions, by their very nature they are secret. That, in my view, is somewhat absurd.

There is a big distinction to be made between cabinet ministers meeting and discussing certain points and a cabinet meeting being struck for the purposes of making the decision.

At a cabinet meeting there is a secretary, there are minutes and there are copies of the decisions that have been reached at that particular meeting.

To suggest to the House that each and every conversation between two cabinet ministers, whatever it may be, is somehow sacred is absolutely absurd and I believe should not be found by the Chair or by anyone to be an appropriate point of order.

Second, with regard to the point of order raised by my colleague from Burnaby concerning proceedings at committee not being allowed to be raised on the floor of the House of Commons for Question Period, Mr. Speaker, you have given an undertaking to that member and I believe through him to the House that you will reflect on the "blues".

I would simply ask you, Mr. Speaker, prior to making any adjudication to give due notice to the various political parties so that we will have an opportunity to make additional representations to you. While you are reflecting on that, let us draw the distinction that the hon. member has made.

I am looking at the fifth edition of Beauchesne's. My sixth edition is not with me today, but I am sure members will bear with me.

I refer to paragraph 360(3) which talks about seeking information about proceedings in a committee which has not yet made its report to the House.

Let us be very clear. The wording says: "proceedings". It does not say: "subject matter". There is quite a distinction to be made between proceedings on one hand and subject matter on the other.

My second point is the following. We have in the rules in Beauchesne's a rule which has been tradition through the years, which I know my colleague in the New Democratic Party and the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader will probably want to speak to if not today, later in the debate. That is the *sub judice* rule.

That specifically refers to subject matter before a court. It says: "subject matter".

This citation concerns proceedings. It does not concern subject matter. If it was to have been subject matter, the rule would have been clear. It would have been spelled out that subject matter is not to be raised on the floor in Question Period.

Finally, it must be understood—the Chair is well aware of this and I am sure the Table is also—that there are numerous agencies of the Government of Canada which are obligated by statute to file statutory reports to various standing committees of the House of Commons.

Today, we have some 40 federal departments, 40 different ministries and there are numerous reports that are filed with the Clerk and are automatically referred. There is no debate. They are automatically referred to standing committees. Is the Chair going to say to members of Parliament that because that subject matter has been referred to a standing committee that this particular body has no right, no authority whatsoever to examine the subject matter and to raise questions? It is absolutely absurd to suggest that.

• (1520)

Finally, in terms of the distinction, standing committees of the House are not independent, quasi or judicial bodies of the House. They are creatures of the House. It is Parliament, I suggest, through the Chair to hon. members, that is the final authority, and you, Mr. Speaker, the final arbitrator in terms of what is acceptable or not acceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you will reflect on those comments. But I wish to make the caveat, that before any adjudication is made with regard to the point of order raised by the hon. member for Burnaby that all members—myself, my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier, my colleague from Kingston and the Islands, and I am sure more members—would want to have the opportunity to make interventions.

I make those general comments for the Chair so that the Chair might reflect on the absurdity that is being promoted by the government House leader with regard to that point of order; and, second, his point of order that cabinet ministers when they meet on the street and talk, their conversations somehow are secret, is absolutely and unequivocally nonsense.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Just on a very short point of order to complement the point being made by my hon. friend, the House leader for the Official Opposition.

I refer to "we cannot comment on the proceedings of committee in the House". I think we all understand that. I want to draw the House's attention to the fact that on the agendas for the committees we talk about the "Minutes, Proceedings and Evidence". Obviously when we talk about proceedings we are not referring to the subject matter being discussed in committee.

I want to draw the House's attention and yours, Mr. Speaker, to Erskine May, 12th edition. On page 92 it says:

Point of Order

The meaning of the term 'proceedings' in Parliament: The primary meaning, as a technical parliamentary term of proceedings, is some formal action, usually a decision.

I think that summarizes it. In other words, we are looking at some course of action. It is an action, it is not the subject material, it is not the evidence being presented; it is simply some action, something being tabled, a vote being taken, or whatever.

I do believe that these are useful interventions. I want to support the points made by the previous speaker by suggesting that to say we ought not raise any issue that is before a committee would almost prohibit the House of Commons from functioning on many days. We have so many committees, they are very active, they cover so many various areas, that I think when we refer to page 92 of Erskine May we appreciate that unless it is a formal action being taken, subject matter is something that we can in fact bring up in the House of Commons.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. I want to make two or three comments.

First of all, as I understood your rulings during Question Period, they were not relating specifically to the fact that this particular issue was before the committee. In one case, you were dealing with a question concerning a conversation between ministers, supposedly a cabinet meeting. That was the first ruling. The second one, as I recall it, concerned the question, who is telling the truth? In other words, it was an accusation or a declaration of motivation by members. Those were the specific issues.

I think when it comes to the issue of questions before this House regarding committee activity, the Standing Order which I think is the most relevant and the one that the Speaker must take into account in any ruling that he may be considering, is citation 359, clause 5, "where the matter ought to be of some urgency".

I think the whole thrust of that is to say that the reason we don't have a committee hearing and then an hour or two later the same issue heard a second time in the House of Commons is, as the House leader pointed out earlier, that we would be taking the same issue into two completely different forums, one where you have the opportunity to explore in detail and have rebuttal. The other is where there is simply to be a quick question and a quick answer.

If there is another forum where the issue can be better dealt with, as in this case the House decided that the Al-Mashat affair should be dealt with in committee, then as long as those committee hearings continue to provide that forum, I would argue that clearly in accordance with this particular section of Beauchesne's, questions should not be considered on that issue in this House.

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, the same things were said by members opposite in 1988 and you know who became extinct in the national election after that date.

With respect to the point of order relating to the remarks made by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons relevant to the Al-Mashat affair, as a member of the House and of the standing committee on external affairs I was privy to all the remarks made.

What I want to say, Mr. Speaker, and I hope you will take it into account when rendering your decision, is this. It is trite law that when words are uttered in the House of Commons or anywhere else, the meaning and interpretation to be given to those words is a matter of debate. It is not a matter of judgmental decision. One argues one way. One argues another.

When you take that into account, Mr. Speaker, you will find that as high an official of this government as Mr. Paul Tellier has said that the remarks made by the Prime Minister of Canada are 100 per cent accurate. Those words are on record. They are in the public domain. The public can judge the accuracy of the words.

Mr. Speaker: I am certainly prepared to accept, and I do accept the argument of the hon. member, but this is not the place for us to be judging the testimony heard in the committee.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I know you do not wish to have this matter go on and on, but hon. members are going to have to bear with me. The fact of the matter is that the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has made specific references to Beauchesne's citation 359, subsection 5, when he talks about whether or not the matter is of some urgency.

The hon. member, maybe in his own mind—and I could use adjectives to describe "mind" but I will not—may feel sincerely that the subject matter being raised is not of sufficient urgency. But I suggest that the matter is of paramount urgency.

The Prime Minister of this country has made a statement on the floor of the House of Commons on May 15, 1991. Our colleagues have expressed certain concerns with regard to the validity of that statement. I think the Prime Minister ought to be given every opportunity to clarify, if they need clarifying, those particular statements. To suggest that somehow the subject matter of the evidence on the record of the senior public servant of this country seems to be quite different from what was said in this Chamber—

An hon. member: That is debate.

Mr. Dingwall: No, no. It is not debate, Mr. Speaker. It is not debate. The hon. member has said the subject matter is not of great urgency. What I am doing is rebutting that argument and saying that it is urgent. It depends upon your definition of urgency, and I suggest that the hon. member is taking a very subjective view as to what is the definition of urgency and it is a very self-serving one. I am suggesting through the Chair to the hon. member that if the objective test was taken in this particular instance, particularly with the Prime Minister and his chief public servant being at odds, then hon. members would readily recognize that it indeed is an urgent matter.

• (1530)

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member would like to contribute to this discussion.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, if the government House leader was to read out all of the tests for a question in Question Period from Beauchesne's or from Erskine May, I am afraid we would not have any questions qualifying under those standards in Beauchesne's. Of course, the reason is that those guidelines for questions were devised a few hundred years ago and one of the chief rules is of course, as you know, that under those rules you are not allowed to ask the government questions concerning government policy.

The Chair has to make a decision when you have rules that really no longer apply to today. When the rules that are in the official rule book are there with the rules that your seats must be two sword lengths apart. Our rules evolve according to what is common sense.

I think that the judgments made by the Chair should reflect what would make common sense today. What would be the judgment of the ordinary person?

We would submit that the entire purpose of Question Period is, if you wanted a broad definition, to make the government accountable to the people of Canada for its actions. That should be the guiding rule that determines questions in the House of Commons, the accountability of the government.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind you that the accountability of government through the House of Commons has changed drastically over the years. A cabinet minister is no longer, according to our customs, held accountable at times for things that happened in a department. Any restrictions on Question Period, the types of questions that can be asked or the subject matter of those questions, would seriously impair the little accountability we still do have in the procedure of the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker: I want to thank hon. members and the parliamentary secretary, the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond, the hon. member for Kamloops and the other members who have taken part in this debate. I will, of course, examine the "blues". I think all of the matters that have been raised are worthy of consideration and I shall try to give the best guidance I can.

I might say to hon. members that I also take into account the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond's request, which I accept, and that is to not report back to the House without adequate opportunity to discuss the matter further if that is necessary.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

SECOND REPORT OF CANADIAN NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

Mr. Bob Hicks (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the pleasure to present to the House, in both official languages, the Second Report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association.

Routine Proceedings

AUTOMOTIVE POLLUTION REDUCTION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex) moved for leave to introduce Bill C- 226, an act to reduce automotive pollution.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present during Environmental Week in Canada a bill to reduce automotive pollution in Canada.

This bill provides the means to reduce automotive pollution by requiring that automotive gasolines contain at least 3.2 per cent oxygen and that methylcyclopentadienyl manganese tricarbonyl be banned in Canada. Ethanol blended gasolines labelled as an environmentally friendly fuel will cut carbon dioxide emissions by 5.9 per cent, carbon monoxide emissions by 25 per cent, volatile organic compounds by 8.5 per cent, nitrous oxide by 5.7 per cent and urban ozone by 5.3 per cent.

With a hot summer ahead of us and the increased threat of global warming with increased auto emissions, I am moving this bill that will improve the environment, remove a health risk, especially for urban areas, and provide a market for millions of bushels of Canadian grain.

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

* * *

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND SOLICITOR GENERAL

REVIEW OF PAROLE AND PENITENTIARY ACTS

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find consent for the following motion:

That pursuant to subsection 14(1) of an Act to amend the Parole Act and the Penitentiary Act, Chapter 34, Second Supplement, Revised Statutes of Canada 1985, the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General be the committee to undertake a comprehensive review of the provisions and operation of section 21.2 to 21.6 of the Parole Act and the Schedule thereto in subsections 25(5) to 7 and section 26.1 of the Penitentiary Act, and that the said committee report no later than Monday, July 22, 1991.

That the evidence adduced by the committee on the said subject in the Second Session of the present Parliament be deemed to have been referred to the committee.

And that notwithstanding the usual practices of the House, if the House is not sitting when the report of the committee is completed, the committee may report its findings by depositing its report with the Clerk of the House and the report shall have been deemed to have been presented.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

MMT

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. One petition is signed by a number of constituents of the great riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell who are supporting the initiative so eloquently placed in this House by my colleague from Lambton—Middlesex to encourage Canadians to utilize a mixture of ethanol in fuel for automobile use and to eliminate at the same time the product known as MMT.

That is an excellent petition, of course.

VETERANS BENEFITS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition. This one is signed by a number of people from Alexandria, Ontario, in Glengarry of course. These fine constituents and Canadians are wanting to alert the government to the fact that they are most upset with the federal government's decision to cut back on benefits to veterans in this country.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Finally, Mr. Speaker, I have a whole series of petitions from Canadians virtually everywhere, thousands of them, who again want to remind the government that they do not like the goods and services tax any more now than they did before the government put it in place.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches—Woodbine): Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition signed by over 400 residents of my own constituency of Beaches—Woodbine who state that the government has cut CBC funding by $140 million over the next four years, resulting in 1,200 job losses and the closing of 10 regional stations.

These petitioners urge the government to restore proper funding to the CBC so it can fulfil its mandate and role as the heartbeat of Canada.

• (1540)

RCMP

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present to the House today, pursuant to Standing Order 36.

The first one comes on the back of the announcement by the Solicitor General that the contract for RCMP services throughout Canada will be continued for one year.

However, these people in various areas of British Columbia point out that the cutbacks recently in the

RCMP services have hurt small communities within Canada.

The petitioners urge the government to restore proper funding to the RCMP so that it can fulfil its mandate and role as the only visible police force for communities across British Columbia.

UNITEL

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): My second petition urges the Minister of Communications to oppose Unitel's bid to compete with Canada's telephone companies in long distance service.

It further urges the Minister of Communications to consult with all affected parties, specifically those citizens living outside Canada's urban areas who will be impacted severely by deregulation.

It further urges the Minister of Communications to hold local hearings in our communities before deciding the fate of Canada's telecommunications system.

RURAL CANADA

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here that is signed by people from 21 Saskatchewan communities, including the communities of Oxbow, Cut Knife, Maidstone, Spy Hill and Lone Rock.

These people are protesting the cutbacks in the infrastructure of rural Canada by this government, including cuts to VIA Rail service, abandonment of rail lines, neglect of fishery, forestry and agriculture, erosion of rural postal service and particularly closure of rural post offices.

These people are calling on the government to turn back from its abandonment of rural Canada and especially to support the rural post office system, which is in fact the lifeline of rural Canada.

UNITEL

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present to the House today, pursuant to Standing Order 36.

The first petition concerns the Minister of Communications. It is to oppose Unitel's bid to compete with Canada's telephone companies in long distance service.

As has been pointed out earlier today, this threat is most pervasive in the non-urban areas and particularly on the Gulf Islands where it is necessary to have long distance charges.

As is well known, competition in telephone services increases rather than decreases costs.

I urge the Minister of Communications to listen to those petitioners.

RCMP

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): My second petition is in relation to the RCMP.

The Solicitor General has acted to extend the contract for one further year. We are very glad for that, but for long-term planning for the municipalities of my area, assurance is needed that funding for the RCMP will be extended longer than one year.

The RCMP is a force which Canadians are proud of and which is a symbol for national unity at this important time.

I urge the government to listen to these petitioners.

UNITEL

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and indeed a privilege to present a petition on behalf of a large number of people from western Canada who have concerns regarding Unitel's bid to compete with Canada's telephone companies in long distance service.

The petitioners point out that if this is permitted to proceed, the effect would be that local telephone rates will escalate and add a lot of additional cost to people who use the telephone.

The petitioners are asking the Minister of Communications to oppose Unitel's bid to compete with Canada's telephone companies in long distance service. They are urging the Minister of Communications to consult with all the affected parties, specifically those citizens living outside Canada's urban areas who will be impacted most severely by this deregulation.

PETRO-CANADA

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present a petition signed by some 58 petitioners who are mostly from my own riding of Kootenay West—Revelstoke, the communities of Slocan, Johnsons Landing, Argenta, the cities of Revelstoke, Castlegar, Trail, and outside from Salmon Arm, Vancouver and Sparwood, British Columbia.

The petitioners ask Parliament to give serious consideration to the matter of Petro-Canada and Bill C-84, to take into consideration matters of price stability and energy security.

For a number of environmental reasons, they call upon Parliament to defeat or repeal Bill C-84, an act respecting the privatization of the National Petroleum Company of Canada and to keep Petro-Canada as a Crown corporation acting in the best interest of all Canadians.

* * *

QUESTION PASSED AS ORDER FOR RETURN

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 42 could be made an Order for Return, the return would be tabled immediately.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House that Question No. 42 be deemed to have been made an Order for Return.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

FEDERAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK

Question No. 42—**Ms. Phinney:**

With respect to the Federal Business Development Bank (a) how many staff are employed (b) how many grants and/or loans were given by it last year (c) what is its overall budget?

Return tabled.

* * *

[*English*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

PROCEEDS OF CRIME (MONEY LAUNDERING) ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): moved that Bill C-9, an act to facilitate combating the laundering of proceeds of crime, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the bill we have before us, Bill C-9, entitled an act to facilitate combating the laundering of proceeds of crime, is part of Canada's national drug strategy. As such, it builds on and complements

other legislation that Canada has introduced in this area, most notably Bill C-58 which was designed to enhance international law enforcement co-operation and Bill C-61 which made money laundering a criminal offence.

Its purpose is to discourage the use of Canada's financial system by criminals and to ensure that there is an adequate paper trail for our law enforcement authorities to carry out money laundering investigations.

The bill is consistent with the recommendations of the G-7 financial action task force on money laundering and consistent with those of the advisory committee on money laundering, a joint, private-public sector group which I chair.

The bill also has the support of Canada's financial community and a cross-section of senior officials from that community are members of the advisory committee.

Before I turn briefly to the specific measures in the bill, I would like to outline the setting in which the bill was developed.

As you know, drug trafficking, unfortunately, is something which plagues all modern societies. Familiarity, however, should not breed complacency. The destruction that drug trafficking renders is a tragedy of gigantic proportion. Individual lives, families and communities can and are being destroyed in Canada and elsewhere.

Drug trafficking generates large volumes of cash and therein lies both its attraction and its vulnerability. The proceeds of crime, particularly from drug trafficking, must be converted in other seemingly legitimate forms. The act of doing so is of course called "money laundering".

Without money laundering, drug trafficking would be less profitable and, therefore, less attractive to the criminal element in society.

[*Translation*]

In July 1989, the leaders of the G-7 countries announced the establishment of a Financial Action Task Force to study and make recommendations on measures to combat money laundering. The Task Force's first report was released in April, 1990. It contains 40 recommendations for action. At the Economic Summit in Houston in July 1990 the Prime Minister and the other G-7 leaders made clear their intention to fully implement the Task Force's recommendations quickly.

I think that we all can feel some measure of satisfaction in that Canada is in substantial compliance with the Task Force's recommendations. One area where we fall short, however, is in ensuring that our financial institutions, other businesses and professionals who handle large volumes of cash maintain adequate records. This brings me back to Bill C-9, which is designed to fill this gap.

• (1550)

[*English*]

The bill, the short title of which is the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) Act, is linked to the criminal offence of money laundering as defined in the Criminal Code, the Narcotics Control Act and the Food and Drug Act.

It is important to note that the provisions of the legislation focus on record keeping, not on reporting. The specific details relating to the keeping of records will be established by regulation. The records in question are limited to those which have been determined to be useful in the prevention, investigation and prosecution of money laundering.

This approach allows us to be flexible so that as the channels by which money is laundered change, the methods used to combat it can be adjusted. The bill is similar in most respects, Mr. Speaker, to Bill C-89, which we introduced in the last Parliament. However, the current bill calls for a consultation period of at least 90 days between the time of publication of regulations issued under the bill and their finalization.

In addition, the wording of certain sections of the bill has been made more precise. The revised bill makes it clear that intent is required before penalties apply. In addition, the regulation-making power of the government, with regard to determining the accuracy of information contained in records, only applies to the identification of clients.

The bill, I can assure you, will not reduce the traditional safeguards with respect to access to these records.

Finally, the bill imposes penalties in accordance with the seriousness of the situation. In closing, I do not need to remind the House that drug trafficking and money laundering pose major challenges to society.

Bill C-9 is an important bill for Canadians. It is designed to strike at these social ills but in a way which is not intrusive. It is in the interests of all of us to ensure that Canada does not become a haven for money launderers. I would welcome your support for this bill.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and speak on this particular bill, Bill C-9, otherwise known as the money laundering bill.

Bill C-9 appeared in the last session as Bill C-89 and it was lost when the House was prorogued. It is probably a good thing that it was because there were some flaws in that particular legislation. We are very pleased to see that the government has responded and made some changes in the legislation that make it a little more workable.

It seems to us that there are still a few things we should take a look at. We understand that everyone is in agreement that this bill be sent off to committee, and that is positive.

The drug war, as we hear it called from time to time, is a major problem in the world. There is absolutely no question about that. Canada has in part been considered a bit of a haven as far as the drug situation is concerned. Because of our close proximity to major drug routes, because we border on the United States and in part because we have lax financial reporting laws, Canada is one of the areas in which we see the drug trade moving. I know I can speak with some knowledge as far as New Brunswick is concerned.

There have been a number of cases where planes containing large amounts of drugs have landed on rural runways. Also, certain people have arrived in the New Brunswick area and deposited guns and everything else to try to free some of the people who have already been incarcerated by our efficient police force.

We know there is a drug problem in New Brunswick. We know there is a drug problem in Canada and this bill will help, in part, to solve the problem. Obviously, the problem has to be attacked on many levels. It has to be attacked where the drugs are being produced. It also has to be attacked at the means of delivery. Third, the criminals who are making a profit on the sale of drugs have to be attacked. I think, in large measure too, consumption also has to be attacked.

There is no question that this particular bill is aimed at one aspect. That is the profits which are associated with drugs and how those get into our community and become legitimate.

The bill builds on the so-called freeze and seize legislation, C-61, which in effect created the offence of money laundering. Money laundering is described as a process by which illegitimate dollars are transformed through the financial markets into legitimate funds. The purpose is to hide the identity of the real owners of the funds and give them the appearance of being legitimate.

[*Translation*]

There is no question that there is a problem and it is a world-wide problem. The question is whether this legislation goes far enough. We support the bill being considered in committee, but we hope that it will be improved upon thereafter.

[*English*]

There is no question that it is an international problem, and that is really what has forced this matter on this House. It is the United States and the G-7 which have said that all of the nations facing this problem have to become involved. This legislation when it was first presented had to be returned to the drawing boards because it did reflect an American slant. Their laws, as they deal with barristers, solicitors and other professionals, are different than ours so it was necessary for some of the legislation to be redrafted.

The other thing we have to look at is the area of regulation. A lot of this particular legislation is aimed at allowing the law to really develop through regulation. In some senses that is good but in others it is bad because the regulations do not have the control that Parliament has over intrusions into peoples' lives. We have to remember that is the effect of this legislation.

Any transaction over $10,000 is going to be subject to an intrusion by government, in effect through the reporting of those transactions in financial institutions. On the face of it that is good. There is no question, that is the only way we are going to track this situation. At the same time, it is an intrusion into peoples' lives and we have to make sure there is a balance and that we are going to benefit.

There is no assurance yet, nor have we seen any of the necessary money placed on the table to ensure it, that the government, the RCMP and the crime enforcement agencies are going to use this information. We have to be assured that when the information is sent from the financial institutions to the law enforcement agencies that they are going to have the resources and people and the money, all of the things that are necessary, to ensure that something good will come from this legislation. It does no one any good for this information to end up on a shelf in some RCMP office without being utilized. Therefore, that becomes a major concern.

As well, with respect to the regulations, there is a concern among many that the regulations will be proclaimed, and that the different professions and different institutions which are affected will not be fully aware and not have the input that they would have if it was an actual bill that came through Parliament.

• (1600)

We are hopeful that in the long run there will be more control over the regulations so that the adverse effects of regulations which slip through will not be felt. We are pleased that the government at least is going to have a three-month consultation process prior to the regulations coming into effect.

There is also protection for lawyers, as far as solicitor-client privilege is concerned, as that is the other problem and is where we differ a little bit from the American system. Lawyers were faced with the conundrum of not being able to divulge information given to them by their client while, at the same time, having to face a penalty for not giving out that information. There is an attempt to clean up that particular problem.

We also see that the government is going to define "cash" and say what that term really means. That is a loose end that certain criminal elements could hide behind.

The other broad aspect of this bill is that we are going to see an attempt to close some of the borders as far as Canada is concerned. One of the mechanisms to be closed is using Canada's financial system to legitimize illegitimate money.

However, the critical aspect and something that will become interesting once the committee meets is how effective the other countries are going to be. If we do not have connections between all of the other countries then it is not going to work. The other thing we have to be aware of is that the information gathered on Canadians will be available to other countries and other law enforcement agencies. That is a good point and a bad point, as it is an intrusion into the privacy of Canadians. We have to do a cost benefit analysis to ensure that there are not adverse effects on Canadians.

The Liberal Party is prepared to support this bill at this particular stage. We are excited that it will go to committee and that we will have before us all the different interest groups involved, such as the bar society and the bankers' society. We do not know which committee, but it will be one of the very important committees of this House I am sure, perhaps the one which the hon. member chairs.

In any event, the fact that it goes to committee and that we can have submissions from those different interest groups is important. In addition to the involvement of the barristers, the chartered accountants and the bankers' associations, a good idea that has been suggested—perhaps by the chairman of that committee—is that the RCMP be involved in advising us as to what the status of things is.

Second, it probably would not hurt for us to have someone from one of the civil liberties organizations appear to talk about the cost benefits of these intrusions. Let it be perfectly clear that the Liberal Party is fully supportive of the efforts to fight the drug situation in our country and on our streets. We are prepared to go to most levels in order to have legislation which will assist law enforcement agencies in achieving that goal. However, we are not prepared to go to the extent of a complete denial of civil liberties and individual Canadians' rights.

That is why this committee is important. That is why we want to see it at committee. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time to give comments on this particular bill.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Occasionally there is a piece of legislation which comes before the House and receives the unanimous support of all parties, and which has reached the House through a process of negotiation and discussion, which helps to explain that

unanimous support. In the case of this piece of legislation, that is very much the reality.

This legislation is a result of the decisions of the G-7 countries to, quite rightly, attempt to ensure that what we assume to be tremendous monetary flows taking place as a consequence of the illicit drug trade are made easier to track and easier to police. As my colleagues in the Liberal Party have suggested this is not for purposes of trying, to somehow hurt the privacy of people, but instead of suggesting ways for our financial institutions in this country to help control more effectively this large scale flow of illicit funds.

We are talking about the flow of illicit funds which is especially important to track. If it is not possible to do so then these illicit funds become the basis on which legal activities are established within this country. This in turn permits further profit making on the basis of what was originally an illicit sale of drugs with subsequent flow of illicit money.

From our perspective as a party we strongly share the basic purposes and goals which lie behind this legislation, and that is to try to see to it that the flow of illicit funds does not become possible in our country. It is not a secret that Canada has been seen as a relatively easy country through which money laundering can take place. This is not a reputation that any of us in this House would want this country to have, and I am certain everybody in the House will support tightening up the situation.

Our concerns however with the original bill, which came before us in a previous session of this Parliament, were that in the process of attempting to deal with a serious problem the government had established a number of clauses as part of the legislation, a number of regulations as part of the draft regulations prepared to support the legislation which frankly represented certain dangers. These dangers could conceivably penetrate for instance the relationship between a lawyer and a lawyer's clients. That penetration could begin through the search for a monetary trail based on money exchanges, but it would have the effect of leading from the purely financial considerations involved into a detailed probing, we feared and the Canadian Bar Association feared, of the lawyer-client relationship which existed in a number of situations.

• (1610)

It is for that reason that the original version of this legislation was very strongly condemned by the Canadian Bar Association.

The Canadian Bar Association is not an organization which ordinarily takes strong positions on pieces of federal government legislation. Yet, the Canadian Bar Association did take the highly unusual step of passing a motion at the national level, condemning this piece of legislation as it was originally drafted.

We talked about this piece of legislation with members from the opposite side, the government side. They assured us that at the time the previous legislation was in front of us, there were no problems.

We however checked to see if this were the case with a number of associations such as the Canadian Bar Association. It indicated to us that unfortunately, contrary to what we have been told, there were serious problems which led them to pass this national resolution.

Subsequently, we indicated that we would not be prepared to co-operate with the passage of this legislation. It was after this, as I understand it, that the government finally entered into serious discussion with the Canadian Bar Association and came to conclusions which now resolve the problems that were in the previous piece of legislation.

We have discussed the new piece of legislation with the Canadian Bar Association. We have discussed it with the body that represents the Canadian Chartered Accountants. We are assured by both that they see no problems with the bill as it presently stands.

We have talked with representatives of the chartered banks who have also indicated that there should be no problem from their perspective with the period of time for which financial records are required to be kept under the legislation.

I think, as a consequence of further consultation, we have a much better piece of legislation in front of us now than we had in the previous session of Parliament.

For this reason we are prepared as a party to support the legislation because, as I say, we strongly agree with the principle. Our concern was with some of the details.

Those details have now been worked through with some of the bodies that previously expressed concern.

We would still hope that when this bill goes to committee, whether it is a legislative committee or a specific standing committee, it will call before it some of those organizations which expressed concern in the past so that those concerns will in fact be overcome by the changes which have taken place.

We have heard from such organizations. We take their word, but I think it is important to see that this is explored at committee.

I have had some discussions with the parliamentary secretary to the minister. I think there is widespread agreement with respect to the three or four groups that we would want to see come before the committee.

I hope that speedy passage through the committee will therefore be assured. I am pleased to say that as far as we are concerned, we are very pleased to see speedy passage at second reading of a significant piece of legislation.

It will not in any sense be a comprehensive response, but it will be a significant part of the response to try to deal with the illicit flow of funds associated with the drug trade in our country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

* * *

EXPORT AND IMPORT PERMITS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Thursday, May 30, consideration of the motion of Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre) that Bill C-6, an act respecting the exporting, importing, manufacturing, buying or selling of or other dealing with certain weapons be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this legislation with a great deal of mixed feelings. Canada has had a history of being a nation which, on the whole, has worked for peace. It has been in the forefront of attempting to limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to provide peacekeeping forces within the United Nations.

Within my own family there is a long and strong tradition of working for peace. My father grew up in Russia belonging to a group called the Molokans, whose members are much like the Quakers; pacifists. He was fortunate enough to be able to leave Russia when he became draft age and he chose to come to Canada because he knew that Canada allowed for religious and political freedom. He was involved in some of the first peace movements in Canada including, I am proud to say, leading some of the first demonstrations and marches against the bomb in 1946 and 1947.

He spoke about many things in the late forties and early fifties and at that time, particularly if you had a Russian name, it was not easy to stand up and advocate peace initiatives. Many years later, when it became more acceptable, many of the things that he suggested, the total community adopted and realized that they only made sense in a modern society.

What we have here is the start of a new government initiative to get Canada farther into the area of arms sales. It is one of these things that becomes a treadmill. The farther you get into it, the more difficult it is to get out.

It is based on a number of very shaky premises. Under the present export control policy, Canada has agreed to a number of things. I think it is worth while looking at what they are. Basically Canada agreed to four things: it would not export military goods to countries that pose a threat to Canada or its allies; it would not export military goods to countries that are involved in or under imminent threat of hostility; it would not export military goods to countries under United Nations Security Council sanctions; it would not export military goods to countries whose governments have a persistent record of serious violation of human rights of their citizens.

• (1620)

Some of the current proposals would fail on two of these grounds. The current proposals are designed to start and dump back military armaments into the mid-east, including Saudi Arabia. If anyone looks at the history of the mid-east in the last four years, or 10 years,

it would be very difficult to say who are our allies are and who are our enemies.

We have decided at various times that Iran is our enemy. During the war, maybe Iran was our ally. We armed Iraq because we decided Iraq was our ally when it was involved in the war with Iran. Where do nations like Syria, Saudi Arabia, some of the other gulf states and even Kuwait stand?

Certainly neither Saudi Arabia nor Kuwait would stand the last test of countries whose governments have a persistent record of serious violations of human rights of their citizens and yet we are prepared to start re-arming undemocratic regimes.

There are many other mid-east countries that I get very concerned about, such as United Arab Emerates in which I had the pleasure of spending two weeks. At this point it is a peaceful country. It is under no threat internally or from any of its neighbours, but it is ruled by one family and one family only, with no pretence of democracy or freedom and with dictatorial policies along religious lines. Yet I see this morning that the United States has just decided to sell it 12 military attack helicopters and 6 to Bahrain.

What are they going to do with those? One becomes suspicious as there is a new birth of democracy sweeping through some of these countries, making sure that they have the means of ensuring their own continued survival.

The whole experience within the war in the gulf should have taught us something. It should have taught us that Iraq would have been militarily incapable of violating the sovereignty of its fellow nations. It would have been militarily incapable of perpetuating the war with its mass destruction. Hussein would have not been able to maintain his dictatorship had it not been for the arms supplied to him and Iraq by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council; Britain, France, China, U.S.S.R and the United States.

It seems to me that Canada was involved in testing weapons that ended up in Iraq. Now we want to get involved in the actual sale of arms to countries that are involved in conflict and in violation of civil rights.

All this does is detract dramatically from Canada's ability to be a peace negotiator in this world. Our whole credibility as a peacekeeping nation and a peace negotiator was trampled on dramatically during the gulf war.

We rushed in and backed the United States in a military operation that turned out to be an environmental disaster with a huge loss of life. At least 100,000, 150,000 or 200,000 people died in that war.

The Kurds have been totally disrupted. The environment in the gulf has been totally wiped out for 50 or 100 years, or maybe forever. Canada blindly went along.

Now we have the government saying that for the sake of a few jobs we will sacrifice another piece of our prestige, integrity, neutrality, and our ability to act as a peace negotiator and peacekeeper in this world. We will do so being blind to the history since the Second World War. If there were somebody on Mars to look down at us, they would ask: "What is this race of creatures down there doing? It looks like a football scrum has picked up and that they change sides every weekend and have another go at it".

Our strong ally right now is Japan. It was our enemy less than 40 years ago. Less than five years ago, our worst enemy was the Soviet Union. Now it is considered our ally.

We have even been involved in conflicts in the mid-east on both sides of the argument and in other areas. Think back to the Falklands war between Argentina and Britain in which the British were being fired upon by French weapons.

We always make the assumption that we know who our friends are, our loyal friends. Particularly in the mid-east the situation is volatile. No one can guarantee that countries which pose a threat to Canada or to its allies are countries that are involved in or are under imminent threat of hostilities. All of those countries are involved in an ongoing regional war in which the western and Soviet bloc powers have armed them in order to escalate arms sales.

Military spending in this world is out of control. It is $1,000 billion a year, $1,000 billion a year. That is a figure that is totally incomprehensible to most Canadians and to most people in this world. Yet we persist. This bill does not say: "Look, we want to see military spending in the world go down so that it can be directed to positive uses". It simply says: "We want a piece of the pie".

We want to be able to say that there is this military spending and we want to get in on the action because it is good for business and profit making.

It is funny how very quickly people's attitudes change. When the gulf war was at its height, we heard from the government some very encouraging speeches. For a moment, I was almost proud of a government that was speaking on my behalf.

The minister of external affairs spoke out clearly saying: "The world cannot let a victory become a truce, an occasion for nations to rearm, to regroup and return to battle". That was a statement that clearly said we have to put an end to this type of arms trade.

• (1630)

The Prime Minister made very, very high sounding statements. He talked about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the arms trade and the constant chasing of spheres of influence. He said: "We could be big arms merchants. We chose not to be, although it is a very lucrative business. We chose not to be, because it is fundamentally inconsistent with our policy to develop it, to peddle it, to finance it and then to deplore its use".

If only the Prime Minister really believed what he was saying at that time, if only he had been willing to commit his government to that type of policy and to say: "Not only have we chosen not to, we will not be involved in developing it. We will not be involved in peddling it. We will not be involved in financing it". All we have left, I guess, is that we will be deploring the use of arms when they start again.

The government tries to indicate that in this time of recession we cannot afford to miss an opportunity for a few jobs. I say to the members on the government side, this is like saying we will keep capital punishment because it makes work for the hangman.

Mr. Hockin: What does the CAW say to that?

Mr. Karpoff: I feel for the members within the CAW. I will tell you, most of the CAW people want work that is not based on the arms industry. This government has the responsibility to provide work that is not based on transitory jobs and arms production. There is no justification for an employment policy based on the peddling of arms that are going to be destructive to this world. That is the hollowness of the government, if all it can do is provide jobs that are based on perpetuating military conflict in the world.

Mr. Hockin: You are calling the CAW workers hangmen. That is what you are doing.

Mr. Karpoff: I am saying that the government is so short-sighted that it cannot look at anything but the employment advantages. It has no ability to say: "Look, we have a moral obligation to the men and women in those factories to find them alternative employment. To shut them down today and find positive, alternative types of employment".

This government has done such a flip-flop. Where are the statements that the Prime Minister made less than three or four months ago, when he said: "We could be big arms merchants. We chose not to"? Now it is choosing to be when he says: "It is fundamentally inconsistent". Well, now the government has chosen to be inconsistent.

It is almost pathetic that this is one of the first bills to be brought before the House in this new session. What does that say about Canada and Canada's priorities?

We talk about economies and military spending. One begins to wonder whether the economic success of West Germany and Japan was not based in large part on the fact that after World War II, they were in no position to plough their financial resources into rearmament. Instead, they ploughed them into industrial development. They ploughed them into human resources, technology, education and training. I think that is a lesson the rest of the countries, particularly Canada, should learn.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my voice to those across this House who are scratching their heads at this moment and asking themselves why the government has chosen this moment, in a very fragile period, just after we have been embroiled in a situation of war in the Persian Gulf, to introduce legislation which sends a confusing and contradictory message to the international community.

Specifically, the confusion revolves around the fact that at the height of the hostilities, the Prime Minister of Canada made great efforts and great pains to suggest that in the post-war period Canada should take charge and be a leader in the area of arms reduction. He made a statement in February in which he said: "Left to proliferate, arms seriously threaten peace around the world". He also said, in a number of post-war initiatives: "This

problem must be brought under control and the time to act is now". In fact, he offered to host an international summit aimed at curbing the world arms trade.

We know the difficulty Canada's reputation suffered, specifically as a result of our involvement in hostilities which left us abandoning our historical role as a peacekeeper. But we believed that the initiatives announced by the Prime Minister were a possible ray of hope in a world that clings to the idea that we have in fact embraced a new world order.

However, with the specifics of this legislation and contrary to the position taken by the New Democratic Party, we believe that there is a place in legislation for export and import control. In fact, for many years we have called for specific legislation to permit the arms business, which has existed for many decades in Canada, to be a matter of the public record.

As the Speaker will now know, most exporting of arms is carried out by Order in Council and very specific legislation directed toward friendly countries could be a benefit because it would lay bare the facts surrounding Canada's role in the arms race.

Most people who have involved themselves in the issue of arms control were not surprised to discover, during the height of the Persian Gulf hostilities, that mercenary activity such as gun running and illegally supplying arms, for example to Iraq, was carried on through Canada. We were not surprised either to realize that the arms, in large measure, that were subsequently used to attack the forces of the United Nations were sold to Iraq legitimately by countries in the United Nations, and most specifically by the United States.

While it is true that the elements of the military equation are constantly changing and very fluid, in this party we do believe that a very specific law governing the publication of export orders would be, in effect, a positive step in terms of exposing and highlighting just where we are going on the issue of arms control.

However, we are most concerned that the specifics of this legislation will lead to a wide open sale of arms to countries that are not on the list of friendly countries. I refer specifically to the legislation as presented to the House by the Minister for International Trade in which he spoke about the role played by the Governor in Council in terms of establishing a list of countries. We feel that this is key to the debate. He says: "According to the legislation, the Governor in Council may establish a list of countries to be called an automatic firearms country control list, including therein any country with which Canada has an intergovernmental defence, research, development and production arrangement".

• (1640)

However, Mr. Speaker, the word "may", as you know, is not an exclusive but rather a general wording which would in fact permit the Governor in Council to extend the list to countries beyond those which are considered friendly countries to Canada.

We know, for example, that one of the specific contracts which this particular piece of legislation was allegedly introduced to support was the sale to Saudi Arabia. We also know that notwithstanding the elements of progress we saw in the relationship as the Persian Gulf events unfolded, Saudi Arabia is still at war with the State of Israel. Saudi Arabia has not denounced the state of war with Israel and, as such, certainly is not one of the countries which would legitimately be included on the list of countries which the Governor in Council is called upon to establish by way of this legislation.

Unlike the NDP, which basically has taken the position that all current arms activity in Canada should be banned forthwith and for which it has absolutely no support in the union movement, we do not believe as a party that we can move as of this date to ban the sale of all arms, in particular to countries which are using those arms in a supportive and a defensive role.

However, we believe that the sale of arms should be public by way of very specific legislation and that the control order should be very tight. It should not be left up to the Governor in Council by way of regulation to play with the list as he or she sees fit.

In that context, what we are proposing are some very specific amendments which would in fact tighten the legislation to make it very clear that countries like Saudi Arabia would not be the legitimate recipients of defensive arms from Canada.

An argument was put forward by the Minister for International Trade. He argued here in this House that his particular government was not abandoning its role of arms reduction because in fact the weapons it was talking about were not weapons of mass destruction. You can be killed singly or you can be killed collectively. If you are dead you have still been hit by a weapon of destruction.

I dare say the Canadian public finds that argument rather weak, recognizing that it is the intention of the minister to basically liberalize an activity which has gone on for very many years in Canada but which clearly should be in the sunset and not the sunrise of its activity.

We agree that the Canadian economy over the next decade should not be dependent upon growth from the defence industry. But we also recognize that in the current world order we have not reached the stage of peace and stability where no arms are needed anywhere. In that context, we want to see very specific, well articulated, thoughtful legislation which lays out in the Parliament of Canada just who can receive arms from our country. That is clearly not present in this particular legislation.

Clearly the proposal of the Minister for International Trade that he is only talking about small weapons and not weapons of mass destruction, and the contradictory comments of the Prime Minister that he wants to see Canada as a country that will be leading the way in terms of arms control, simply do not come together.

[*Translation*]

The public perception is that this is a confusing policy, because, at one time, toward the end of the Persian Gulf war in February, the Prime Minister himself announced a peace plan in which he said he was prepared to preside over a disarmament summit aimed specifically at encouraging arms reduction in the Middle East. However, this legislation, as it stands, does exactly the opposite.

We suggest, Mr. Speaker, that with the proposal put forward by the Minister for International Trade, arms could even be sold directly to Saudi Arabia while it is still at war with the State of Israël.

The problem is that you cannot claim to want arms reduction while, at the same time, introducing a bill liberalizing our capacity to sell arms to any country.

Some Canadians were shocked to hear that the arms used to kill great numbers of people, including allied troops in the coalition, had indeed been sold to Iraq by the United States and other UN member countries when Iraq was at war with Iran, our alleged enemy.

We saw how quickly things changed, Mr. Speaker. That is why we are calling, first of all, for very specific legislation. It is important that exporting of arms be not carried out by a mere Order in Council, as it has been the practice for many years. At the same time, the legislation should be very specific as to which countries should be listed on the Control List and those that should not.

We know that, notwithstanding the NDP policy to the effect that no arms are sold in Canada, arms sales do take place in Canada. We have been selling arms for years. One thing is sure, if we are planning to introduce a disarmament policy, the first thing to do is to find alternate jobs for the workers in that industry.

We also know, Mr. Speaker, that the situation in the Middle East is still volatile and, with the China's policy setback reflected in the Tiananmen Square massacre, the new world order is not quite established.

Earlier, my hon. colleague from the NDP referred to Canada's neutrality. We are not a neutral country. As a member of an alliance, we share certain defensive responsibilities, not offensive ones, Mr. Speaker. But how are we to be expected to defend ourselves if we cannot even arm ourselves? So we do not understand the somewhat hypocritical position taken by the New Democratic Party, by those people who walk around union halls and say they are working for the unions. However, when they come here—and as far as I can see, there have not been a lot of members from Ontario who spoke to this issue—they certainly don't show a lot of courage when we discuss these issues.

Mr. Speaker, I am from Ontario—you may have forgotten that—but I am from an area where steel is the main industry. I am certainly not ashamed to say we want a clear policy, because this one is not clear. It is confusing, and it sends the wrong message to Canadians. We also want some specific amendments concerning the lists, those so-called lists drawn up by the minister. We do not want Canada to be able to sell arms to countries that are still at war with our allies.

That is why we intend to propose some specific amendments. We are going to do what we have to do, and one thing is certain: the bill as drafted could never be supported by the Liberal Party.

[*English*]

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, on the subject of Saudi Arabia and Israel, does the hon. member realize that when it comes to the light armoured vehicle implication of this export permit act, these are wheeled vehicles and therefore they could not be carried over the desert and therefore they are only defensive weapons with regard to Israel?

Is the hon. member aware that the member for London East, in whose riding the LAV plant is situated, very much supports this bill? Is the hon. member aware of those two points?

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, I am certainly aware of the position of the member for London East who certainly has been most vocal on this particular issue. I am also aware that obviously the minister requires certain changes of legislation to facilitate this sale. Otherwise we would not be having this discussion in the House. If there is no problem with the sale of the armoured vehicles with wheels as they now exist, obviously there would be no need to be here in the House. There is a problem and we do not want to see a control order list including sale of arms by way of a vehicle where the gun will in fact be put on in another country.

• (1650)

We do not want to see the sale of arms to countries that are currently not on the acceptable list, because that sets the stage for the kind of situation we saw in Iraq, where the Canadian government, and other governments, saw our own allies being attacked by weapons which were sold to the Iraqis by the Americans and other allies. It was a ridiculous situation that left Canadians scratching their heads.

That is why we want to bring to bear amendments which will very specifically deal with who is on the control order list and why and ensure that that will be available public information.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, in my brief time here I have found that when the hon. member for Hamilton East begins to accuse the New Democratic Party of hypocrisy, quite often it is by way of mirror reflection.

I would like to investigate that just briefly, if I may, with specific regard to one of the most potent weapons of destruction in the Iran–Iraq war, the Cruise missile used in Baghdad and other major centres in the festival of the slaughter of the innocents in which we engaged.

Most Canadians will recall that the guidance system of the Cruise missile was manufactured and designed by Litton Industries, a subsidiary of an American parent, in Toronto, Ontario, and was done with the active approval of the former Liberal government of the Right Hon. Pierre Trudeau. The testing—at least the beginning of the testing—of that same guidance system over Canadian territory was also approved enthusiastically by the Liberal government of Pierre Elliot Trudeau.

I would just like to ask the hon. member if—

Mr. Horner: No lover's quarrel.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Oh, there are no lovers here to have a quarrel, sir, I can assure you.

I would like to ask the hon. member how she squares her apparent distaste for certain elements in the arms trade now, with her party's enthusiastic endorsement of the development and testing of what everyone has agreed was in fact a destabilizing weapon that has come to be among the most terrible on the face of the planet.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, maybe the member did not hear the point I was making. The point I was making was the fact that while we get a very spirited condemnation of all sales of arms from the New Democratic Party, as articulated by the member opposite from Alberta, there has not been a member of the NDP from the province of Ontario who has opened his or her mouth to speak. The reason is because they are quite aware of the fact that the CAW very specifically has come out publicly in support of this particular legislation.

I am suggesting that we should put a realistic policy forward. Yes, for many years in Canada there have been arms sold and arms will continue to be sold as long as we live in a world where we are not neutral. We are not neutral at the moment and we need certain weapons of defence. But let us make sure that the control order put forth by the government specifies exactly to whom those arms are being sold and under what conditions. Those are the amendments that we are putting forward.

I do not like to have my colleague in the House stand up and decry the sale of all arms when his colleague in the riding in which they are selling the arms goes to his local union meeting and supports it. That is what I do not like and that is what I call hypocrisy.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, I want to make clear to my good friend from Hamilton East that I intend to speak next in this debate, unless the Conservatives are drawn into the debate. I want to raise a question with respect to that extraordinary final statement she made, which suggested that there were members of this House from the New Democratic Party who in fact had gone to labour councils—

Ms. Copps: You are going to be sorry, Steven.

Mr. Langdon: No, I am quite interested if some evidence can be brought forward of this, because certainly it is not something of which I am aware. I am not aware of my colleagues in this House having engaged in something like this.

If, in fact, any of my colleagues from the House have spoken out to local labour councils in favour of this piece of legislation, I would be very interested to hear the member provide evidence. If however there is no such evidence, I would expect the member to withdraw her statement.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, an NDPer is an NDPer. The member should be aware of the fact that the member from London Centre, a minister in his friend Bob Rae's government, has spoken in favour of the legislation, as well as another member of the NDP who is sitting in Queen's Park in Toronto. Clearly with the close ties that this member has with Bob Rae and his team at Queen's Park, I am sure he should know the position being taken by the cabinet of Bob Rae.

Mr. Langdon: To make it clear, Mr. Speaker, on a supplementary question, there is of course no connection between the provincial government and its policies and the federal caucus of the New Democratic Party so far.

I put the question once more to the member. She has suggested that there are members of this caucus who have spoken in favour of this piece of legislation to labour councils. There is to my knowledge no such evidence any place in the province of Ontario. If she has evidence of members of this caucus having made such statements, I would ask her to document them to the House or else to withdraw a statement which clearly is not correct.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, I think if the hon. member reviews *Hansard* he will realize that I said NDP members. The last time I looked the minister from London Centre was an NDP member of the Legislative Assembly in the province of Ontario to which the member has associated himself on many occasions. I am sure he will reflect on the fact that at least two members of the NDP party—of which he is a member in the province of Ontario—now sitting in the Legislative Assembly at Queen's Park are in favour of this bill and speak in favour of it.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to follow my friend from Hamilton East who, as usual, has straddled the fence magnificently with respect to a difficult issue of principle. In other words, she made a speech which took the classic Liberal position of saying that: "If it is necessary to have legislation, well we would have better legislation than this but of course we would not want to give the impression that we were in favour of encouraging world arms trade", when in fact what this piece of legislation is about is precisely encouraging the world arms trade and perhaps most unfortunately, encouraging Canada's participation in that world arms trade.

I think that we should not have illusions or permit illusions to be put forward to people across this country about what this particular piece of legislation is about. It is not a piece of legislation which is designed, as the member for Hamilton East would suggest, to set up some kind of system of regulation, some system to let us see what is actually happening because we do not know what is actually happening. In fact, it is a piece of legislation which amends laws which already exist in this country, which prohibit the export of various weapons to countries around the world. It is not that we do not have, at the moment, ways of seeing to it that we have a record of what takes place with respect to imports and exports of arms. We have such records. What we do not have, up to this point, is the possibility of getting around those constraints as a country.

• (1700)

Perhaps the most telling part of this piece of legislation is clause 8. This particular clause amends the previous legislation which deals with imports and export permits. Let me just read from the present legislation:

> Every one who imports, buys, sells, barters, gives, lends, transfers or delivers a prohibited weapon or any component or part designed exclusively for use in the manufacture or assembly of a prohibited weapon
>
> (a) is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years; or
>
> (b) is guilty of an offence punishable in summary conviction.

That is what the present law says. It prohibits certain weapons from being exported or delivered from this country.

What does this new piece of legislation do? It basically repeats that existing commitment, but then it adds to that which is described in this legislation as a saving provision, "Notwithstanding subsection (1)", which is the subsection that I just quoted. It continues:

> —a person who carries on a business described in paragraph 105(1)(b) may export or import for a purpose that the Governor in Council prescribes by regulation to be an industrial purpose a prohibited weapon described in paragraph (c) or (e)— if that person does so under and in accordance with an export permit or an import permit, as the case may be, issued under the Export and Import Permits Act.

In short, what we have is the provision of a new loophole which makes it possible for the government to export what had previously been prohibited weapons under the present Import and Export Permits Act. That is at the heart of this legislation. It has nothing to do, as the member for Hamilton East suggested, with whether or not we produce arms in this country.

Of course, it is important for us in this country to continue to produce the arms of which our armed forces make use. Nobody in this party is suggesting that the arms which are produced for our armed forces should cease to be produced in this country. Nobody is suggesting that we should abolish the armed forces of Canada or that we should rely on imported weapons for those armed forces. Such nonsense.

The whole issue which the member for Hamilton East so successfully, unfortunately, tried to avoid is the question of whether we are going to permit prohibited weapons from being exported in the future. That is the issue. The Liberal Party is supporting this legislation, for what reason I cannot understand, but it is legislation which will have the effect of putting Canada in the centre of the world arms trade, as opposed to the not insignificant, but nevertheless fairly marginal position which we have had in that trade in the past.

The Liberal Party is in favour of us, as a country, being part, to a much greater extent, of the world arms trade and we in the New Democratic Party are proud to say that we are not in favour of that kind of expansion of Canada's participation in the world arms trade.

In my view, and I speak as a member from Ontario, as somebody from a constituency with many members from the Canadian Auto Workers, it would be a serious mistake for this country to move in that direction.

There are at least four reasons that I want to talk about that convince me that this would be a serious mistake. First, if we look at many of the Third World countries to which we provide billions of dollars of aid, which is often felt by many people in our country to be desperately needed here at home, but aid which is, nevertheless, provided by Canada and which we support providing, because it will help poor people in the Third World and give them some sense of hope for the future.

The reality is that much of that aid at the moment ends up providing foreign exchange to those Third World countries which is wasted on the build-up of huge armies, which is wasted on the destruction of neighbouring countries and which is wasted in civil wars. It just does not make sense for us as a country to, on the one hand, be providing help to Third World countries for water supplies, for housing and for food assistance and, on the other hand, to be increasing this world arms trade which is so destructive to many people and many regimes in Third World countries.

Second, our movement as a country into more involvement in the international arms trade contradicts completely the statements and commitments which this

government made in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf war.

Some of my colleagues have quoted from some of those commitments. I do not want to simply reproduce some of the government's statements, but I cannot help but point out what the previous minister of external affairs said on March 8. He said: "We cannot let a victory become a truce, an occasion for nations to re-arm, re-group and return to battle." For that reason, he suggested that there should be action to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the arms trade, the constant chase for spheres of influence.

• (1710)

This piece of legislation before us directly contradicts what the Secretary of State for External Affairs suggested at that time in those statements. The Prime Minister was even more straightforward. He said: "We have all the technology in the world. We have all the resources we need. We could be big arms merchants. We chose not to be, although it is a very lucrative business. We have chosen not to be because it is fundamentally inconsistent with our policy to develop it, to peddle it, to finance it and then to deplore its use".

All I can hope is that members on the government side will listen this time to their Prime Minister. They will recognize that those words, which were said on March 13 by the Prime Minister of this country, require them to vote against a piece of legislation which takes us directly and deeply into the world arms trade.

I also want to point out that when we get into providing arms to Third World countries, arms to countries in the Middle East—and the suggestion here is that this is going to permit arms sales to Saudi Arabia—we open ourselves up to the possibility of providing arms that prop up regimes which often have human rights records which are absolutely deplorable.

Let me quote, for instance, from Amnesty International's report from 1990 with respect to Saudi Arabia. It says:

> At least 27 prisoners of conscience were imprisoned and other prisoners of conscience may have been among more than 70 detainees held without charge or trial. Some political detainees were held without trial in prolonged incommunicado detention. Torture was reportedly common and one death in custody may have been caused by torture or ill-treatment. Sentences of amputation and flogging continued to be imposed and carried out. At least 111 persons were executed, 16 of them for political offences.

Those are the people to whom we are going to provide Canadian arms? That is shameful.

Finally, I want to point out, as a representative of an industrial constituency in Ontario, that in fact the money which is spent on the arms industry provides far less in the way of jobs than money which is spent in other sectors of our economy. For instance, a study which was done in the late 1970s indicated that at that time a billion dollars worth of spending on the military industry would create just under 45,000 jobs, while the same amount of money spent on the medicare industry, with respect to nurses, would create 85,000 jobs. That is almost twice as many.

That has changed even since that time in a way that has made the provision of money for the arms trade and for the military industry even less able to produce jobs than was the case in the late 1970s.

We have to begin to explore the conversion of our industries from arms production and arms export to the production of military related goods for our own country, yes, but more important to the production of industrial commodities and other commodities and services which serve our country and which serve people and people's needs rather than kill people and help to suppress human rights, as the comments with respect to Saudi Arabia indicate.

That is the direction we have to take. It is a direction which many countries in western Europe are taking. Companies in Britain and in other parts of western Europe have explored ways of converting their industries from arms production, military hardware and involvement in the international arms trade, to the production of items which are important to people's social and human needs.

That is the direction we must take in this country. It is not a direction which means that we intend to eliminate arms production for our Armed Forces. It is not a direction which is going to eliminate jobs in London or in Kitchener overnight. In that sense, it is not like the free trade deal, which has had such effects in London, in Kitchener, in Windsor and in hundreds of other communities throughout Ontario.

Instead, what we are looking for is an approach which will stop us from becoming part of the problem of the international arms trade, providing jobs for Canadians by meeting human needs instead of killing human beings.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): A point of order, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

AUTHORIZATION TO AUDIO TAPE STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but there have been discussions among the three parties, and I believe that you will find unanimous consent for the following motion, Mr. Speaker:

> That, notwithstanding Standing Order 119.1(2), the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade be authorized to permit audio tape recording, by the broadcast media, for the duration of its order of reference under Standing Order 108(2) respecting consideration of the immigration to Canada of Mohamed Al-Mashat.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I do not doubt the word of the parliamentary secretary but we have attempted to verify this with the opposition House leader who I understand will be here momentarily. I am just wondering if the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader would not mind waiting to put the motion perhaps after the next speaker terminates in 10 minutes or so. I understand we are on to 10 minute speeches.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, perhaps what we could do is indicate that the House supports the motion, subject to the approval of the House leader who would come in at a later time if he objected. I have no problem with that. It is just that my schedule pulls me away from here now so I do not want to tie up the House.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that on behalf of the New Democratic Party we certainly support this motion in an effort to clarify some of the proceedings that are taking place in that committee.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I attended the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade where this subject matter was discussed. I believe there is unanimous consent from all parties, particularly from this party.

• (1720)

Perhaps, while I am on my feet, the parliamentary secretary might indicate whether he is in a position today to tell us whether the television broadcasting of those particular hearings is a matter which can be adjudicated with the same speed with which this particular matter has been resolved. Can he give us any indication with regards to television?

Mr. Cooper: I thank the hon. member for his representation. I can inform him that at the House management committee we have begun discussions relating to the whole question of the televising of committees. We are presently seized with the report of the previous Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. The committee, I hope in the very near future, will be developing the necessary guidelines.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Since there were no questions or comments. Debate.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

EXPORT AND IMPORT PERMITS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre) that Bill C-6, an act respecting the exporting, importing, manufacturing, buying or selling of or other dealing with certain weapons, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I am naturally delighted to participate in this debate. I wanted to begin with a quote from the book of Isaiah regarding the changing of weapons into ploughshares. I will do that later if time permits.

I want to quote from a past President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower. Many years ago he made the following comment: "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in this final scene, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed; those who are cold and are not clothed.

This world in arms is not spending money alone, it is spending the sweat of its labourers, the genius of its scientists, the houses of its children. This is not a way of life. Under the cloud of war, it is humanity hanging on a cross of iron".

What we are discussing today is nothing short of sinister. What we are discussing is really a complete reversal of what I think most Canadians believe to be one of the very fundamental theses of Canadian society, and that is that we are a peaceful country. We believe in peacekeeping. We believe in promoting peace in whatever way possible. This government is asking the House of Commons to permit Canada to enter the arms race in a serious way.

I think what we are being asked to do today is absolutely disgusting. I think it is absolutely incredible that the government is now taking this particular action after the comments of some of the critical spokespersons for the government. I want to quote from a speech made by the Prime Minister in this city on February 8, this year, referring to the gulf war: "One of the main lessons to be learned from the war is the danger to us all of the proliferation of both conventional and non-conventional weapons".

He went on to say:

"The major arms exporting firms and nations have contributed to the current crisis. The great majority of weapons in Iraq's arsenal came from suppliers in the countries of the five permanent members of the Security Council. This problem must be brought under control and the time to act is now".

We all thought the Prime Minister meant that the world would be moved to get out of the arms race, to start de-escalating the arms race. We thought that was what he meant. He went on to say: "When the war is over, the world community must co-operate to prevent the proliferation of these weapons and to roll back that proliferation which has already occurred".

The people of Canada thought the Prime Minister said that Canada ought to play some leadership role in the de-escalation of the arms race. On February 20 of this year, the Secretary of State for External Affairs said, and I quote from a speech that he made in London, England: "I believe it is imperative that the world declare that there be no Middle East arms bazaar. Ninety-five per cent of the weapons in the hands of Saddam Hussein came from the five permanent members of the Security Council". He goes on and on to say that Canada ought to be playing a leadership role.

Again, we thought the leadership role was to take Canada in positions in which we de-escalate. What we have is the spectacle, in spite of the comments of the Prime Minister of Canada and the former Secretary of State for External Affairs, the hon. member from Alberta, of the government introducing legislation to encourage the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia.

Not hundreds of vehicles but nearly one thousand vehicles, mounted with automatic weapons, were negotiated on a government to government basis from the kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Government of Canada to enable General Motors of Canada to get into the arms race in a major way.

Another deal is to encourage automatic weapons sales to the Netherlands. It goes on and on and on. If I had time I would read into the record pages and pages from this armaments book from Canada which lists all of the various technologies, all of the weapons that Canada produces for sale abroad. There is this sort of attitude on the part of most Canadians that Canada is not participating in this activity.

Year after year in the city of Ottawa we have the ARMX bazaar. This is the arms bazaar to which weapons' buyers come from all over the world to look at all the displays. I have been there myself and I could not believe what I was seeing. There were all kinds of machine guns, tanks, rocket systems, explosives, things that you can throw, things that you can shoot and it goes on and on and on. In other words, it is a whole bazaar of weapons of destruction sponsored and encouraged, in part, by the Canadian government. It happens right here in the capital city and arms merchants from around the world come here to shop.

At Suffield, Alberta, we have ongoing research into chemical warfare, but today while the government on one hand is bringing in legislation to restrict Canadian ownership of shotguns and rifles, it is bringing in legislation to encourage Canadian firms to get into the arms

exportation business. There is a certain element of conflict here and a certain element of hypocrisy.

When we listen to the statements by the right hon. Prime Minister of Canada and the Secretary of State for External Affairs condemning the arms race and at the same time slipping in, via the other hand, legislation to encourage arms exports, it is no wonder the people of Canada wonder what on earth this government is up to.

Last year Canada's arms export was worth nearly $2 billion. This places Canada in the top 15 arms exporting countries of the world. I do not think Canadians know this. I do not think Canadians want to know this.

I know that the explanation by the minister, who sponsors this piece of peculiar and odd legislation, is that it will create jobs. I suppose, using that argument, we can get into the heroin business, we can get into the prostitution business and we can get into the drug dealing business. They all produce jobs, if that is the motive. Surely to goodness there is not a single member of Parliament who is not aware that a dollar invested in education, in construction of housing, in child care or in hospitals is a dollar that will create a lot more jobs than a dollar going into the arms industry. We all know that. If we want jobs, well then let us invest more into housing which Canadians need, and let us invest more into education and hospital care which Canadians need. If that is our motive we should be doing that.

The argument that we need this to create jobs is a bogus argument. If we permit this legislation, and this is why I oppose it so strongly as do all of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party, then what is next? This is a sale of troop vehicles, with automatic weapons attached to them, to Saudi Arabia. All right, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia is going to get hundreds of these vehicles from Canada indirectly through the United States.

What else do we get into? In other words, what we are saying is that if this passes the door is open to get into the arms export business in whatever way Canadian firms wish.

I want to say that it was one of the saddest days of my life when we decided to discuss legislation here to privatize Canadian Arsenals. You remember that day, Mr. Speaker, you were here. We wanted a Crown corporation in place to facilitate the development of military equipment and so on when Canada needed it.

• (1730)

It was a Crown corporation that permitted us in the threat of war or allowed us very quickly to mobilize an industry that could expand to fulfil and support Canada in its obligations. But when the threat of war was over and when the need was over, it could shrink up very quickly and those people could find jobs elsewhere. That was the theory of that Crown corporation.

It was in the ammunition business as well, and for us it made a lot of sense.

Now, of course, we have increasing numbers of private sector firms in the arms business. Their motive is one thing only: not the protection of Canada, not the protection of our sovereignty, but to maximize profits for their firms. That is the legitimate motive.

Once we get into that business of encouraging firms to get into the arms business, we are not just going to encourage them to keep expanding their businesses, which means expanding more and more into the arms production industry.

Is this what Canadians want? Is this the kind of country we want? No, it is not.

I see that my time is very limited. I simply want to say that we are speaking today on the principle of the bill. The principle is: Do we as a country wish to get into the arms export business? Do we as a country want to have legislation to facilitate private sector firms getting into the exporting of arms and weaponry throughout the world?

That is the question. That is the principle we are debating. I say no, we do not. I am extremely proud to say that the party with which I am associated says no, we do not want Canada to become a major arms player in the world.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer to another quote from the former President of the United States, as referred to by the previous speaker.

I would also like to congratulate the previous speaker on a very fine speech and for so succinctly assessing the situation as we found it.

President Eisenhower referred to one of the major threats to democracy, to the United States and to the freedom thereof. I am paraphrasing. We all know that he was referring to the military industrial complex.

I do not think there is anything to be gained by Canada in the expansion of the military industrial complex in this country as certainly this legislation would do. For that reason alone—a good enough reason and there are others—I stand here very proud to be opposing this legislation.

I guess it is impossible to address the matter of arms so soon after the conflict we have had in the gulf without somehow or another putting that conflict into the discussion.

I have a list here. There have been references made to the five permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations having sold arms to Iraq, but there are others as well. I would be a bit repetitive in mentioning that the United States has sold weapons to Iraq. We are still referring to the gulf conflict.

Egypt sold weapons to the country of Iraq. Kuwait sold weapons to Iraq, as did China and the Soviet Union. Italy and Great Britain did the same. This is not an exhaustive list of those who sold, but the point is that certainly the United States, Egypt, and the United Kingdom were directly involved in the confrontation in the gulf.

If there is anything that can come out of the gulf that we should be grateful for, it is that the devastation of lives was not more extensive than it was. It was bad enough.

If you look at the state of Kuwait, one cannot help but notice that it suffered the greatest devastation of all outside the country of Iraq itself.

Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, the joy—we can hardly call it that—which must today be felt by the citizens of Kuwait as they realize that they themselves helped to arm the very country which has wrought such destruction upon the country of Kuwait? To a greater or lesser extent that is the kind of situation which any country gets itself involved in whenever there is selling of arms.

There have been references made previously to Canada and the arms industry here. There have been references to what my party has said in relation to the production of arms. I would like to reiterate, as one of the previous members of my party has already said, that of course there is no question Canada should not have Armed Forces. There is no question that the armaments for the most part and to whatever extent is possible, should be manufactured in Canada.

What we are saying is that we are not interested in expanding the military industrial complex in this country to the point where we are arming other nations and the very weapons we sell are used against us. Hopefully our peacekeeping capability and integrity will be restored.

The present legislation as it refers to the sale of arms from Canada is predicated on four different things: that there be no threat of selling arms from Canada to our allies; that we not sell arms to a country that is involved or is in imminent threat of becoming involved in hostilities, to a country that is under UN sanctions, or to a country where violations of human rights are occurring in any way.

I do not think there is any point in singling out Saudi Arabia, which happens to be the country most directly involved in this arms sale. I would not suggest for a moment that there is anyone here who would possibly believe an assurance that this legislation was brought in only for the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia. This legislation is just the opening of the door for the sale of Canadian arms, wherever possible the expanded military industrial complex can sell them.

I think in the immediate context it should be pointed out and reiterated that Saudi Arabia has been cited by Amnesty International. This is the same Amnesty International which the government quoted extensively, pointing out how vicious the Iraqi government was and using Amnesty International records to show that.

If we are going to stand in a debate in this House and cite Amnesty International in one context where hostilities are occurring, we have to do it in all cases.

I realize I only have 10 minutes to speak, but I would like to perhaps summarize a little bit later on. I only have two minutes left.

I have to point out now that Saudi Arabia has also been cited by Amnesty International for violations of human rights. This is something that I think should be emphasized as strongly as possible.

There are alternatives to the manufacture of arms. For years and years, if anyone cared to listen, such imaginative people, inventors, philosophers, whatever, such as Buckminster Fuller, have proposed alternate uses of the facilities for the production of destruction, ways to be able to turn them into peaceful uses.

There are alternatives.

• (1740)

For a member of the government to sit there and say that because we take this stand on this legislation that we are somehow calling the United Auto Workers murderers, for God's sake, is to lower the level of this debate to something which we on this side of the House have become accustomed to, I grant you, but certainly takes it to a lower level than we have ever had in a debate in this House before.

There are alternatives. I would suggest that rather than trying to sell more arms, what this country ought to be doing is showing leadership within the United Nations, where I would suggest we should be saying: "Listen, world, this situation has gone far too far; we have to start, for example, paying attention to what Amnesty International is saying". We should be saying to the world that we are willing to let the United Nations become involved in our internal affairs. That could be dangerous for us as well, but we should also be saying that if we are in a new world order, then the United Nations has to be able to become involved in the internal affairs of all nations. Perhaps we can do a lot toward eliminating the need for even the manufacture of arms itself.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I am just trying to put my hands on the quotes from the Secretary of State for External Affairs, but I will do that in a minute.

I just want to make a few remarks on this bill. I am very interested in the issue of arms exports. I have been in this House of Commons some 12 years and I have constantly raised the issue of the transport of arms, especially to the Third World.

I raised the subject before in the context of "Irangate" where Trans-World Arms of Montreal was right in the thick of sending arms both to the Contras in Nicaragua and to Iran. Quite frankly, it was quite hard to get the Canadian House of Commons or the Canadian media, and consequently the Canadian people, interested in this issue until the issue finally appeared in the American nightly news with Dan Rather, and when people found out that in Ollie North's safe in the White House there was evidence that a Canadian company was deeply involved in the illegal transport of arms.

It has been an issue that I am particularly interested in. I raised it again here in the House of Commons with respect to this particular deal, that is, the export of light armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia, about an $800 million contract, and the other $100 million or so contract for the sale of guns, ammunition and so on to the Netherlands.

I had a press conference and no one came to it. No one seemed to be interested until the government brought forward a bill and now they are really interested. I think there has been some really interesting debate on this issue in the House of Commons.

It is not an easy question; it is a sad question, and it is a difficult question. It is easy to give rhetoric to it and one can shout about it from both sides, but I would just like to spend my short period here in this debate on a couple of points.

One of the points is a small but important point that was emphasized by the member for Kamloops a few minutes ago. That was the point of privatization. What happens when you privatize Canadian Arsenals, for example, and make it a private company? What can happen?. When we had a company like Canadian Arsenals, we could build it up when we needed it in the second world war or the Korean war and we could employ more people and make more guns and ammunition for the Canadian Armed Forces. Then, when we were a country at peace again, we could phase it down, because it was a matter of government policy. It was a Crown corporation and we could make other jobs for the workers. We could move them around to other jobs in the civil service or we could make sure they were looked after properly.

By and large, that worked. Once you privatized it, you got Diemaco of Kitchener. In order to survive, it has to go farther than the Canadian government contract for the armed forces and it has to export arms.

Once again, then, Canada becomes like many other countries in the business of exporting arms.

In a way, I have some sympathy. I will be frank and honest with General Motors in this particular contract. After all, it was the Department of External Affairs that went out and helped it get this contract with Saudi Arabia and promoted these contracts.

That seems to be the new role of External Affairs. It used to be that it was Canadian foreign policy. It used to be that it helped Canadian citizens when they were in trouble abroad or when they needed help as they went to a foreign country.

Now, its major role seems to be as a big trade department to promote sales of Canadian goods. Of course, one of the Canadian goods is arms. It leaves the government in contradictory situations making contradictory statements.

I was just examining the exchange in the House of Commons that I took part in on May 23 of this year. I cited the previous minister of external affairs, the right hon. Joe Clark. He said: "If there is one lesson which the world must learn from this war, it is that an unrestricted arms trade in this region, the Middle East, is no longer acceptable and constitutes a threat to the security of all members of the United Nations".

Of course, it looks contradictory to the average Canadian when the government then brings in this bill saying: "All right, let's export arms to the Middle East."

I asked this question of the Minister for International Trade in the House of Commons.

An hon. member: What did he say?

Mr. Waddell: He tried to weasel out of it, quite frankly, by saying: "Mr. Clark meant restricted weapons".

Examine the phrase: "Unrestricted arms trade in this region". We are restricting the arms trade to this region. Who is he trying to kid? The fact is that the government has this contract. It has to change the law, and it is doing that.

It puts the government in a contradictory situation. The Prime Minister and the former minister of external affairs said: "Look, the Middle East is a dangerous area". There have been 26 wars since 1945 and there is only one peace treaty, which is between Israel and Egypt.

Everybody knows what kind of area it is and that there can be other wars there. The Prime Minister was right and the minister of external affairs was right. Now, there is a contradiction here.

We cannot be holier than thou in this matter, and we should not pretend to be. Sweden has a socialist government. France has a socialist government. Name some other countries with socialist governments that export arms.

The late Rajiv Gandhi got into trouble when he was Prime Minister because of contracts with Sweden involving kickbacks and so on. This arms industry is a cancer in the world, and we have to blot it out. It takes political courage to do it.

One person who had some real political courage was the head of the machinists' union in the United States. He is now retired. His name was William Wimpensinger. They used to call him "Wimpy". He was no wimp, this man.

He went around to the machinists in the States and said: "I know we are going to lose some jobs if we cut back the arms industry, but by God, we have to do it or we are going to kill this world. We can find better jobs, brothers and sisters, outside the arms industry." That took political courage.

It is not easy for our party, quite frankly, to get up and oppose this bill.

I want to conclude by saying that it is easy to make a buck off arms, and we are starting to do that. However, we know that disarmament is tied into world development. Both of them are related. There are really two steps to the development of the Third World in the 21st century.

One is that the major powers give up making those weapons, and put some of that money into development. There is another aspect. This is where the Minister for International Trade missed again in the House of Commons when he said to me in his reply: "We were talking about weapons of mass destruction, and not about guns and light-armoured vehicles".

A weapon is a weapon is a weapon. If someone is killed by a bullet, they still are killed. If they are killed by a nuclear bomb, they are killed. If they are killed by a light-armoured vehicle and a bullet, whether in the townships of South Africa, in Central America or in the Middle East and so on, they still die.

More important, we keep sending these weapons—they are small weapons it could be argued—to Third World governments and governments throughout the world which use them on their own people, which use this kind of police force and this kind of anti-democratic system of government. This keeps down development.

There are two steps to development. One is eliminating the big weapons to have a peace dividend and the other is stopping the distribution of smaller weapons.

• (1750)

It would take political courage for a government to say we are not going to do it, we are not going to get into the international arms trade.

I sometimes think it might be nice to be an American congressman. They have a lot of power, a lot more power than we have as members of Parliament. Sometimes I really feel sorry for the American congressmen in many ways. They constantly have to defend weapons and defence contracts in their own constituencies and they cannot eliminate that cancer or oppose it. We are lucky here. We can oppose it. We can say to our union brothers and sisters: "Sorry, but the principle is more important. We can't get into this international arms trade".

The government is inconsistent. The government is wrong. It is so ironic that tomorrow we are going to debate gun control in Canada and today we are debating gun export to the world. It is wrong. It is simply wrong.

My friend, the member for Kamloops, was going to quote the Bible and I think he had to finish before he could do that. That is appropriate. In the past there have been numerous politicians from Kamloops who have been very good at quoting the Bible but he is right on this. The biblical quote was essentially the one about turning your swords into ploughshares.

One of the great times of my life was when as a young student I went to the United Nations for the first time and saw that great statue in front of the United Nations which is literally a picture of a sword being turned into a ploughshare. This government is not doing that. It is turning ploughshares into swords. That is shameful.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Call in the members.

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

(Division No. 12)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Beatty	Belsher
Bernier	Bertrand
Bjornson	Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blais	Blenkarn
Bosley	Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault	Boyer
Brightwell	Browes
Cadieux	Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey	Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)	Clark (Yellowhead)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Clifford
Cole	Collins
Corbett	Côté
Couture	Crosbie (St. John's West)
Crosby (Halifax West)	Danis
Darling	DeBlois
Della Noce	Desjardins
Dobbie	Domm
Dorin	Duplessis
Epp	Fee
Feltham	Ferland
Fontaine	Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Greene
Guilbault	Halliday
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hawkes
Hicks	Hockin
Hogue	Horner
James	Jelinek
Johnson	Joncas
Jourdenais	Kempling
Koury	Langlois
Larrivée	Layton
Lewis	Littlechild
MacDonald (Rosedale)	

MacDougall (Timiskaming)	MacKay
Malone	Marin
Mayer	McCreath
McDermid	Merrithew
Monteith	Moore
Nicholson	O'Kurley
Plourde	Porter
Pronovost	Reid
Reimer	Ricard
Richardson	Roy-Arcelin
Saint-Julien	Schneider
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)	Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Shields	Siddon
Sobeski	Sparrow
Stevenson	Tardif
Tétreault	Thacker
Thompson	Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Turner (Halton—Peel)
Valcourt	Van de Walle
Vézina	Vien
Vincent	Weiner
White	Wilbee

Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Worthy—117

NAYS

Members

Baker	Bevilacqua
Black	Blaikie
Boudria	Brewin
Caccia	Callbeck
Catterall	Chrétien
Clancy	Copps
de Jong	Dingwall
Duceppe	Duhamel
Ferguson	Finestone
Fisher	Flis
Foster	Fulton
Funk	Gaffney
Gagliano	Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)	Guarnieri
Harb	Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Heap
Hovdebo	Hunter
Jordan	Karpoff
Kristiansen	Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Lapierre	Lee
MacAulay	MacLellan
MacWilliam	Maheu
Manley	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	McCurdy
McGuire	Nault
Nunziata	Ouellet
Pagtakhan	Parker
Pickard	Prud'homme
Rideout	Riis
Robinson	Rodriguez
Simmons	Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Speller	Stewart
Stupich	Taylor
Tobin	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Vanclief	Volpe
Waddell	Wappel
Whittaker	Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—80

PAIRED MEMBERS

Cooper	Fretz
MacLaren	Milliken

• (1830)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

Bill read the second time and referred to the legislative committee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chartrand: Mr. Speaker, I did not arrive in time for the vote, but if I had been here, I would have voted with the government.

[*English*]

Mr. Hawkes: Point of order. There have been some informal consultations and I think you would find a consensus in the House to call it seven o'clock, which would enable us to move immediately to private members' hour.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being seven o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30 the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

REQUEST FOR BILL OF ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake) moved:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should establish a Bill of Environmental Rights to empower Canadians to fight polluters and guarantee all Canadians the right to live in a healthy environment.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the importance of this motion to all Canadians could never be over-stated and it is most important that I am presenting this motion on World Environment Day during Environment Week, 1991.

Canadians from coast to coast to coast are all too aware that our environment teeters on the brink of irreparable destruction. Cynical attempts by governments to buffer big businesses' continued practice of sacrificing our land, our air and our water to cheap and

easy profits do nothing but sell off our childrens' right to a healthful future.

Tracts of forests one-third the size of Japan are sold to Japanese industry while our Prime Minister travels to that country and cosies up to their top big business executives to encourage more selling of our deteriorating forest. Our forest is shrinking. It is not being regenerated at the same rate that it is being removed. These forests are our lungs and home to countless disappearing species with which we share our country. We should be stewards of wild life, not executioners. Much of our disappearing forest will simply not be there for our children.

Water, air and land pollution continues to fume, spout and pour forth from industry and communities at an ever-increasing rate. Our fragile ecosystems cannot cope with the ravaging of violent toxins slathered across our environment. Government continues to support businesses' efforts to avoid often costly cleanups and environment impact studies of projects. Northern and remote residents, cottagers and tourists alike watch with frustration, shame and disbelief as acid rain continues to kill our lakes and rivers. The government's refusal to accept plans to phase in a long-term strategy of zero discharge for toxic effluents confound increasing attempts by individuals and communities to combat toxic biocide.

But our laws have not kept pace with the times. During the 1960s and 1970s, more and more Canadians raised their voices against environmental destruction and more and more of these people spoke with one voice. DDT, destruction of farm land and mercury poisoning were but a few of the key issues of the time. But our legal system still favours the polluter and environmentally hazardous developers over those who would give of their time and energy to protect, not to destroy, our environment.

Our citizens do not currently have the right to take sufficient action to protect the environment. The government's refusal to proceed with a serious environmental assessment bill serves only to underscore the unwillingness of cabinet to protect our nation's skin and tissue from pollution by eager developers who would sacrifice not only our environment but entire cultures, like the Cree facing the James Bay II project. The solution is no mystery. The collective expertise and experience of environmentalists and environmental organizations have produced reports which lay the basis for a very clear and effective environmental assessment bill, but the government instead, turned the volume up on big business opposition to effective environmental assessment and refused to listen to what environmentalists had to say.

• (1840)

Our government may have the power to stop these acts, but as is the case, time after time after time, with Point Aconi, Kemano James Bay, Rafferty-Alameda and so on, our government has not the will or the backbone to listen to Canadians and put a stop to treating the environment like a sacrificial lamb on the altar of quick profit.

In fact, just last week the government had the opportunity to demonstrate a real commitment to the environment, but they chose not to do so.

All previous parliamentary business died when the House began a new session with a new throne speech on May 13. The government's then C-78 legislation, an act to establish an environmental assessment process had not passed and all testimony heard by the legislative committee studying that bill suggested that this was the best thing to happen to C-78, that it should have been put aside and the bill rewritten.

The government was given the opportunity to bring in new legislation which reflected an understanding of the need for a sound, well designed assessment process. But instead, they chose to reintroduce C-78, as if it had never died. C-78 is now C-13, a bad news number for a bad news bill. C-13 is the same old flawed and unsatisfactory bill that C-78 was, and it should not be that way.

The new Minister of the Environment had a golden opportunity to demonstrate that he had a real commitment to the environment and that he had listened to the experts on this bill. Instead, the new minister has taken up where the old minister left off and none of us are any better off. There is still no environmental assessment legislation in place in Canada.

I remain committed to developing a better assessment bill, and will continue to work to secure one for Canadians and their children who will inherit this mess that we are leaving behind.

The green plan had also presented the perfect window of opportunity to turn the corner away from continued escalation of pollution. But the government chose to turn this window of opportunity for positive change into a door to the trough for the friends of government. Green plan moneys are being squandered on pre-election ploys and we all lose because of it.

According to information gained through Freedom of Information requests, the federal government has spent more than $7 million on advertising and public relations exercises around the green plan. To me, if the green plan was as good as the government says it is, no selling job would have been required, nor would the government have had to spend $12,000 on picture frames, $10,000 on lapel pins or $150,000 on communications advice from a private consulting firm.

Canadians already know that they want their government to work on the environment. The polls tell us that the environment rates high on Canadians' list of priority issues. Canadians are willing to support action on the environment. But $10,000 for lapel pins does nothing for the environment.

Obviously the sales job was not for the environment, it was for the Conservative party whose free trade agreement and goods and services tax have angered Canadians from coast to coast. Seven million dollars in taxpayers' money on the green plan should not have been directed for this clearly partisan purpose. The Tories should have used their own money in this shameful promotion.

It is equally shameful that we still have no measures to ensure that such a basic right as safe drinking water for all Canadians, a disgrace made absurd by the amount of fresh water available within our borders and made criminal due to the government's trade deal and the move to export more water to the United States industry, while so many Canadian citizens are denied fresh water to drink.

The current round of constitutional talks provides an opportunity to renew the values upon which our nation is founded, values of environmental respect and stewardship. I am proud that the leader of our party has called for an environmental accord to protect not only our resources, but our jobs as well. Any new constitutional accord must include a stronger recognition of environmental as well as social and economic rights.

What better measure to unite Canadians from coast to coast to coast? Polls and simple logic both show that our environment, the world in which we live, work and play, is a top priority for Canadians. This tremendous will to do something before it is too late should be harnessed to build a strong Canada. Pollution does not respect boundaries, it is a preventable disease which knows no borders.

A bill of rights would go a long way to dealing with these issues for many, many years to come. It would be central to the much needed integration of economic planning, social considerations and environmental protection. Instead the government continues daily to push changes which make environmental matters worse.

The Mexican trade deal is a case in point. Our government has mouthed the words of United States government and business by refusing to integrate environmental concerns into the trade negotiations. What shameful and backward thinking.

A bill of rights is the step that is needed to bring our laws into the last decade of the 20th century. A bill of rights would guarantee: "That people have the right to clean air, pure water and the preservation of natural, scenic, historical and aesthetic values of the environment."

Those words were from a private members' bill introduced some time ago by Ruth Grier, a member of the Ontario legislature and now the new Ontario Minister of the Environment. As minister, Ms. Grier has begun a process which will see the province of Ontario try to fill the gap created by this federal government as Ontario moves towards its own environmental bill of rights.

I have just returned from the Yukon where another NDP government, led by Premier Tony Penikett has introduced its own environmental bill. Here too we see that the territory is enshrining the right to a healthful, natural environment in their legislation and is therefore a leader among all legislators in this marvellous land we call Canada.

The federal government, in turn, has the obligation to conserve and maintain our environment for future generations. This is not a new idea. The Canadian Environmental Law Association has been pushing for an environmental bill of rights since at least 1970.

Any one person, or group of persons, who believe that a polluter is contaminating or degrading our environment, deserves the right to know the minister responsible will proceed in a serious way to determine the extent and nature of the problem, and be supported by legislation to give the government the power to stop, alter or otherwise change any existing or proposed project. Such a bill of rights would shift the burden of proof to the polluter, after establishing that environmental damage is the likely result of their action or their proposed project.

Such a bill of rights would give people the right to sue polluters, thrusting us finally into the role of nurturing stewards of our land. In this way we have much to learn from our indigenous people, who for so many years have tended and respected our environment.

It reminds me of a meeting this afternoon of the environment committee of this House where the Minister of the Environment told the members of the committee that he would like to see, through the green plan, the empowering of people on the environment. Nothing would empower the people more than a bill of rights. Such a bill of rights would ensure whistle blowing protection so that any worker has protection of the law in blowing the whistle on an employer who causes serious pollution, excessive waste of energy or deliberate or accidental contamination or degradation of our land, air or water. Workers deserve this right because not only will that go a long way toward preventing pollution at the source, but these workers who see big business pollution going on, know full well it is their children who will suffer from the effect of this environmental damage. Buyers and users of land have the right to be protected from buying polluted tracts of land, and consumers have the right to be able to choose and expect increasingly environmentally friendly products and packaging when there must be any packaging at all.

• (1850)

The people of our communities across this country deserve the right to sue the government and ensure that laws are enforced. There have been hundreds of cases in the United States where the Environmental Protection Agency has been sued on this basis. The majority of cases has been successful.

A bill of rights must also deal with the issue of compensation for workers who lose or must alter their livelihood because of essential environmental protection measures. Of course, workers through their organizations must be central to the decision-making process which concerns all dealings with the environment and particularly those which impact on industry and their jobs. Most importantly, all citizens must have the right to be directly involved in this process through tribunals and panels.

Community based input is essential to ensure community based support for serious long-term environmental protection. People in communities deserve to be involved in all aspects of environmental decision making, the setting of standards and controls, the review of permits and regulations. They should receive adequate notice about all orders and regulations relating to control standards and public participation in decisions.

All members of this House should support this bill. Our environment is not something which we can leave until another time. There is no other time. Environmental organizations and community groups have made it all too clear to each and every member of Parliament in this House.

Today is the day to act. Today is the day to become a government with a commitment to the environment, a commitment to our children's future and our planet's future. Tomorrow is far, far too late.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate my colleague, the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, for introducing this bill which, I must say, I fully support.

[*English*]

I want to congratulate my colleague. He and I sat on the committee on Bill C-78 together. I know the environment is something he takes very much to heart. I support the bill. I support the initiative.

That being said, there are certain nuances that I would like to draw in the differences of opinion between him and me, and then there are certain fundamental differences which I would also like to bring to the attention of this House.

In terms of the nuances, the smaller differences, I do not believe that it was necessary in presenting this bill, which as he so properly said should involve all members of this House and indeed all of the Canadian people, for him to engage in a particularly blanket and vicious attack on Canadian entrepreneurs. It is not fair and it is not appropriate.

I am sure that if he were to review his remarks, he would really understand that it is not all business, not all of the private sector that engages in unlawful pollution. Yes, there are some businesses which do so and they should indeed suffer penalties. Let us not engage in universal condemnation.

At the same time I am sure that the member would want to recognize that there are other bodies who pollute, governments for instance, and municipalities that are not prepared to clean up their act. I am sure that the member, again if he were to go through his remarks, would not be so fulsome in his praise of the NDP government of Ontario. Indeed, the major environmental thrust in Ontario was due to the hon. James Bradley, the Liberal minister of the environment in that province. I am sure he would share again with me, if he were to review what he had said, the deep disappointment of the people of Ontario with the fact that the NDP government which did not expect to take power simply engaged in a lot of promises and has let the environmental community down very badly.

Let us go now to some of the more substantive differences of opinion between myself and this member, whom I admire greatly, and his legislation which indeed I ultimately support.

There is no doubt that the member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake is right when he says that the purpose of this legislation is to empower people to force governments to obey their laws.

He is also right when he examines the evolution of the EARP guidelines brought in by a federal Liberal government. Those guidelines, which were meant to bring polluters to heel by this unfortunate Conservative government, were simply regarded as guidelines. It has been successive court decisions which have forced the government to live up to its responsibility.

The member is right as well when he says that what is now happening is that we have guidelines that have the force of law. This government with C-78, now C-13, is attempting to bring in legislation which would only have the force of guidelines.

An environmental bill of rights is necessary to empower people.

Where I would disagree, with the member however, is how to empower people. It is not sufficient to only bring in an environmental bill of rights. That bill of rights must have certain teeth. There are two suggestions that I would make to the member, within the context of the goodwill that exists and my support for his bill. The first is the absolute need for third party intervenor funding. It is not enough to simply empower people if, as a result of empowering them, we are ultimately going to bankrupt them as they begin the lengthy degree of court cases in an attempt to force government to live up to its own legislation.

Third party funding, which the current government has refused in the case of C-78, now C-13, on any kind of a reasonable level in virtually every court case, is essential if the Canadian people are to be allowed to expand democracy in the way that we all believe should happen. It would allow the Canadian people, not only to decide after the fact, but to have input into decisions as they are in the process of being made.

The second suggestion that I would make to the member in beefing up his bill is the necessity, within this House, of having an environmental auditor who would—and I have heard the member speak about this and he is nodding his agreement and we obviously share that view—have the same power as the Auditor General. He would report to Parliament whether the government was obeying its legislation and what progress the government had made on its commitment. He would be an environmental auditor who would really empower the people of Canada through their elected representatives.

I support the philosophy behind the member's bill and I would hope that this government would take the member's speech into account.

[*Translation*]

I would also like, Mr. Speaker, to ask the government, when it accepts the member's request which was so well formulated, to agree also to my suggestions regarding an environmental Auditor as well as third party intervenor funding. And I would also like, Mr. Speaker, to see the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, give up his attacks against the private sector and not indulge in his desire which is quite understandable to praise the outdated NDP Ontario government.

I hope the government is really going to tackle the basic issues we are considering. I am sure, because I know the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment very well who is a man of high calibre and who shares our philosophy, that the government is going to accept these issues in an effort to really help the hon.

member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake win acceptance for his vision.

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, once again I am happy to participate in a debate and particularly a debate on the environment, like the one called for by the motion of the New Democratic Party.

This motion is asking the House to endorse the establishment by the government of a Bill of Environmental Rights. Such a Bill would give Canadians a chance to fight polluters and guarantee them the right to live in a healthy environment.

I must state, Mr. Speaker, that protection of the environment and improvement of its quality are amongst the top priorities of this government. Our track record clearly shows to what extent we are determined to work to that end. On December 11, 1990, we made public our environment action plan entitled "Canada's Green Plan". The basic principle of this plan is shared by all Canadians: To guarantee to the present and future generations a healthy and safe environment and a strong and thriving economy. The best way to guarantee to the citizens of this country a clean environment is to set ourselves very definite goals and keep people abreast of the progress we are making toward them. This, Mr. Speaker, is the essence of the Green Plan. It contains specific objectives and timetables. It provides for regular consultations and detailed reporting on the environment, to allow the public to follow closely the progress being made.

• (1900)

Mr. Speaker, the commitment made by the government to improve the environment will be enshrined in the legislation. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, which establishes the federal environmental assessment process, states, in its preamble, that the government seeks to achieve an appropriate balance between economic development and the preservation and enhancement of environmental quality.

Mr. Speaker, impact studies were done in my riding concerning the completion of highway 50 between Lachute and Mirabel. Of course, these studies have held up for quite some time, the construction of that highway which is necessary, if not essential to the development of the large region of Argenteuil. And I can tell you that the people of my riding were very aware of the quality of the environment. They, of course, wanted to preserve the environment, but not by having to go through red tape and additional delays. The latter are often welcomed by the government's financing the construction of those highways, who end up making commitments over several years, but which in fact are detrimental to regional development. A balance must therefore be found and I certainly agree with the government's objective of achieving an appropriate balance between economic development and the environment.

That bill also provides that all departments and federal agencies must make an environmental assessment for all the projects concerning which they have a decision making power. The legislation also gives far reaching powers to the Minister of Environment, so that he can ensure that the process is applied fairly, efficiently and openly. Moreover, and this is a very important aspect, those powers will ensure that the public can contribute to a large extent to the decision making process regarding projects which may have serious consequences on the environment.

Over and beyond this legislation, the Prime Minister has pledged unequivocally, on behalf of the government, that the environment would be a priority in all the decisions concerning policies and programs. Mr. Speaker, the government realizes that the Prime Minister's actions have a bearing on the life of the Canadian population in ways that are not always directly linked to his projects. That is why the government now requires that policy and program proposals submitted to Cabinet which may have a substantial impact on Canada's environment, must be accompanied by a statement of their environmental impact.

Thanks to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and the policies of the Canadian government, almost every important measure contemplated by the government will be examined from the environmental perspective. Canadians will have the right to be directly involved in the process or at least have access to the results.

The Minister of the Environment is responsible for implementing the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. This legislation confers very broad powers on the minister for issuing regulations to protect air, water and soil quality in Canada. Furthermore, the legislation requires the minister to report regularly to Canadians on the state of the Canadian environment.

Thanks to this legislation, the public can be actively involved in decisions that have an environmental impact. The legislation also gives the public the might to prosecute polluters who violate the Act.

The government is also very much aware of the importance of providing information on the environment, Mr. Speaker. In the course of consultations with Canadians as the government was developing its Green Plan, it was often said that the government should set a very high priority on regular dissemination, on a broad scale, of easily understood information on the state of the environment and any changes that have been corded.

Canadians also told us, Mr. Speaker, that they wanted to be able to base their environmental decisions on solid ground. They wanted good, solid information to determine whether their individual actions would help reduce the deterioration of the environment. They also wanted to be able to judge whether the government was also doing its share to leave a healthy and sustainable environment for future generations, and to be able to make an informed assessment of the performance of industry with respect to the environment.

To provide regularly quality information on the environment is one of the principal commitments made in the Green Plan. Although much remains to be done in this very complex field, the government is committed to providing Canadians with the information they need to make enlightened decisions regarding their own activities and those of others—including governments and industry—as they affect the quality of the environment.

I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that the government feels that the steps we have already taken are indeed the best way for the Canadian people to fight polluters and for the government to fulfill its commitments. We have already taken the necessary steps to ensure that all Canadians have the right to live in a healthy environment. I think this Bill of Environmental Rights would duplicate many existing provisions. It would be better to let the voters concerned about the environment be the judge of the government's performance. That is true accountability! The Canadian people will decide if we have not achieved our goals regarding the environment.

In my riding as in others, Mr. Speaker, I think that most of the people involved and active in local environmental associations know very well that, while working towards a healthy and sustainable environment, they have to bear in mind that economic development must go on. We cannot stop the march of time unduly and prevent the implementation of an industrial project designed to provide employment for fear that a bee will not be gathering nectar.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I hope that my constituents will take part in the green plan implementation process. There will be programs to encourage participation in special projects. Being a member yourself, you know very well, Mr. Speaker, that people interested in doing various things, be it recycling bottles, newspapers, whatever, are coming to see us regularly in our ridings. For years now, one of my constituents has been wishing that the government would come up with a little program to finance the purchase of a vehicle, allowing him to expand his business and gather more cardboard for recycling and resale to companies prepared to buy it from him.

So, I am convinced that the green plan will give my constituents the opportunity, or so I wish, to be more directly involved in the protection of our environment.

Mrs. Finestone: Happy birthday, Lise! You turned 41 today, did you not?

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to take part in this debate and support the motion moved by my colleague, who calls for the government to establish a Bill of Environmental Rights to empower Canadians to fight polluters.

• (1910)

I listened carefully to what the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau had to say. Of course, she praised the green plan introduced by her government, but, at the same time, she opposed the motion before the House asking the government to establish a Bill of Environmen-

tal Rights to empower Canadians to fight polluters and everyone who is destroying our country's environment.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I have some difficulty understanding the arguments put forward by my colleague from Argenteuil—Papineau. I also have trouble figuring out why she is against this Bill, or should we say this initiative, since it is not even a Bill.

[*English*]

With this motion, the government itself would still be drafting the bill along with its content. If there are concerns on the part of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment or anyone else across the way, and if they fear that the bill would be too strict and would stop the economy from functioning, or if they have some other morbid fear which they may be motivated to use as an excuse, then I say to them: Draft your bill in such a way as to provide the equilibrium that you say is necessary. I say that if that is their position.

They are taking the position that the bill the government would produce would be wrong. From time to time I am partisan and do not always support the government across the way, but not even I would accuse this government of being so incompetent that it could not possibly propose a bill such as the one requested here.

I would say that this government probably is able to draft such a bill. We should allow it the opportunity to do so. Here I am supporting giving the government the power to propose such a bill.

Let us assume, for instance, that this government is totally incompetent. I know it is not beyond possibility, but we on this side of the House will help the government to produce such legislation.

My colleague from LaSalle—Émard would be more than pleased I am sure to assist the government and the parliamentary secretary in preparing the kind of legislation that we need in the event that the government is as incompetent as some of the Tories across the way think it is.

The Tories were talking about the green plan. I can think of two reasons why it is called the green plan: the environment is green, and it is a green slush fund. The only thing green is the money coming into the government advertising agencies which are benefiting from the green plan.

I say to the government across the way that if its green plan is going to mean anything, the government will have to stop using the money for its advertising—

Mr. Stevenson: Are you not in favour of cleaning up the Fraser River?

Mr. Boudria: I am not in favour of cleaning out the taxpayers' pockets to reward the friends of the Tories across the way in government advertising agencies.

What I am in favour of is taking the money to clean up the environment, not to clean out the taxpayers' wallets. That is what I am favour of.

If the members across the way think differently, if they think instead that we should reward the friends of the Tories, they have a right to think that. I suppose they have a right to be wrong and they can continue being wrong if they wish to do so.

They now have the popular support of a very large proportion of the population, somewhere in the area of 13 or 14 per cent, but that is okay. If they want to continue along that line, they can do so.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from LaSalle—Émard has shown today that the government's Green Plan is clearly not enough. What we need are specific initiatives to protect Canadians. Today, we are asking this House to approve a motion authorizing the government to propose legislation, which of course we could accept or reject, or improve, once we get it. If the government feel they are unable to propose such legislation they just have to step aside, Mr. Speaker, and we on this side of the House will be ready to move over to the other side and we will be ready to provide real, specific initiatives to protect the environment of this country.

[*English*]

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to address the House on what is a very interesting proposal, one for which I am afraid there may be excessive expectations. Those are the kinds of issues which I would like to address during the next few minutes.

All members of this House irrespective of party share a very common and strong desire to protect the environment. As a result of an enhanced amount of environmental awareness over the last perhaps five to ten years, I think there is a widespread realization not only in this

House but throughout the country that Canada's environment, the environment of other nations, and indeed the global environment is very much under attack.

While some individual members may have led in the forefront in their efforts in this House to increase awareness, I think it is true to say that at this time there is not a single member in the House who is not in broad agreement that an immense amount of work needs to be done in order to undo many of the mistakes of the past.

A question which is uppermost in my mind is how we should go about addressing what is obviously a very monumental problem, a problem which faces us as a federal government, a problem which faces each of the provincial governments throughout the country, a problem which faces the municipal governments as well, faces us as individuals and within the international community.

At first blush the thought of an environmental bill of rights is certainly an attractive one, and I would congratulate the hon. member for making sure that it is a point of debate in this House. I would encourage him to continue with a suggestion that even if he is not successful on this particular occasion, it may well be that the idea with the passage of time will develop to the point of a broader degree of understanding.

It seems to me that what we must address right now is the question of what we would expect of an environmental bill of rights and how we would best go about achieving those several objectives. I believe what we are looking for as Canadians and as parliamentarians is some sort of assurance that the various levels of government will work together among themselves, with the environmental groups, with the business community, and with citizens at large in order to ensure there is a broad framework in place to try and protect the environment in the future from some of the ravages of the past.

I see this broad framework including many facets. I see it including federal legislation. I think of the Canadian Environment Protection Act which is already law. I see it including many regulations, many of which will emanate from that Canadian Environment Protection Act, and I am very conscious in my responsibilities as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment that we still have a significant distance to go in the establishment of those regulations.

As I say that, I am also conscious that government alone will not accomplish a great deal if it simply passes regulations without working in close consultation with other jurisdictions of government and with those whose actions should be regulated. Very often that is, but not solely, the business community, the industrial community. Of course individuals must be a part of that process as well.

I believe that the provincial governments' jurisdictions must be a part of this process, part of this multi-faceted approach to achieve the over-all objective which we are pursuing. I am very conscious of the constitutional fact that the provincial governments are largely responsible for the control of natural resources within the Confederation of Canada. To be frank, many provincial governments today are fearful that the federal government either is or may be on the verge of intruding upon what it perceives to be its jurisdiction.

• (1920)

In my own mind I am very clear on the fact that I believe Canadians are asking this federal government to accept a major role of leadership and I believe it is appropriate it should do so. But I also believe it will be more effective if we can work in co-operation with the provinces rather than confrontation with the provinces. They are a very important part of the multi-facet approach.

I would like to say that I believe the NGOs, the environmental non-governmental organizations, have a major role to play in this process. To me they bring a wealth of experience, a vast amount of knowledge and as well some very obvious, sincere convictions on the need for the environment to be protected. I see them as partners in the process, just as I do individuals who are becoming increasingly conscious of the need to protect the environment.

I spoke once before in this House about an individual constituent who wrote to me some time ago. I would like to remind the House of that one single letter because the message, I thought, was so meaningful, somewhat symtomatic of what I see happening in Canada. She was an older woman, according to her letter, living alone in a very small community within my constituency of Brandon—Souris. She wrote to say that she was concerned about the manner in which she was heating her house and whether or not in using the fuel oil which was available to her she was in any way endangering the

environment. She sought advice as to what she should do as a result of that.

I was very touched by that letter because here was evidence of an individual Canadian, perhaps without substantial monetary means, who was clearly prepared to make some sort of sacrifice in order to do her part in what she perceived to be a Canadian struggle in order to protect the environment.

I guess what impressed me about that particular letter was that she wrote out of a genuine sense of concern and conviction. She did not write as a result of regulations requiring her to do so. She did not write because of a particular piece of legislation on which she based her concerns. She wrote as an individual who had grown aware of certain dangers and she was willing to do her part and respond.

I think what I see right now in this country, and elsewhere in the world, is a tremendous need for the development of partnerships in which all people will understand—perhaps to say all would be naive—but a vast majority of Canadians and citizens throughout the world would understand that we have a common responsibility to address the problems which face us in a co-operative and partnership manner.

One of the reasons why I am hesitant to see an environmental bill of rights as being some sort of solution to the challenge which is before us right now is that I fear it would suggest that somehow or other we could depend upon a particular piece of legislation, and the courts, which would presumably be an important partner in the process, to absolve ourselves of any other responsibilities and to be some sort of panacea in itself.

I accept the fact that legislation and courts may be an essential part of the over-all process of protecting the environment. I am sometimes as frustrated as other members are when I see that sentences levied against polluters are not as severe as I would wish them to be. I really believe that the best guarantee for a safe environmental future lies in a widespread determination to accept our responsibilities as individuals and whatever level of government we may be a part of, or whatever role we play in society, rather than put all of our hopes in a single piece of legislation or in the courts and ask them to enforce them.

We must work together and by working together we can succeed.

I was struck during the course of the green plan consultations how many hundreds, indeed thousands of Canadians who came forth, even though they came with a great deal of scepticism at the start, willing to be a part of the process. I would suggest that it is out of that sort of search for solutions that will come the strategies of tomorrow.

It may well be some time into the future that the environmental bill of rights will fit in perhaps to a multi-faceted approach as the hon. member wishes, but I believe right now the priority of this government, other governments and Canadians wherever they may be, whether individually or collectively, should be in trying to form the kind of partnerships the green plan is addressing.

While I congratulate the hon. member for ensuring that this issue is very much an issue to be debated now and again in the future, I would suggest perhaps that there are other issues and other solutions that are more important at this point in time. I look forward to that debate continuing on into the future.

Mr. Ross Stevenson (Durham): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to talk to the member's motion. The motion, as others have said, would have the government consider the creation of an environmental bill of rights to empower Canadians—and I think we should remember those two words clearly, empower Canadians—to fight polluters and guarantee all Canadians the right to live in a healthy environment.

I am sure very few of us would quarrel with the member's objectives on this issue. Certainly I would not and I know few people in my constituency would quarrel with that concept. We want a clean, healthy and productive environment for ourselves, for our children and certainly for future generations.

Let us not choose a means of questionable effectiveness to achieve an end which we can all support. The creation of an environmental bill of rights is an appealing

notion, but is it in reality the best way to achieve the goals?

I would like to reflect just for a moment on our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Certainly it provides Canadians with individual rights beyond those of most nations. Many people of the world would consider our Charter of Rights and Freedoms a model for their countries. Yet sometimes, when it is taken to an extreme, one really wonders if, in certain aspects, it is in the best public interest.

I will give an example of one of those extremes, what I think of as an extreme. I look at the situation of criminals in this country who are here claiming refugee status to evade punishment in other countries. I see how they use our laws, or maybe I should say abuse our laws, and I wonder whether this is in the best public interest of Canadians in general.

Sometimes one wonders if we have not taken individual rights a step too far in certain situations. Sometimes I wonder, when I think of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, if we should not have brought along a charter of responsibility, or maybe a charter of responsibility and opportunity to go along with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In drafting an environmental bill, again I am going to purposely use an extreme, one might very well draft around the sort of issue that I am going to bring up. Certainly one can look at the automobile. The automobile certainly pollutes the atmosphere. If a bill of rights for the environment were drafted in a fairly broad way, an individual could bring action against neighbours and against the public in general on the use of the automobile, a polluting device in our environment. Could the banning of the automobile result from that sort of action?

Again, that is an extreme, but certainly one has to be careful when one looks at what exactly pollution is and how it affects us as individuals.

I did not mean to be partisan in this talk today. The opposition took a few definite shots. I suppose one should reflect on the situation and I suppose, to a certain extent, I will be partisan in my next couple of comments.

I used to be a member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It was interesting that during my years there, two members of the Liberal party had Private Members' Bills—actual bills, not just motions—suggesting that the government bring forward a bill of environmental rights. Interestingly enough, both of those members ended up in the Liberal cabinet later in the 1980s and neither one of them ever brought forward a bill of rights for the environment.

Subsequently, just a year or two later, the NDP critic for the environment brought in a Private Members' Bill almost identical to the bills that the two members I referred to previously had introduced to the Ontario legislature. Once again, now that the NDP is in power its promise of a bill of rights on the environment is at least delayed, and quite possibly we will not see it forthcoming.

Again, I think the problem is that while the concept is good and everybody generally supports the idea and individuals want more power to deal with environmental issues, when it comes to actually writing a bill, it is rather difficult to word it in a proper way so that it is not taken to an extreme.

Therefore, let us look at some of the possibilities of empowering people, giving them more ability to react and help in the improvement of our environment.

I am not going to talk at great length about the green plan because other members have done so. Certainly, the green plan is based on a vision which all Canadians will share in. When one looks at the individual programs in the green plan, a few of which have been announced and many more will be announced over the next six years, there are many areas where individual Canadians can take a very active involvement.

Just to briefly mention two. There can be individual attempts to reduce solid waste—whether by a family or a business—through recycling, judicious purchasing and reducing the amount of packaging in the products we purchase and the use of composting. There are a great many areas where an individual can take action, and very distinct action, to assist in saving our environment.

Another opportunity to assist in the environment is the community tree planting program. That will be announced soon, I hope. That will allow individual Canadians and local organizations to get very much involved in planting trees across Canada.

The other piece of legislation I had hoped to talk about is the Environmental Assessment Act but I see my time is rather limited. There certainly will be opportunities for Canadians to be involved in that. The one I wish to mention at the end is the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. That gives extensive rights to public participation and decision making affecting the environment. It also confers upon the public the power to take

court action when an activity contravenes the act. I think, to a significant degree, the empowerment within the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, and the new assessment act when it passes, will go a long way toward giving individual Canadians the thrust that they wish to have to improve our environment.

Mr. Brian White (Dauphin—Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take the couple of minutes I have remaining to say a few words about Motion M-217 brought forward by my colleague from Saskatchewan.

The hon. member's riding is just west of where my riding is in western Manitoba. When you speak of the environment, if you come out to my part of Manitoba you can look up and see the clear blue sky, and about 300 yards away from my home in Swan River, Manitoba you see nature at its best. We have small mountain ranges with the grass and trees growing. People in the urban centres of Canada cannot appreciate the type of environment that we are able to live in. But, of course, if things keep going the way they have been going over the recent past, that is very much at risk.

I will give one example specific to my part of Manitoba. Back in 1989 the Repap Corporation purchased a large pulp mill in La Pas, Manitoba, and in doing so acquired the cutting rights to a major portion of Manitoba, including the area around where I live in Swan River. Included in the purchase were plans of major expansions, both in La Pas and a chipping plant in Swan River. They had planned to follow up on several other areas. What has come to pass since that time is that Repap is subject to several environmental studies to enable the corporation to expand. So even in the pristine part of Manitoba and areas in western Canada, the governments and citizens involved are very very sensitive to the environment and are making sure that these projects are subject to environmental studies before they go forward.

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

It being 7.38 o'clock p.m. this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 o'clock a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 7.38 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 6, 1991

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

TABLING OF TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CANADA-FRANCE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the official parliamentary delegation that represented Canada at the twenty-fourth meeting of the Canada-France Inter-Parliamentary Association, held in Paris, Calais, Lyon and the Alps from April 5 to April 15, 1991.

* * *

[*English*]

BILL C-202

REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of legislative committee A on Bill C-202, an act respecting a national day of remembrance and action on violence against women, without amendment.

I might say that this is the first committee I have ever sat on in which all the members were on one side of the table. The members of each party spoke strongly in favour of the bill, expressing their support for the concept and the idea.

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Bob Hicks (Scarborough East) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-227, an act to amend the Criminal Code (desecration of the flag).

He said: As we have heard, this is a bill making it an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada to desecrate the flag.

I think all members of the House will remember that this legislation was chosen as a votable item by the elections and privileges committee during the last session of Parliament, but did not have the opportunity to proceed to debate and a vote because Parliament prorogued.

I must say that I have been very pleased with the tremendous support since this bill was introduced in the summer of 1990. There has been support from all across Canada. I have been on national television and radio talk shows. Some of the strongest endorsements came from the Royal Canadian Naval Association and the National Council of Veterans Association, representing 19 varied associations.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

EXTENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC WORKS VOTES IN MAIN ESTIMATES

[*English*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made Thursday, May 23, 1991, the following motion in the name of the Leader of the Opposition is deemed adopted:

[*Translation*]

That, pursuant to Standing Order 81(4)(*a*) and Order made Thursday, May 23, 1991, consideration of Public Works Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 of the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1992, by the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations, be extended beyond June 7, 1991.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a number of petitions from constituents in my riding. These particular constituents reside in the communities of Lumby, Salmon Arm, Sicamous and Enderby.

These petitioners are calling upon the government to reconsider its decision to force the provinces to either increase funding for the RCMP, in many cases far greater than the municipalities can afford, or to decrease services and close detachments.

We recognize that a decision has been made recently in this regard.

These petitioners had signed these beforehand, but I think the petitioners are still relevant in presenting their case that RCMP services should be maintained at their current level, with the current levels of funding by the federal government.

On behalf of these petitioners, I present these to the House today.

CANADA POST

Mr. Cid Samson (Timmins—Chapleau): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise under Standing Order 36 to present a petition signed by quite a number of my constituents in the riding of Timmins—Chapleau, and in particular in South Porcupine.

The petitioners are calling on Parliament to support the maintenance of rural post offices and postal services. They also call on Parliament to reject the Conservative agenda to cut back and close these post offices.

TAXATION

Mr. A. H. Harry Brightwell (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present to the House a petition from people in the riding of Perth—Wellington—Waterloo, the communities of Stratford, Mitchell and Shakespeare.

The petitioners consider the Income Tax Act discriminatory against the people who choose to stay home and look after their children as compared to buying child care services.

They believe the credits and allowances make it more advantageous for people with families to live together in an unmarried rather than a married state. They believe the system is cumbersome.

The petitioners pray that the House will amend the Income Tax Act to make it fair and equitable for all family arrangements that are available.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure today to present two petitions on behalf of my constituents, pursuant to Standing Order 36.

The first petition deals with the goods and services tax, the tax that was supposed to be so simple and so effective. It was supposed to be revenue neutral.

My constituents from the communities of Rainy River, Emo, and Fort Frances ask that this particular tax be rescinded. They humbly petition this place, this House of Parliament, to rescind the goods and services tax and find a simple, fair and efficient means to levy taxes in Canada.

WAGE CONTROLS

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Madam Speaker, I also have a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 which deals with the government's large tax increases and its belief that in order to get its house in order, it would discriminate against working men and women in this country by freezing their wages in the public sector, and by doing so, enabling itself to get out of the mess that it put itself in.

Again, the petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject the imposition of wage controls and reaffirm support for free collective bargaining in this country for Canadian workers.

MERCHANT NAVY

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Madam Speaker, I have a petition today signed by the residents of Saskatchewan, some from my riding and some neighbouring my riding in the communities of Debden and Big River, rural Saskatoon and Shelbrooke.

The petitioners state that 12,000 Canadian members of our merchant navy served their country during the Second World War, 1,259 of whom died in combat.

The petitioners state that the United States and the United Kingdom have recognized that merchant seamen are veterans, and they state that approximately 3,500 Canadians served in dangerous waters during the last war and seek what they sought since the end of the war: equal recognition, entitlement and benefits, a position supported by the Royal Canadian Legion.

These petitioners call upon Parliament to pass legislation that would confer veteran status to those who served in Canada's merchant navy during the Second World War.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Shall all questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved that Bill C-17, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Customs Tariff in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

• (1020)

Mr. Dingwall: I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. There have been some discussions among the three political parties. I am not seeking unanimous consent. I just wish to inform the House that there will be one speaker for the government, one speaker for the Official Opposition and, I believe, one speaker for the New Democratic Party.

Then, when that debate collapses, which we would presume would be prior to one o'clock, it would go on division. Thereafter at three o'clock we would proceed with the discussion of Bill C-11, an act to amend the Railway Act, post-Question Period.

I believe the parliamentary secretary is aware of that, and I apprise my colleagues in the New Democratic Party as well.

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, I can confirm that these are the discussions and that we on this side are certainly pleased to co-operate with that.

Mr. MacWilliam: Madam Speaker, speaking on behalf of my colleagues in the New Democratic caucus, I just want to say that we concur with that decision.

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to have this opportunity to speak on Bill C-17 which amends Part III of the Criminal Code dealing with firearms and other weapons.

All Canadians are aware of the need for changes to Canada's gun control system. This government is committed to the reduction of crime, and effective gun control measures are an important part of Canada's criminal law. The time is right for this House to respond to the concerns of all Canadians. Four out of five Canadians support stronger gun control and with good reason. Most important, Canadians are becoming increasingly concerned about the increase of firearms violence.

The ownership of firearms of all kinds is increasing and Canadian police forces are becoming increasingly concerned about the frequency with which they are being used in crimes of all kinds, ranging from domestic violence to armed robbery and even mass murder.

There is some misunderstanding about the nature of the issue and the nature of firearms related violence or homicides with respect to urban and rural Canadians. In fact, public opinion polls show that the concern for stronger gun control is shared by Canadians who live in communities of less than 10,000 people as much as by Canadians who live in large urban centres.

In addition, according to the Canadian justice statistics, homicide rates caused by firearms are just as high per capita in small communities under 10,000 as in large communities. In fact, they are greater per capita in communities under 10,000 than in communities of greater than 500,000 and are only exceeded by communities from 100,000 to 250,000.

The concern for firearms related homicides and the concern to have effective and sensible gun control is a concern that is shared by Canadians all across this country in communities of all sizes in urban and rural areas.

The existing gun control law has not changed significantly since January 1, 1978 and changes are needed. This government is being asked to take strong and effective measures to control firearms. As the hon. members of this House are aware, on June 26, 1990, I introduced Bill C-80 which contained a number of new gun control proposals. This bill was studied by a special committee of members of this House which produced a report containing a total of 32 recommendations for changes in the legislation.

Many of these recommendations make a contribution to stronger controls and have been taken into account in revising the legislation. Bill C-17 is the government's response to the special committee report.

I am grateful for the hard work and support of the committee members, and I would like to thank them for their contribution to the new legislation.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, the purpose of Bill C-80 was to provide better protection for all Canadians against firearms violence, while avoiding undue or unnecessary interference in the activities of Canadians who use guns legally, responsibly, and safely.

The legislation now before this House contains a number of modifications to Bill C-80, but the fundamental purpose remains the same. I believe that the modifications that have been made contribute to the achievement of a safer, more balanced, and more effective gun control system.

The measures contained in this Bill will improve Canada's gun control system in many different ways. Taken together, they comprises a package that will help to ensure that those who should not have guns do not have guns.

They will take the wrong guns out of all hands, and all guns out of the wrong hands. They will result in better screening of gun buyers, and they will limit access to the most dangerous types of firearms. They will reduce the accidental misuse of guns. They will encourage the responsible ownership and use of guns by all Canadians. They will help to keep firearms out of the hands of those who should not have them or who might use them for criminal purposes. And finally, they will increase deterrence for those who may use guns criminally or negligently.

I believe that these measures, with your strong support, will help alleviate the personal sense of fear and vulnerability that many people experience in today's society.

[*English*]

Under the new proposals deterrence of firearms crime will be increased by raising the maximum sentences for some of the offences created by the gun control law. Witnesses who appeared before the Reimer committee, the special committee of the House of Commons, including police and customs officers, suggested that one major source of illegal firearms is illegal imports. To respond to this, the maximum sentences for importing, possessing or selling prohibited weapons will all increase from five to ten years.

Another major concern expressed by the police community has been the association of firearms with specific areas of criminal activity. In response to this, the legislation will also extend the use of prohibition orders to offences of drug trafficking as a bail condition and upon conviction.

To supplement this, the sentence for possessing any firearm while under a court prohibition order will also increase from five to ten years.

Canadians are very concerned about problems of violence against women and violence in domestic situations, and I share these concerns. All members of this House will realize that this is not just a gun control problem, but clearly firearms are a factor in many situations and the gun control law must recognize this. The presence of firearms in many homes raises grave concerns when domestic disputes occur. Too many of the domestic homicides that occur in Canada each year involve a firearm: easy access to a gun in a domestic dispute is an invitation to tragedy.

An important difference between gun control and other elements of Canada's criminal law and justice system is that gun control seeks to prevent as well as deter firearms incidents. Several elements of this bill will address concerns about domestic violence by helping the justice system to remove guns from potentially violent situations at the earliest possible time.

The present law provides for mandatory or discretionary firearms prohibition orders where there is a conviction for a violent offence. The new legislation will require the courts to consider firearms prohibition orders before conviction in some cases. When an accused person has been charged with an offence in which violence was used, threatened, or attempted, the court will be required to consider whether to make prohibition or other conditions a part of the bail order if the safety of any person might be jeopardized by not doing so.

A similar process will apply to peace bond applications which often arise during domestic disputes. This measure is intended to encourage the police and the courts to remove firearms from potentially violent situations before tragedy can occur. Where a person is convicted of a violent offence that carries a maximum sentence of 10 years or more, a five-year firearms prohibition order is already mandatory. This legislation will increase the prohibition to 10 years, with a lifetime prohibition for any repeat offence. Where the sentence available is less than 10 years, the courts currently have the discretion to prohibit for up to five years; but there are concerns that prohibitions are underused.

Under the proposed amendments the court will retain this discretion but will be required by law to consider prohibition even where the matter is not raised by counsel.

Under the present law police may also make an application to a court where they have reasonable grounds to believe that allowing a person to keep a firearm or acquisition certificate would endanger the safety of any person. This provision is an important one for domestic violent situations and will be kept unchanged.

I will be asking my provincial counterparts to encourage police officers across Canada to use it wherever possible to remove firearms from dangerous situations before they can cause harm.

• (1030)

Taken in combination, I believe that these changes should substantially increase the use of firearms prohibitions as a means of removing firearms from potentially dangerous situations, many of them domestic disputes, both before and after a conviction for any offence.

I might add that certainly one of the concerns that has been raised by lawful and responsible firearms users in Canada is the notion that the law must be enforced adequately and must address the criminal and misuse of firearms. I think that message was very well received and I think that these additions to the legislation that came as a result of the consultation surrounding Bill C-80 strengthen it and really make a significant and helpful addition to the over all legislative framework.

For those who are concerned that the law is not enforced strictly enough with respect to firearms offences, two other approaches I wish to take, which are not inherent in the legislation are, first of all, to draft prosecutorial guidelines for my own prosecutors in the territories. I am the prosecutor for the criminal law only in the territories of Canada. I think the public would like to ensure that these offences are dealt with seriously and that Crown counsel does not plea bargain away such offences. I will provide my own guidelines for consultation with my provincial counterparts in September when we meet to encourage them to perhaps develop the same ones.

In addition, I have had discussions with the Director of the Canadian Judicial Centre about the possibility in the course of the judicial education programs provided to judges to provide some component that would sensitize members of our judiciary to the seriousness with which Canadians view offences related to firearms and their concern that these laws be carefully enforced. I have had

a very positive response to that. It is a broadly based initiative to try and ensure that the misuse of firearms is the major focus of our criminal activity.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, the proposed legislation also contains a number of improvements to the screening system for those who request permission to acquire firearms. The firearms acquisition certificate system is at the heart of Canadian gun control.

By controlling the acquisition certificate, we insure that anyone who wants to obtain a gun must first be screened. Members will recall that this certificate is necessary to acquire a gun in any fashion, whether by purchase, gift, or loan.

The system only requires that those who want to keep a FAC be re-screened every five years to be sure that they are still suitable.

The screening system is a key element of our gun control proposals, and the legislation I have placed before this House contains many proposed changes to it. It will require all applicants to furnish two personal references who can assist those conducting the screening check. It will require a minimum 28 day waiting period during which that check will be carried out.

To prevent use by unauthorized persons, it will require the new FAC document to include a photograh of the holder. Finally, it will require FAC applicants to pass a firearms safety course or test.

[*English*]

Many concerns have been raised about the safety training requirement, especially on behalf of those Canadians for whom such a requirement might present an unnecessary or undue hardship. The new proposals will authorize local firearms officers who accept an FAC application to certify competence and knowledge without a formal test.

Regulations will be enacted to guide this discretion and to ensure that the exception is applied fairly and consistently. I anticipate that it may be used where the applicant can provide some other evidence of competence or where he or she is not able to complete a formal written examination.

It is difficult in this enormous country of ours with enormous regional variations to legislate fairly for all Canadians. We have to recognize that we have many Canadians who live in very remote areas. We have many Canadians who, unfortunately, are not literate and it is important to ensure that the standard is met but at the same time that the implementation is sufficiently flexible so as not to exclude Canadians who would otherwise be able to establish their competence.

A national safety education program is now being developed in consultation with my advisory council and provincial authorities. This provision will be proclaimed in force as soon as it can be implemented.

Concerns have also been raised about the possible liability of those who act as references. It has been suggested that the possibility of being held responsible for the applicant's use of firearms would effectively deter most potential references. It has also been suggested that the fear of liability might deter references from being candid about the applicant's suitability.

To address this problem, the law will make clear that a reference cannot be held civilly or criminally liable unless there has been a deliberate attempt to mislead the police, either by providing false information or deliberately failing to reveal significant information when it is requested.

I want to make it absolutely clear that references are only expected to assist the authorities to ensure that only those who do not represent a danger to the safety of themselves or anyone else are given access to firearms. Provided this basic standard is met, there will be no liability of any kind.

Concerns have also been raised that young people have access to firearms with too few restrictions. The new legislation will require FAC applicants between 16 and 18 years of age to obtain parental consent.

[*Translation*]

In many areas of Canada, the use of firearms by young persons is an important, and even an essential part of daily life. The law must provide for this, but it must also be sure that young persons are subject to appropriate supervision and controls.

In addition to requiring parental consent for a FAC application, the amendments will also give parents the option of consenting to a minors' permit up to age 18.

The minors' permit allows limited access to young people, and may have special conditions placed on it for supervision.

[*English*]

The fee charged for an acquisition certificate is currently $10. This is far below the cost of the screening process. The level is fixed by the statute and has not been changed since the last amendments were made in 1978. The new legislation will make it possible to set the fee by regulation which will allow for periodic adjustments to reflect changes in the cost of running the screening system.

There is no intention to use high fees to deter legitimate gun owners, but the taxpayers have been heavily subsidizing the current system. This government is committed to the principle of cost recovery and the firearms community agrees with us. Most of those who appeared on behalf of firearms groups before the special committee on gun control indicated that they believe that firearms owners should pay reasonable screening costs.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, it has been suggested that the focus of Canada's gun control system be changed from screening FAC applicants to registering all firearms.

The present system requires a screening check before a person can acquire a gun of any kind. Those firearms that represent a greater risk are designated as restricted weapons, and these must be registered. The owners are recorded by the RCMP, and transfers must be reported.

The combination of these two systems allows us to focus the additional resources needed to register and track firearms on those types of guns associated with additional risk. Mandatory registration of all firearms would place much greater demands on the existing system.

It would require trained police officers to spend more time reviewing gun registrations, and less time screening the people who will possess the guns they are registered.

Registering firearms would tell us how many legal guns there are in Canada, Madam Speaker, but it would have little effect on their use in crime, or on the number of deaths and injuries caused by suicides and accidents each year.

In a time of fiscal restraint, this government prefers to concentrate the available gun control resources in those areas of the system that will provide real benefits to firearms users and to the public safety.

• (1040)

[*English*]

It has also been suggested that the expiry time for acquisition certificates be changed. Gun owners would like to see a longer term or easier renewals. Those on the other side of the issue would like to see FAC holders required to re-apply after only two years. The present five year period strikes an effective balance between rescreening too often and not often enough. To reduce this period to two or three years would increase screening costs without any benefit to public safety. To increase it beyond five years or to reduce the screening process would be to compromise public safety. This government will not compromise the safety of the Canadian public.

The amendments I am proposing have been carefully considered with a view to protecting all Canadians from firearms violence. They are also intended to regulate the possession and use of firearms in ways which make it possible for those who require them to obtain and use them with a minimum of unnecessary interference.

One way of doing this is to focus the regulatory system, as much as possible, on types of firearms associated with the greatest risk to public safety, and relatively few, if any, legitimate sporting uses.

There have been concerns raised about the increasing prevalence of military and high fire-power firearms in Canada since the law was last amended in 1978. Hon. members will recall that effective controls on fire-power were a major component of my earlier legislative proposals.

There are still serious concerns about these firearms that this House must address and they remain a key element of the current proposals. These firearms represent a much greater danger to the public than others and they are dealt with accordingly.

Those who own military or paramilitary firearms, fully automatic or converted fully automatic firearms face a much greater degree of restriction than others because their guns are much more dangerous. They are designed and intended for military, not sporting uses.

The laws dealing with these types of firearms are tough, and I make no apology for that. Many other countries have already prohibited machine guns and other military firearms and more will almost certainly do so in the future.

These amendments will make it clear that these guns have no place in Canada. In 1978 machine guns were made prohibited weapons. There are now large numbers of machine guns in Canada that have been converted to comply with the 1978 law but which still pose a serious threat. They cannot fire automatically but they have other characteristics such as military design and large magazine capacities which make them a problem. In many cases they can be reconverted to machine guns without great difficulty.

The amendments will allow those who now own such firearms to keep their guns, subject to restrictions on transfers to others. The only legitimate reason for wanting a converted machine gun is for a gun collection, and the amendments will only permit collectors who already own them to register them.

The amendments also include a definition of a genuine gun collector and will establish quite significant criteria and standards which must be met before someone can qualify for that category.

Before registering such a firearm, the police would ensure that it has been converted satisfactorily. I recognize that these individuals have obtained their guns legally and will now, in some cases, be unable to sell them. What the law will do is allow those who have these guns to keep them and to sell them to others who also already own similar ones. As these owners die or lose interest in their firearms, the guns will be forced out of circulation so that future generations of Canadians will not be faced with them.

These proposals are the best possible solution. I might add that this was the approach to grandfathering that was taken in 1978 with respect to automatic firearms and it has worked well, because in order to retain those firearms people have had to be brought into the system to be registered. They are known to the policing authorities and it gives us a much better handle on what firearms are there. Standards can be imposed for safe storage and safe handling and that, I think, has worked very well with respect to those firearms. That is a closed class. Those firearms will go out of circulation as will the converted automatics.

These proposals take into account the property interests of present owners who obtained the guns legally, but most important, the interests of all Canadians which require that they be taken out of circulation entirely.

[*Translation*]

When I initially introduced Bill C-80, I indicated that it was also my intention to designate other types of military or paramilitary firearms as restricted or prohibited weapons.

This is intended to restrict the availability of the most dangerous firearms, and at the same time, underscore the traditional Canadian idea that firearms in society are more properly regarded as tools for hunting or sporting purposes and not weapons for personal or civil defence. These roles are very capably performed by the police and the armed forces of Canada, and should not serve as a justification for the private ownership of firearms.

It is not my intention, however, to restrict or prohibit every single type of firearm that has ever seen military service. I recognize that many older-style military guns have seen valuable service as hunting firearms.

What I am concerned about, and what the legislation seeks to control, are modern military firearms that contain high firepower, fast-firing mechanisms, large capacity cartridge magazines, and other characteristics that make them very dangerous weapons, and have little or no place in legitimate sporting activities. Where there are relatively few legitimate uses for these firearms, they would be prohibited altogether.

Where they are used for some forms of legitimate target shooting activity, they may be designated as restricted weapons, which would allow the activity to continue, but protect the public by registering and tracking the guns and their owners.

[*English*]

I want to reassure those who own obsolete military firearms such as the Lee Enfield that this proposal is intended to reduce access to the most modern semi-automatic military assault weapons.

Older models do not differ significantly from many common hunting rifles. There would be no point prohibiting or restricting these firearms and this government has no intention of doing so.

The Canadian Advisory Council on Firearms, which combines expertise and viewpoints from all sides of the firearms issue, is currently considering criteria for identifying military type firearms and will be reporting to me in the near future.

A number of the members of the advisory council, as firearms users themselves, have already pointed out the sporting applications of older military surplus guns. While I cannot predict the criteria the council will put forward, I am sure that it will reflect the necessary balance.

I would also point out that the final decision will be that of the government. The council is advisory, but the final decision will be made by the government. Those regulations will have the opportunity to be reviewed by this House.

There are many similarities and differences between military and sporting firearms. In trying to identify military guns, the law will have to pay close attention to the differences. Those guns that are clearly of a military nature will be dealt with as I have explained.

The most critical difference is the capacity of the cartridge magazine. The addition of a large magazine can convert almost any ordinary semi-automatic hunting rifle into an assault weapon. This legislation will designate large capacity magazines to be prohibited weapons.

It will also allow the Governor in Council to specify the types of magazine that will be limited and the capacity limits to be applied.

Limiting the size of magazines will supplement the other measures by placing effective limits on the fire-power of guns that are on the borderline between military and sporting applications.

The previous proposals would have placed controls on magazine capacity, and the same limitations will also be imposed under the legislation now before this House.

If these amendments become law, I will be developing regulations that will limit the capacity of magazines for semi-automatic handguns to 10 shots, and will limit the capacity of magazines for centrefire semi-automatic rifles to five shots, exactly as I proposed in the context of Bill C-80.

The fire-power of non semi-automatics and rim-fire .22 calibre rifles does not represent a problem. Magazines for these firearms would not be limited at all.

I also recognize that there are those who engage in legitimate target shooting competitions which normally use magazines that would become prohibited under the proposal. Where involvement in such an activity is established, these persons will be permitted to retain their magazines for competitive purposes. The controls will be strict, however.

Competition activities must be sanctioned and those who take part will only be permitted to keep magazines that are required for suitable types of firearms and firearms which they actually own and possess.

I also recognize that many semi-automatic firearms cannot be used without the magazines designed for them. Collectors and other persons who have large magazines will be permitted to keep them provided that they are modified in an approved manner to reduce capacity to an acceptable limit. The regulations will be worded in such a way as to make this a practical option.

This is similar to the requirements in some provinces to limit semi-automatic hunting rifles to three shots under the terms of a hunting licence. In other words, the practice of blocking off some of the chambers in a magazine to comply with a legal limitation on a number of shots is well established already in Canadian society. We will try to establish standards of conversion that are both effective but also practical to implement.

• (1050)

[*Translation*]

The gun control system treats all handguns as restricted weapons, and requires that they be registered individually. The present system of permits for possession and use has proven effective at reducing handgun shootings, but it does create obstacles for legitimate shooters.

Some degree of inconvenience is inevitable, if gun control is to be effective at all, but I have attempted to remove unnecessary red tape wherever possible.

The bill will address some of the administrative concerns of handgun shooters by creating three new permits for restricted weapons.

[*English*]

The permit to carry, which is required to take a handgun to shoot at a range, will be expanded to allow more than one permit to be used for the same gun so that more than one shooter may share it. The holder of the second permit would be allowed to take the gun to a shooting range without having the registered owner present.

Competition organizers have raised concerns about the obstacles facing foreign shooters coming to Canada to take part in sanctioned competitions here. A new temporary carry permit will be created to allow these shooters to bring their handguns into Canada in order to attend sanctioned Canadian shooting competitions and to transport the guns to and from the point of entry.

A new temporary storage permit will also be created to allow a gun owner to store his or her handguns with another owner temporarily where it is unsafe or not practicable to store the gun at home, as is normally required. This will allow persons going on vacation, for example, to store their guns with a friend while they are away and is consistent with our emphasis on higher standards of safe storage.

As Canadian firearms owners are aware, a portion of the gun control system is enacted by a combination of regulations and Orders in Council made under the legislative authority of the Criminal Code. This combined approach makes for a better system for all concerned because it allows for flexibility and clarity which would not be possible using the statute alone.

I appreciate that this causes some concerns and the new legislation contains several safeguards for developing Orders in Council and regulations in the future. New Orders in Council and proposed regulations will be tabled in this House for consideration. When I referred the subject matter of Bill C–80 to the special committee, I suggested that it may want to consider putting some of the features that I proposed for regulation into the statute itself, but on careful consideration of the use of those two devices the recommendation was to continue with the proposed plan to use the regulations in addition to the statute in order to provide for specificity, clarity and some flexibility.

If a sufficient number of members of Parliament wish to do so, a resolution to revoke the order or proposed regulation may be put forward. All regulations and Orders in Council under Part III of the Criminal Code will be subject to this procedure. In the near future regulations or Orders in Council for a large number of important gun control matters will be reviewed in this way.

In particular, regulations or orders will be used to prohibit large magazines and designate some military firearms as prohibited or restricted weapons, to set new fees for firearms acquisition certificates and to establish clear, safe storage standards for all firearms owners. These are intended and will be used to create additional certainty and clarity in the interpretation and application of the gun control laws and amendments.

I am strongly committed to developing a stricter and more effective gun control system, but I also recognize that the process must be as open and as accessible as possible. This is an essential part of any democratic society, but it is also good common sense. Some members of this House have suggested that a parliamentary review of regulations will weaken the gun control system. However, the right of review is not open ended, but must be exercised within a particular period of time.

This government is committed to developing tough but workable controls. This requires public scrutiny of the process. The changes I am proposing are too important not to receive public and parliamentary review. Rejection of a regulation or Order in Council will require a majority vote of this House.

I am confident that the parliamentary review created by the new amendments will ensure that any proposed regulations help to create reasonable and workable safeguards within the general gun control system and I have confidence in the good sense of the majority members of this House.

Some Canadians have criticized these amendments. They have suggested that the proposals rely too heavily on regulations and Orders in Council and not enough on the statute itself.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, the fundamental goal of gun control in Canada is to protect the public from firearms violence, while at the same time preserving the interests of legitimate firearms owners and users as much as possible. Regulatory powers are an important tool for this task.

The use of regulations allows the law to focus closely on the firearms, individuals, and situations that raise public safety concerns.

Regulations allow for flexibility in the law to achieve effective gun control in ways that can still permit legitimate activities to continue.

Statutory powers are much broader. Attempting to use them to accomplish regulatory controls on firearms would result in a much less responsive and effective gun control system.

This is why a number of elements of Bill C-17 combine statutory and regulatory components.

The essential elements of the gun control changes I am proposing today are in the legislation, not in the supplementary regulations.

Parental consent, references, and the 28-day waiting period for acquisition certificates are all in the Bill itself. The requirement for a safety course or test is not, because it is already in the *Criminal Code*. In fact, it has been since 1978.

The prohibitions of converted fully-automatic firearms and large capacity magazines are also in the Bill.

The prohibition or restriction of military or paramilitary firearms is not in the Bill. This is because the power to do this by order in council already exists in the statute itself. No statutory amendment was necessary.

[*English*]

Provisions in the bill will also increase sentences for firearms offences and will increase the use of court prohibitions to include bail and peace bond applications.

I consider all of these things to be key elements of the total package of changes I am proposing today and all of them are included in the bill itself. The other elements, some of which will be the subject of new regulations, are being developed and will be brought forward as soon as possible.

I have already stated the specific details of the types and capacities of cartridge magazines that will become prohibited weapons by regulation. I have already indicated that the regulations will specify a new FAC fee of $50. Regulations dealing with safe storage of firearms and criteria for identifying military or paramilitary firearms are being developed by the Canadian Advisory Council and I expect to have its proposals in the near future. Some of the questions raised are complicated. I want to be sure that the regulations are going to work before they are implemented. They must fit together into a comprehensive and effective package and this will require careful preparation and drafting.

I share the concerns of many members of this House that Canadians expect and deserve improvements of the gun control system as soon as possible. We must also be sure that the job is done properly. Hastily prepared regulations will benefit no one. My commitment is a matter of public record on which I expect to be held accountable. Provisions in a statute may languish for lack of proclamation as have the requirements for training prior to obtaining an FAC. Regulations have the same legal force as statutes and are the essential partners of legislation in a well structured regulatory scheme.

Gun control works. It is probably the oldest and most effective form of crime prevention law, not just here in Canada where it dates back to the last century, but in many other countries as well. It works by ensuring that only those who actually require guns for legitimate purposes can obtain them. Any Canadian who really wants or needs a firearm is free to obtain one provided that he or she can comply with the screening measures. These create some inconvenience for firearms users, but this is a small price to pay in exchange for protecting all Canadians from firearms violence.

Bill C-17 is the product of a long process. It is the product of many contributions from those concerned about gun control and public safety, from those who administer the present gun control system, from previous Ministers of Justice, from other parliamentarians and from those great many Canadians to whom firearms are an important part of their way of life.

[*Translation*]

It reflects a tough approach to gun control because this is necessary for gun control to be effective.

It reflects compromise and consensus because this, also, is necessary for gun control to be effective.

Gun control is, ultimately, the responsability of government. We in this House have an obligation to ensure that all Canadians have the best possible protection under the law.

• (1100)

But the firearms community must have some of the responsibility as well, and I am convinced that it can and will help us to ensure that we have the best possible system.

I am therefore pleased to be able to bring this legislation before this house, and I am grateful to all of those who have contributed to its development.

It is good, effective, workable, and balanced legislation, and I urge all members of this House to give it the support it deserves.

[*English*]

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for bringing this legislation before the House in a reasonably quick period of time after the commencement of the new session. When asked when she was going to table the legislation, she said: "As soon as possible in the new session", and I think she has done that.

This bill before us is of tremendous importance to Canadians, certainly to the 80 per cent of Canadians who want stronger gun control and of course to those who do not feel we need stronger gun control.

It has been almost a year now since the minister first introduced the predecessor bill, Bill C-80, which did not have second reading in this House but instead had its contents referred to a special committee. At that time, I and other members of Parliament expressed our disapproval of this process. We felt Bill C-80 should be proceeded with, with the utmost dispatch, and that we needed in this country new gun control legislation as soon as possible.

That was not the case. We went to the special committee, and whether one would say that that was an improvement or not is history. I think what we have to look at, and certainly what we in the Liberal Party are looking at, is whether this legislation is an improvement over the legislation that exists at the present time. We feel that it is and, as such, we will be supporting this bill.

However, I do want to make a few comments that have been of great interest to me, of great concern to me. I will start of course with the special committee.

I would like to say, first and foremost, that at the least it was an interesting experience being a member of that special committee. I think that all members of the committee worked diligently in trying to put forward the best package possible. Certainly it was a compromise. We all knew it was going to be a compromise when we started. Nevertheless, it does not take away from the good faith of the members who participated in that committee.

While I want to thank all members of this House for their participation and their contribution, I particularly want to thank my colleague, the member of Parliament for Kenora—Rainy River, who I think did a tremendous job. He has a vast knowledge of firearms. He stated his opinions very clearly and concisely and without any hesitation. Through the contribution of that hon. member and other hon. members I think the report was generally well accepted. Certainly it was not considered the result that most people wanted, because some people thought it was too strong and others thought it was too weak. Then again, as a friend of mine who is a labour negotiator said, when you have an agreement in a labour dispute where both sides are not pleased, that is when you have a good agreement. Maybe this was a good report, in spite of what many would have us believe.

I do not feel that any Canadian should be threatened by gun control. I say that more now than I would have said before the meeting of the special committee. The objective of this legislation is to control access to firearms and ammunition in Canada and not to place excessive or undue restrictions on responsible gun owners. I think that has been achieved. The special committee addressed a lot of the concerns of gun owners, and the work of members of the committee such as my colleague and friend from Kenora—Rainy River indicates that.

For one thing, in Bill C-80 there was a lot of concern about the term device, that this was unduly restrictive, that this gave the government too much power over a person's rights, and that a device could be termed to be practically anything.

In fact, the Canadian Bar Association objected to that, and I think with a good deal of reason. It said that it was too broad, that a government should not have that kind of a broad scope within legislation and certainly within a legislative framework. The association said that it should be narrowed in scope so that we would have a better idea of what was intended and what was to be brought forward.

This point was studied by the committee, and I think the minister has made an improvement in Bill C-17 by restricting the scope of that to the actual aspect of the firearm itself. I think we have a better idea of what is intended and the actual freedom of rights of Canadians is respected by that change.

We heard from responsible gun owners and gun enthusiasts, be they hunters or collectors, that there was a concern about politicians not knowing enough about firearms. Of course, I felt they were immediately speaking to me because that could be very applicable. However, not only members of Parliament, but bureaucrats and people in particularly the Department of Justice who were framing these laws and who framing these regulations, wondered what right they had to say anything about my use of firearms. How do they know my responsibility? How do they know the intricacies of a particular firearm to say that it should be prohibited or it should be accepted?

That was considered by the committee and it was termed that the advisory board should be given more powers. I do not necessarily say as many powers as it has been given, but more powers to put at ease the concerns of people by having in its hands, the hands of the advisory committee, people knowledgeable in firearms. Not all of them—some of them come from every aspect of society—but many of these people have a vast knowledge of firearms. The concerns of people interested in firearms and the rights of firearms owners and users has to be respected by the vast authority given to the advisory board in this country.

We have heard from many people before the committee who said: "Look, you are punishing gun owners, but the real culprits are the criminals, and they are getting away scot-free. There should be stricter penalties for criminals". I think that was generally accepted as being the case by pretty well everyone in the committee and those who appeared before the committee.

The minister has increased the penalties in this legislation. We do have stiffer penalties and I think that is warranted. The use of firearms in a crime is a completely unacceptable activity, be it considered social or criminal or whatever; but this is totally unacceptable in our Canadian society at the present time. Crime is unacceptable, but certainly crime with the use of a firearm is even more unacceptable.

We also heard about the concerns of gun collectors. I will get to that more fully at a later period in my speech. However, certainly gun collectors felt that their rights were being abused; that we did not understand the significance of gun collectors; that this was a business; that these were people who knew guns, knew firearms, bought firearms, sold firearms not only in Canada but in the United States as well. They made their point and our report reflected that. The new legislation reflects it, but I am not completely in agreement with that reflection. I would like to say, as I said, more about that later.

There is a misunderstanding, to a certain degree, about young people and firearms, that young people in rural Canada in many cases use firearms from the time they are old enough to know right from wrong, and that they are instructed in the use of these firearms by their parents and friends. In most cases these young people are very responsible and use firearms to an excellent degree.

However, when dealing with young people there is still the questions: Do you really understand the full ramification of what you are doing and of what you have? There was a belief among many people that we would try to take firearms away from young Canadians. We said that if the parents are in agreement with their young people having firearms, then certainly the parents know the children much better than the committee does. This is the reason for the Firearms Acquisition Certificate for young people between 16 and 18 with parental consent.

• (1110)

We also discussed references. People do not like the idea of references. They feel they are an infringement, that people had to comment on their competency, their

state of mind and their value as a human being or as a citizen, father or husband. Many people are reluctant to act as references because of this and because of the fact that by giving an opinion on somebody, and it is stated to be an approval and subsequently this person commits a crime, a homicide, more particularly, then this person could be considered as being liable because they gave a reference to this alleged misuser of firearms.

That position certainly warranted consideration by the committee. The minister, I am glad to see, has included this in the bill by making it non-culpable and these people will not be subject to charge under criminal proceedings for giving an opinion that turned out to be wrong. Presumably they did it in the best interest of serving the process and what they believed was the actual state of the person to whom the reference was given, and one could never prove anything else.

There is also the problem of recreational shooters. Canadians would no longer be able to compete in particular competitions because we were reducing the size of the clip to an unwarranted small number of cartridges so that they could not fire successively in the number that was needed to compete in particular competitions. By limiting the use of particular firearms, they could not compete, because some of the firearms they were using would be termed prohibited or ones that were completely frowned upon by society and ultimately would be termed prohibited by a further deliberation of the advisory board. The interests of the recreational shooters have been looked at.

Really, gun users in this country do not need to be concerned about their rights. I have heard it said that it would be ideal to do away with all semi-automatics. There was never, certainly in my party, the consideration that we would ban completely all semi-automatics. It is a simplistic solution to say that is what is going to be done. Certainly the question is going to be with the advisory committee. This party's position very strongly is that we are opposed to the use of military and paramilitary semi-automatic weapons. But that is not all semi-automatic weapons. Sometimes the line is very blurred between what is a paramilitary semi-automatic weapon and the other semi-automatic weapons. Sometimes it is just a matter of design. This is why the advisory committee is going to be looking into this question.

I can assure Canadians that this party is not going to be in any way negligent and will be diligent in following the regulations and deliberations of the advisory committee to determine what the response is going to be and to assure everyone that those military and paramilitary weapons which we feel are not useful for hunting, other than just as a fancy of a particular hunter, but no more useful to a hunter than any other semi-automatic weapon and that semi-automatic weapons, military, paramilitary, be prohibited weapons. I think that is in the interests of all Canadians.

Whether you can say that is in the interests of all hunters is another question. This is where we really have to look into this whole question. There are going to be weapons that are going to be considered prohibited. Certainly the bill talks about the automatic being converted to a semi-automatic mode. These will be prohibited weapons. They will join fully automatic weapons on the prohibited list. Also we hope to have military and paramilitary weapons prohibited.

The question is that there will certainly be a restriction on the use of particular firearms. That is not something that anyone would ask for unless there was a reason for doing so. The reason has to be in the consideration of the national interest of this country and to say that it is an infringement perhaps on the type of firearm that somebody may have at the present time, there is a need in this country to be responsive to the needs of Canada as a whole and to deal with this in the general interest.

In 1978 my colleague and friend, the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce was the minister responsible for passing the gun control legislation in force at the present time. At that time it was an excellent piece of legislation. He received a lot of criticism that he was introducing a bill that would infringe on the rights of Canadians, that the Liberal government at the time was going to infringe on the rights of Canadians.

I think we have seen that this bill has been effective. This bill has reduced the number of homicides, accidental deaths, and suicides up to a period. Now we are seeing that violent crimes are on the increase and we are saying that the legislation that is in force at the present time, as good a legislation as it was in 1978, needs to be strengthened. The member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce

has been a very strong proponent of the strengthening of this legislation and I want to thank him for his contribution and his work on behalf of gun control in this country.

There is no question that firearm restrictions work and no one who is capable and responsible enough to own a firearm needs to be worried about excessive restrictions.

I do not feel that responsible gun users in this country have anything about which they should be concerned. I think that their rights as recreational shooters, as hunters, as gun owners will be respected. There will be a reduction in the type of firearms they can use. It is important in the interest of Canadians as a whole that this be done.

In 1989, I believe, there were 1,400 gun related deaths of which 1,100 were suicides. Homicides constitute about 15 per cent of all firearms deaths each year. A significant proportion of these deaths are the result of domestic disputes and crimes of passion. The minister has said quite honestly, forthrightly, and correctly that violent deaths and homicides are as much a part of rural Canada as they are of urban Canada, and the percentage of these deaths and homicides that are crimes of passion are in equal ratio in rural Canada as in urban Canada.

We were told in the special committee that as committee members we were bringing forward this legislation as a reflex action of the tragedy of École Polytechnique in December 1989. I will say to any Canadian that there cannot possibly be any member of Parliament who was not influenced by that tragedy; of course we were influenced by it. We were influenced by the tragedy of those young lives ending, of the trauma of those young people coming to a complete halt as a result of this completely incomprehensible action. We could not possibly be insensitive to the families who have lost these wonderful young women, to the community that could have benefited from the lifetime they could have given to the community and to this country as a whole. It is not something any of us in this House of Commons will ever forget, the senselessness, the tragedy, the loss.

• (1120)

I can honestly say, and I think I am speaking for all members of the committee, that what we formulated in the special committee was not just as a result of that. What that tragedy did do was to highlight the possibility of the misuse of firearms. We are not, even with this legislation, or stronger legislation, going to erase the misuse of firearms. We are not going to stop homicides, family disputes, crimes of passion completely, but I think we are going to reduce them. We are going to reduce them in number.

I use as an example the way these crimes and these activities were reduced after the passage of the existing legislation presented by my colleague, the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. I think that we have to look at that. We have to say that all Canadians are concerned about firearms. Some who use firearms on a regular basis are not as concerned as others. There is one very large segment of this country that is concerned and that segment is the women of Canada.

I do not have to tell you, Madam Speaker, the fear that women in this country feel, that men cannot possibly understand. We hear about it. We have got to start listening. We have got to start listening to the women of this country and the concern that they have; women in this country who are petrified when they step off of a bus and have to walk a distance of maybe only one or two blocks to their apartment building; women who are petrified when they get into an elevator alone not knowing who is going to be on the elevator or who is going to be at the floor they want to reach.

This is something that most men cannot possibly understand, but it is a way of life for many women in this country, day after day after day. If they feel that their safety and the rights of Canadians and the general benefit of all of Canada is going to be strengthened by this bill, then I think this is something of which we have to be very cognizant.

However, I think that we could say that good gun control is all that is needed. A recent poll by Allan Gregg and Decima Research has shown that Canadians are very concerned about the increase of crime in this country. I think that gun control is important.

Other areas are very important. We have to look at the question of violence in the family; we have to look at violence against women; we have to look at the question of young offenders and their rights; and crime prevention in the communities. All this comprises a package which is of great concern to Canadians. Gun control is a large part, but we have to look at the whole subject. I am not sure that that is being done in a comprehensive manner.

We need also to erase the fears as much as we can. There are going to continue to be fears. A mark of a good government and a dedicated parliamentary body is that we do what we can to reduce the fears that exist as much as we possibly can.

I do not think these fears are being reduced as much as we possibly can. I do not think for instance in the bill—I think it is Bill C-12 now in its new incarnation—the young offenders, provides that. I agree with longer periods of incarceration but incarcerating young offenders with adult criminals is to me a barbaric situation. I do not want to get into that bill, but I do want to say that if we do not look at the whole picture of crime prevention in this country, we are not doing our job as parliamentarians.

I would also like to state that I feel that a great deal, too much frankly, is being left to the Advisory Council on Firearms. I think it is important that it use every discretion.

The reason I am concerned is because of the 15 who are appointed, probably 10 would be considered as more sympathetic to the use of firearms than the other five. I think there has to be a balance, and I would hope that the minister would keep this in mind.

We have to reassure the users of firearms that their rights are being protected. We also have to respect the rights of all Canadians, particularly the citizens of this country who are concerned about the increasing crime rate in Canada.

I would ask the minister to look at this and ensure that this advisory committee will reflect the needs of this country.

I would also like to ask the minister to present the regulations to the committee when this bill gets to the legislative committee.

She may not have them all completed, but I would like to see the regulations that have been completed and formulated so I can give consideration to these regulations.

I am very concerned about shell legislation. I am not saying this piece of legislation is a shell legislation. However, we have to watch out for the tendency to have just the absolute minimum in a piece of legislation and to put as much as we can into the regulations, so that they can be changed by Order in Council and do not have to come back to Parliament.

I do not say that this is the case here because, for one thing the regulations are going to be referred back to the House of Commons for consideration. I think that is very important.

I do not feel, as the minister does not feel, that this is a threat to anybody because I feel that most members of Parliament reflect the opinion of Canadians in general.

That is, 80 per cent of Canadians favour stronger gun control. Whether they favour stronger gun control than they are going to get in this legislation, the poll did not answer that. They wanted stronger gun control compared to the gun control legislation that existed at the present time. This, of course, is stronger.

My own personal feeling is that there are things that could be changed. It is not the intention of this party to ask for a two-year firearms acquisition certificate.

As the minister has said, we can get too bound up in the paperwork and the actual bookkeeping and not leave time for other very important supervisory and research ideas, regulations and requirements in the issuance of the firearms acquisition certificate.

I also say that the $50 fee does not represent merely a sum of $50. It was determined when we were in the special committee that this is what we believe the cost of supervising the review process, the FACs and related activity will be.

If the advisory committee feels that this process can be carried on for less than $5 per person, then fine. I have no objection—nor does my party—to a reduction. However, the question of this being a figure which is reasonable to pay for the process is important.

Unfortunately the minister has relaxed the requirement of the training provision to too large an extent.

Page 22 of the bill goes on in the first part about the successfully completed process. In the second section it states:

> (ii) been certified by a firearms officer as meeting the criteria of competence in the safe handling and use of firearms and the laws relating to firearms prescribed by regulations.

This means that if a firearms officer feels that this person is certified and does not need the training program he or she can give an exemption.

• (1130)

It does not say that this is somebody who has owned a firearm for a certain period of time. It does not say that this is a person who is going for a second FAC. It could be somebody who is just applying for the first time. It is far too broad.

The training program is something that everybody who appeared before the committee and everyone to whom I have spoken feels is a very worth-while thing. We need to train the users of firearms. This has received almost universal approval and I think the minister has to make changes to strengthen this program, to ensure that this training takes place, except in strictly defined areas where the minister feels there should be an exception. What those exceptions are is open to question. Certainly the exceptions should not be as broad as this act allows.

It is vital that the minister use every bit of influence and persuasion on the provinces that she possibly can to implement these courses as soon as possible. I realize it is a provincial jurisdiction, but it is in the interests of all Canadians and all governments, be it federal or provincial governments, that this whole question be looked at. We should have a training program implemented from coast to coast to coast in this country as soon as possible.

If we do not have suitable training programs, not only do the applicants lose the instruction and the knowledge they would gain from that program, but the instructor will not have the ability to weed out somebody that he or she feels should not own a firearm. It is very important that not only is there an instruction consideration but there is also the consideration of the person who will be the possessor of a firearms acquisition certificate.

Safe storage is important. The minister considers this in the bill and that is very important. The problem, of course, is enforcement of safe storage. That is going to be difficult generally because a lot of the firearms are not registered and it will be difficult to know who has them. Also, there is the question of somebody who has a firearm which is not registered having a regular visit from an official to check as to whether his or her firearm meets the criteria. I certainly hope that one of the criteria will be a trigger lock on all firearms. That would be helpful.

It is also helpful that, whether or not safe storage can be monitored and inspected at all, there still be penalties for breach of safe storage. However, it is going to be awfully hard to implement, awfully hard to prove.

This brings me to the other consideration, the genuine gun collector. Now, it was the intention—as I understand it, my intention—that a gun collector be defined as a specific group of people who understand firearms, buy firearms, sell firearms and deal with them in a responsible way. For many people it is a business. They have invested a good deal of money in their collections. A definition of a gun collector to me has those connotations.

To be even more specific, the term genuine gun collector was used so there would not be any doubt as to the type of person to whom we were referring. This is my own subjective perception of what went on in the committee. There may be others, of course, who disagree but that is my own understanding, the reason being that we wanted the prohibited firearms to be restricted. We wanted the restricted firearms not to exist in every home where they are at the present time, but to be restricted, to be restricted in use and as to where they could be located.

We wanted a particular level of safe storage for gun collectors. The way this definition is set forward, it states that this could be an owner of one or more related firearms, or one person who intends to buy related firearms. This means that a person can own one firearm and be a genuine gun collector. If you go to the post office and buy a stamp, that does not make you a stamp collector. This is a very vital distinction. This definition is too broad. We want, through the gun collectors who will sell these prohibited firearms to other gun collectors, there to be a certain restricted number. We also hope that they will take these prohibited weapons into the United States to gun shows and sell them there, and then they will be out of the country.

I think it is important to make that distinction. I would ask the minister to consider a change to this definition to make it a stricter definition.

I would also like to speak to the minister on amnesty. I think these periods of amnesty that the minister brings forward in the act are very important. There should be an amnesty after this legislation comes into effect. There should also be an amnesty after the advisory board states that certain military and paramilitary firearms are prohibited. I also feel that there has to be consideration to financial compensation for some of the firearms that are turned in.

A lot of these firearms, except for the case of automatic weapons which have been prohibited since 1978, are owned completely legally at the present time. If they are $500, $600 or $700 apiece, then we are asking the individual to come forward with a donation of $600 or $700. There are a lot of people who say that the people who own these firearms should not be compensated, that they should not have these firearms. However, it comes to the question of rights of Canadians. Whether you like these people or whether you like their firearms, they are abiding by the law. If you say retroactively that they are criminals, then I think this is an infringement of their rights.

The amnesty may see a lot of these automatics, converted automatics and subsequently military and paramilitary weapons being brought forward, but it may not as well. What will happen? A lot of these prohibited weapons will not be registered. They will merely be kept in the homes of Canadians and we will not know about them.

What we want to do is get these firearms in. We do not want them left. We want to give owners an opportunity, if we can. I would ask the minister to consider that possibility because we do want to make this bill as effective as it possibly can be. To be effective, we have to look at what we feel are going to be the results.

This is human nature, and I think it is a reality to think about and to look at this aspect. I would, as I say, ask the government to look at this.

My major concern with this legislation is something the minister mentioned, but not in the context that I feel it needs to be mentioned at the present time. She talked about customs and having stricter penalties for those who illegally bring firearms into the country and sell firearms. I think that is important and necessary as far as it goes, but within this country there is a large problem at border crossings as the minister will know. Each year we import about 130,000 firearms and about an equal number come into this country unlawfully. Unless we do something to curtail the illegal importation of firearms into this country, we are not going to have effective legislation. There have to be new enforcement procedures at border crossings and there has to be more attention paid to the unlawful importation of firearms into Canada.

I would ask the minister, when she speaks to the legislative committee on this, whether she can help the committee understand if this is in fact going to be a concern of government and if government is going to turn its attention to this problem. I think it will.

While this bill is not everything I would like to see, I do feel it is an improvement over the legislation we have at the present time.

• (1140)

I commend the minister once again for bringing it forward. It was not brought forward too soon and it cannot be passed too soon. Those who want to appear before the legislative committee will have every consideration, as far as I am concerned. I hope it is the minister's intention to allow large numbers of people, not unduly large, but a large cross section of this country to come before the legislative committee to testify. I think that is important. That voice is necessary. That is why we in this party are agreeing to pass this legislation on second reading as quickly as possible.

To Canadians, whether they are in favour of gun control or not, I would like to say that there is not going to be any legislation which is going to be weaker on gun control than this brought before this House. I would say that there is no threat to responsible gun users. It meets in a minimum way the requirements of Canada for the safety of the Canadian public and the needs of all aspects of our society. We in this party will support this legislation.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, just before I begin, I wonder if I could have the indulgence of the House. I have 20 minutes to speak, but I may go over for a few minutes, not much more. I would like to ask that at the outset. I will not abuse that.

We in the New Democratic Party welcome this debate. For some time we have been pressuring the government to bring in effective and fair gun control legislation. We regularly demanded a second reading of Bill C–80, which is the predecessor of this bill. Even though, in our view, this Bill C–17 is at best a modest proposal, it is something to build on and it can be improved as it goes through the legislative process.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, Canadians generally want to reinforce our present gun control system. Unlike the American, the Canadian frontier was not opened with a gun.

In the Canadian West and the North, you checked your guns with the RCMP, and even the police were under orders not to draw their weapons unless absolutely necessary. Canadians do not believe that the gun solves all problems. Our people want stricter and more effective control of firearms.

[*English*]

The Canadian approach to the role of firearms and the use of violence is a fundamentally different approach than that found in the United States. This is a real cultural characteristic of Canada and something we can be proud of.

In the United States the use of guns is widely seen as a right. In Canada gun ownership has long been considered a privilege. The history of the Canadian system of gun control dates back not just to 1977-78 but to 1877 when a law was introduced to prohibit the carrying of handguns where there was no reasonable cause to use them for self defence.

As I said a moment ago in French, the west and north were settled peacefully in Canada without the use, by and large, of weapons.

During the debate in the United States on the Brady bill, some very interesting facts were revealed. In the United States, 23,000 people were killed by handguns alone last year. That is 64 people a day. Every day in the United States there are three accidental deaths from handguns alone.

In short, I think Canadians are right to think that our gun control system has made our society less violent. Gun control works and the reasonable extension of gun control without the creation of needless bureaucracy for hunters and trappers is our goal in this debate.

I believe that Canadians want effective gun control. I believe there is a consensus from all sides in this country for effective gun control.

I just want to say something about the chronology of this debate over the last few years, because it helps us to understand where we are at and where we are going.

In 1978 the current gun control law was passed in the House of Commons. I see the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, who was the minister at the time, is here today. Without going on too much about it, he is one of the members of this House that I very much look up to. He has made an enormous contribution to this House and this country and it is very interesting that he is here today.

An hon. member: He is not a bad hockey player.

Mr. Waddell: My friend says he is not a bad hockey player, too.

That bill is worth looking at. It is the present law. The provisions enforcing mandatory firearms training in that bill, I point out, have not been affected. That is a part of the bill I would still like to see come into force. However, let us look at the bill and the present law.

The 1978 law prohibits automatic weapons. The 1978 law restricts some weapons, including hand guns. The 1978 law makes it mandatory to have a firearms acquisitions certificate and to meet certain criteria to get that certificate, although rather weak criteria I must say. There is a theory stated in the bill that there should be mandatory training before buying a gun. That has not been enacted yet. It really is basically an acquisition system. People who had a gun before 1978 are not involved and people can still get, after 1978, as many guns as they want. Less than 1 per cent of the firearms acquisition certificate applications are turned down. It costs you 10 bucks for a certificate for five years. So, it in itself is a very modest system.

In January, 1989, about a decade later, in Stockton, California a man who said he had a "military hang-up", armed with an AK-47 semi-automatic assault rifle and two pistols, fired 110 rounds from the rifle and killed five children and injured 29 others. This was an indication, it seems to me, of the more and more violent society we have in North America. The state of California responded to the tragedy by banning the sale, possession or manufacture of some semi-automatic weapons. On March 14, 1989, President Bush announced a suspension of the importation of assault weapons. The United States, in some aspects, back in 1989 had a law more advanced than we had with respect to these kind of semi-automatic weapons. That was the impetus for new tougher laws in Canada and was the beginning of the

government's commitment, through the previous Minister of Justice, to a tougher gun control law.

In June 1989 the government indicated its intention to introduce fall legislation controlling the importation, possession and sale of semi-automatic and automatic weapons. It received agreement at the federal-provincial ministers' meeting to do that. Then, in December 1989 we had the terrible tragedy at *École Polytechnique* in Montreal in which 14 young women needlessly lost their lives. In April 1990 a petition was presented to the minister by the students at the *École Polytechnique* with 516,487 names on it. That total would reach 700,000.

On June 17, 1990, the minister introduced Bill C-80. She announced her firm intention to push the bill through. The intention was not as firm as all that because the bill came to second reading in the House and the bill was diverted to a committee for further study. I will not say any more about that. The fact is that we have the bill back before us.

The committee met and produced a report under the chairmanship of the member for Kitchener. I was proud to be a member of that committee and I would like to acknowledge the work of fellow members on that committee, all of whom did an outstanding job. The member for Rosemont from the Bloc Québécois also attended the committee and contributed as much as he could to that committee, not being an official member. However, he did show up and contribute and I would like to acknowledge that and the efforts of other members as well.

The committee produced legislation which is now Bill C-17.

• (1150)

Let me deal with Bill C-17 which I have called a modest proposal. Bill C-17 is a somewhat complex proposal. All of us in the debate have received a large number of letters of concern. Many people have really misunderstood the legislation. They think their gun is going to be taken away or they are going to be more affected than they really are. I will give an example.

I had a letter from one of my constituents saying "I am going to be affected". I called the person and found out that he had in fact a non-semi-automatic gun with a bolt action. He was concerned about the magazine size under the regulations in this bill and he felt he would have to dismantle his gun. It was not true. That was not part of the bill. The magazine size only applies to semi-automatics. It seems to me that we all have a job to do in this House to explain to Canadians just exactly what is in the bill and what is controlled.

First of all, the bill prohibits automatic weapons that have been converted to fire in a semi-automatic mode. These machine guns—and basically they are machine guns—have been brought into Canada in large numbers. The estimate is 15,000 to 50,000 guns in Canada at present. The existing weapons are grandfathered to the present owners. I am glad the minister did not accept the recommendations of the committee. In fact, the department accepted the minority report of the committee not to extend that grandfather. It is bad enough that there is a grandfather provision, but at least it was not extended as the committee wanted to do. There is the first thing: a prohibition of automatic weapons that have been converted to fire in semi-automatic form.

Second, it prohibits a semi-automatic military assault weapon. This is done by regulation and it is not dependent on the bill. As a matter of fact, the minister has the power to do that, I think, under the 1978 law, the old law, and we are still waiting for that.

The problem is this Rambo culture that is growing in the United States where these military assault weapons were produced in surplus by the war machine industries in the United States. Some of them are flowing across the Canadian border. This is what we are aiming at, not at ordinary hunters and trappers in Canada but at this kind of Rambo culture industry that is flooding these weapons into Canada. This is what we should focus on.

There is a real question, however, even after this bill about the Rugez Mini-14. That is a high-powered rapid fire gun. It was used by Marc Lépine, incidentally, in the Montreal massacre. Will it in fact be restricted? Will it be prohibited under this bill?

It will depend on the regulations. We will have to wait. However, the point I am making is that—and I want to repeat it—these are the only firearms whose status is affected by this law. These are the only firearms. It is only the future firearms that are imported. The present ones will be grandfathered and one will be able to sell them to genuine gun collectors. This is a very modest proposal indeed. It is a modest bill. I suggest the minister have a look at the bill. She will see it is a very modest proposal.

Third, there is a prohibition on large capacity magazines. That is the other area people are concerned about. There has been more confusion about this proposal than anything else. Again, it is going to be done by regulation with the enabling power of this bill. The limits are as follows: all semi-automatic handguns, a 10-shot limit. This is what the minister has proposed. All centre fire semi-automatic rifles and shotguns, five shots; 22 rim fire rifles, no limit. All bolt, pump or leverage action firearms, no limit.

Therefore, it seems to me that only semi-automatics are affected by this provision. I say to the people who are writing us: "Have a look at actually what is in the bill".

There was a concern expressed by several firearms groups that this proposal would lead to the destruction of thousands of rifles with built-in magazines. However, evidence presented to the special committee shows that of 2,600 makes and models of shotguns and rifles on the market, only 28 are directly affected by the limits. Of these, 26 are military style semi-automatics such as an AK-47. These are precisely the kinds of weapons the limits are supposed to target. Only two weapons, versions of the Marlin Camp carbine, would require modified magazines.

This proposal is an alternative to a ban on all semi-automatics. That is what some groups were advocating. It is a means of limiting fire power.

I remind you, Madam Speaker, that Marc Lépine had a 30-round magazine. The feeling is if that at least could have been limited it might have saved more lives.

There is an exemption here for competition shooters. I have flagged that to have a look at that exemption in committee, again the point being that this is a very modest proposal.

Fourth, in the bill there are changes to the FAC, the firearms acquisition certificate screening process to improve screening: two references, a photograph, a $50 fee, a 28-day cooling off period, and a mandatory training program.

Fifth, safe storage is to be applied to all firearm owners. A genuine gun collector is defined. It seems to me that the genuine gun collector may be a major loophole in the system today. We will have to look at that proposed definition in committee to ensure that it is sufficient. It is a possible area for amendment. I would like also to flag the storage problem. We have got to be flexible on this, deal with it in committee and define it better.

Sixth, there are tougher penalties for firearm usage, although there is not, as the committee recommended, a section 85. That would mean higher minimum sentences for criminals using guns in the course of an offence and, if there is plea bargaining, would ensure that the Attorney General actually does not make it easier for someone who used a gun in a criminal offence. That was not accepted in the bill, although it is in the committee's report.

Finally, there is a parliamentary review of the regulations.

I think it is a modest proposal. The FAC process is strengthened, but no one I think can really call it onerous. There are two types of Rambo weapons which will be prohibited, but only in the future, and the existing weapons will stay. Fire power on semi-automatic weapons will be limited somewhat, so I think it is a modest proposal.

If we were really serious about gun control, really serious, the government would go after all those machine guns, semi-automatic guns and military style weapons, and would really nail them and get them out of this country. There is a lot of wrapping ourselves in good intentions and a little bit of posturing on this. We should really look at this bill again as to how modest it is. We could have gone further.

It was proposed, for example, that there be a registration system and that every gun control supporting group, including the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Police Association, the Caucus of Big City Mayors, the Coalition for Gun Control, the students at Polytechnique, hospital associations and so on. They came before the special committee. The minister's officials said that such a system of actually registering all the guns that are in Canada would not be worth the effort. I find that rather incredible.

[*Translation*]

Personally, I made the following proposal in my report on gun control. Since the restriction on semi-automatic weapons under the present law would effectively prohibit hunting activities, I recommend that all unrestricted, semi-automatic weapons be registered as a separate class of firearms. All future firearms obtained using the FAC, would also be registered at the time of purchase.

Finally, every applicant for a FAC would be required to list all their firearms on the application. This would not place any additional bureaucratic burdens on firearms owners with non semi-automatic rifles who do not need a FAC at present.

This would move us toward a long term goal of a full National Registry System.

[*English*]

There are other weaknesses in the bill, but my time is limited.

I would just like to read a quote from Mr. Lorne Newson, the chief provincial firearms officer in British Columbia. I would like to quote from what he told the special committee: "In the first place, these people were very much aware that they were skirting the law by buying superficially modified machine guns. They are deserving of no sympathy." "I am concerned that grandfathering these weapons may overturn the present case law. Presently these guns are declared illegal by law and this bill may actually weaken them."

I want to conclude by saying that we have to look at gun control from differing perspectives. The gun debate is seen as a polarized one. You are either right or wrong, yet it seems to me that there are a number of different points of view. I want to underline three, just briefly.

First of all, I think women have a profoundly different attitude toward guns than men do. Women own only a small percentage of guns in Canada and commit only a tiny percentage of firearms related criminal offences. While women commit less than 5 per cent of firearms homicides, they are the victims of 30 to 40 per cent of such cases.

[*Translation*]

The massacre at the École Polytechnique focused public attention on the issue of firearms and violence against women. These are issues that have been around for some time.

Sixty per cent of all homicide victims are killed within a family context, and most often, rifles shotguns were used.

[*English*]

I said in my minority report on gun control that no one believes gun control alone is the solution to the problem of violence against women in our society. I think it is part of the solution.

Second, there is a distinct view in rural Canada. One of my members from the Kootenays put it very well. He said: "If a pick-up truck drove up Wellington Street outside the Parliament Buildings and had a shotgun or a rifle in the back, we would freak out. We would be asking, what is going on?" In rural areas of Canada that is quite normal and we must recognize that distinction. We must recognize that people use guns as part of their livelihood. We must recognize that bureaucracy does not work as well in rural areas, so in committee we have to look at safe storage, as well as other provisions.

We helped a little bit in the committee report giving some discretion to rural firearms officers to help rural people, and I think we have to have a further look at that.

I will point out that in rural Canada, a public opinion poll said that three-quarters of the people did support stronger gun control as long as it is effective and fair.

Third, aboriginal concerns. I draw the minister's attention to my minority report. I believe that the federal government is constitutionally bound to consult native people with respect to gun control.

In view of the Sparrow case, the Sioui case and other cases, it may well be that constitutionally and legally this bill and this regime may not apply to native people. This is a debatable question, but there should be concerns not only with the constitutional position of native people but at a minimum, native leadership and native people should be consulted, especially natives living in northern areas.

Finally, I have some other concerns which I will flag at committee. For example, I would like to make sure that the film industry in British Columbia is protected and we do not needlessly harm them with needless bureaucracy. That can be raised in the committee because they do use blank, automatic and semi-automatic guns.

I would like to give credit to the Coalition for Gun Control and the work that they have been putting out. That is the group led by Suzanne Edwards, Heidi Rathjen and Wendy Cukier.

I want to say that this debate is changing. If you read the editorials, you will see a lot of support for gun control. You will see them sharing the feeling that I enunciated that the bill is very modest, perhaps too modest. It is not a partisan issue and we have to deal with this.

When you see today: "Gun permits jump by 28 per cent in Toronto," our society unfortunately appears to be becoming more violent.

I want to tell the minister that what we have seen in the course of this debate and in the committee reports is that the people who want gun control, the lobby if you like, for that particular point of view has grown and matured very much. Traditionally there was a view that those who supported gun control were well intentioned but misinformed people. Those who were for less gun control, the gun lobby if you like, would try to bury you with so-called facts.

Now it seems to me that the gun lobby in many ways is sounding emotional and the people who want more gun control are sticking to their facts, are exploring the myths about gun control. Myths like, "guns do not kill people; people kill people". In fact, people without guns injure, people with guns kill. Myths like, "gun control legislation does not reduce gun violence". The fact is that gun control legislation saves lives. The myth that, "what is needed is crime control, not gun control". The fact is that easy access to guns contributes to crime. Look at the studies of Seattle versus Vancouver. Look at the statistics on homicides in Canada.

The myth that people need guns for protection seems to be growing in Canada. The fact is that a home is safer without a gun. These are the debates we are going to hear in the future. This issue is not dead. This issue is just beginning.

Let me conclude by saying that I believe that all Canadians want effective and fair gun control. At the committee stage we are going to make sure this is a workable bill for all segments of the country. We are supporting the bill at second reading. We put the minister on notice that we intend to improve the legislation in committee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont): Madam Speaker, this new gun control bill is very disappointing, and I think it shows a clear lack of political courage on the part of the Minister of Justice.

Nearly all legitimate requests from individuals and groups who support gun control were turned down, and most of the proposed measures will be very difficult to enforce. This bill seems more designed to soothe public opinion than to provide effective gun control.

The groups in question estimate that 90 per cent of the bill is about concessions to gun lobbies and only 10 per cent is about improving control measures as demanded by the vast majority of the public.

We were particularly disappointed in the refusal to introduce a firearms ownership licence that would make routine registration of firearms compulsory. We all know that this type of measure is absolutely necessary for genuine gun control.

How many firearms are there in this country? Today, no one can answer that question, and there is nothing in this bill to help provide the answer in the future. Who uses the firearms in this country? Today, no one can answer that question either, and there is nothing in the bill that will provide us with an answer in the future.

The minister expects us to believe the bill will improve gun control. She says quite candidly that she also wants to protect the interests of legitimate firearms users. Would registration unduly restrict their privileges?

The minister knows perfectly well that hunters, for instance, must meet far stricter criteria to exercise their hunting privileges. They have to get an annual licence and conform to very strict wildlife protection regulations.

For instance, in many parts of the country, there is a draw for moose licences. Every year, hundreds of thousands of hunters whose names are not selected are deprived of the privilege of hunting. However, hunters accept this practice because our wildlife must be protected.

One wonders why the minister is so timid about protecting public health. Practically all firearms owners I know would be perfectly willing to have firearms licensing and registration, and to pay the requisite fees.

• (1210)

The Minister of Justice knows perfectly well that this type of measure is badly needed. She has implied that the House will probably be asked to pass such a measure in the future. Why not do it now? Just because there is a very small but effective lobby of sellers and owners of firearms who consider that owning a weapon is not a privilege but a right. These people will not tolerate having this privilege subject to a minimum amount of regulation. They are a minority howerever, and this is unacceptable in any civilized society.

Another deplorable aspect of this bill is the procedure selected to exclude weapons we want to prohibit. There is always a risk that regulations are unable to keep up with the latest developments in technology, and they are difficult to enforce, especially for customs officers.

As the hon. member pointed out earlier, why is the weapon used by Marc Lépine at the Polytechnique still not prohibited, eighteen months after this tragic event? How can we tolerate this any longer, especially since this paramilitary weapon is already prohibited elsewhere, even in the United States, for instance in New Jersey?

There is a simple and effective method for changing all this. We must decide that from now on, only legal firearms may be sold in or imported into Canada. Any administrative delay would actually reinforce controls, and when in doubt, customs and the police could refer cases to the appropriate authorities.

Some people will say this will require creating an additional and costly bureaucracy, but why is it easier to import firearms from the United States than to import beer from Belgium? Why are there fewer controls on the purchase and use of firearms in this country than on the purchase and use of sleeping pills? It doesn't make sense.

As for the costs involved, they must of course be kept to a minimum, but not at the expense of public health. In fact, gun control lends itself admirably to the "user pays" principle. Incredibly, the bill fails to prescribe an additional fee for issuing licences and monitoring restricted weapons permits. Why should all taxpayers have to pay for these administration costs? Clearly this is something that will have to be remedied in committee.

Several other aspects of the bill will also have to be thoroughly reviewed. For example, the new regulatory powers regarding safe storage might seem adequate, but how could the minister argue that such regulations will be effective when we won't even know who owns firearms? The fact that there will be storage requirements might make people more careful about the way they store their guns, it would be a kind of education, but it is not, in any way, a real prevention policy.

This bill contains an insidious clause that should be denounced. The whole process of preparing regulations under this act will be done according to an exceptional procedure, which might limit greatly the scope of the act by opening the door to continuing pressure from the gun lobby. As a matter of fact, any proposed regulation or order in Council under this act could be challenged by 20 members or 15 senators who could force a debate and a vote to cancel the said regulation. Such a clause is an open invitation to the gun lobby to pursue its action with a minority of members and senators who oppose gun control.

The minister and the cabinet will hesitate for a long time before introducing regulations or orders in Council which could solidify this opposition to gun control and force a debate in the House. Consequently, this bill imposes self-censorship system on the cabinet which is totally unacceptable and which will lead to a continuing watering down of the required regulations. These clauses must be withdrawn from the bill.

In fact, the bill that is before us and that deals with arms exports and will enable Cabinet to decide to export arms to one country or another, contains no clause enabling members of Parliament to invalidate such provisions. It must be understood that this provision is unique in Canadian laws. I think that the legislative committee will have to ask the minister to backtrack on this issue.

Finally, this bill is an unacceptable step back, particularly as regards the prohibition of military or para-military firearms, since it provides for grandfather's rights in the case of present owners. The legislative committee will therefore have to undertake an in depth study in order to transform this rough draft into a real bill providing a legitimate and necessary control of firearms.

In concluding, I would like to mention that the only provision in this bill that deserves unanimous support is the one which provides that, from now on, courts will have to consider issuing prohibition orders regarding the release, on bail or temporary, when the offence was committed by using, attempting to use or threatening to use violence, and when a request is made for an order not to disturb the public peace.

This provision is a real improvement towards real prevention and one that would justify supporting this bill if the other provisions can be improved, notably the withdrawal of the power of revocation in the legislation.

It is still possible for this government to show political will by agreeing on legitimate amendments. I hope that the government will clearly demonstrate this will at the legislative committee. That is why I reserve my judgment until the vote on the committee report.

[*English*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

Madam Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

Mr. Hawkes: Madam Speaker, if you would call the yeas and nays again I think some members were thinking of other things.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It is possible that the Speaker was not speaking as loudly as I thought, as I was told earlier this day.

All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

Madam Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

Madam Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

And the division bells having rung:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I have been advised by the government whip that the vote is now postponed until Monday at six o'clock p.m.

Mr. Hawkes: Point of order. Is it the disposition of the House to call it one o'clock?

Mr. Nault: On the same point of order, it is my understanding that you had already called the members in. Are you deciding now to change your mind after you have already called the members in?

Madam Deputy Speaker: If I may answer the hon. member's question? If the hon. member checks the rules of the House, he will see that once the bells have started to ring the whip from the government or the whip from the Official Opposition can come to the Chair and ask that the vote be deferred. This is part of our rules.

Once the whip of either the government or the Official Opposition makes that request of the Chair, the Chair has no recourse in the matter but must defer to the request of either of the whips. At this time both the government and the opposition whips came to the Chair and asked me to postpone the vote until Monday at six o'clock p.m. So I do not have the choice. Those are our rules.

I think there had been agreement earlier that should we be finished with this business before one o'clock we would call it one o'clock and then come back at two o'clock. Is there agreement on that?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It being one o'clock, the House will now be recessed until two o'clock p.m.

The House took recess at 12.23 p.m.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

D-DAY ANNIVERSARY

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, today marks the 47th anniversary of D-Day: June 6, 1944, the day when the Third Canadian Infantry Division and the Second Canadian Armoured Brigade went ashore on Juno Beach to participate in the invasion which would achieve the liberation of western Europe from Nazi tyranny.

Canadians take pride in knowing that our troops were a major part of this armada. Over 15,000 Canadians, one-fifth of the total allied invasion force, established themselves on the Normandy beaches that day. Our army, navy and air force all played notable roles in the invasion.

Let us bless the memory of those Canadians who fought in this invasion. Let us bless those who did not make it home and were buried in Europe. Let us also bless those who went on to liberate the Netherlands less than a year later. All of them helped to restore freedom.

Mr. Speaker, 47 years ago the prospect of freedom came ashore in Normandy. Let us never forget those who were there for us on that day, and let us never forget those who died for our freedom on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, the following statement was made by convicted murderer, Allan George Foster, after sentencing for the murder of three women while on parole. He said: "There is only one thing crazier than me and that is the system that allows me to do what I do".

Many Canadians have become terrified as a result of violent crimes not only by adults but by young offenders. Whether in a mall, a poorly lit street or a parking lot, women are worried about their safety.

One of the root causes of these violent crimes is our justice system, which either renders an all too short prison sentence or grants a too lenient parole.

I call upon the Minister of Justice to address this issue. Let us restore law and order in this country.

* * *

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, today is the 100th anniversary of the death of Canada's first Prime Minister and first member of Parliament from Kingston, the Rt. Hon. Sir John. A. Macdonald, who is also being recognized at his grave site today in Kingston.

Perhaps, more than any figure in our history, Sir John A. Macdonald is recognized as the driving force behind Confederation. His unwavering conviction that Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia could become prosperous and strong by forming a political union under one flag, serves as a guide for us today as we review our constitutional agreements.

During his political career he was elected to the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada seven times and was Prime Minister for 19 years. He is truly the Father of Canada.

On the 100th anniversary of his death, I urge all Canadians to reflect on the trials and obstacles he overcame in order to forge a nation which today is one of the wealthiest in the world.

By capturing the spirit and confidence he held in Canada, we can continue to make our country prosperous and continue to uphold the proud legacy he left behind.

* * *

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, according to a recent public opinion poll, 68 per cent of Canadians outside Quebec and 57 per cent of Canadians in Quebec favour holding a constituent assembly to resolve our national unity crisis.

Yet, at the same time, the Minister of Constitutional Affairs was quoted as saying: "The federal government has considered this and now, for several reasons, we have rejected the pure and simple option of a constituent assembly. We have reason to believe it would not be acceptable to Quebec".

Is it any wonder, then, that Canadians feel politicians are not responsive to their wishes and that they have lost faith in the political system and its leadership. If the Prime Minister is really looking for ways to restore the faith of Canadians in this House and in his leadership, he can start by establishing a constituent assembly as favoured by a majority of Canadians, both inside and outside Quebec.

* * *

REVENUE CANADA

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to my attention that Revenue Canada is now withholding the goods and services tax credits from persons who qualified for the full GST rebate because they owe back taxes. It is my understanding that Revenue Canada is going back to collect 1986 taxes in order to receive back taxes of lower income Canadians who qualify for the full GST tax rebate. In other words, they are offsetting the GST rebate against back taxes that low income earners owe the government. And when I say low income earners, they are the ones who have the right to the full goods and services tax credit owed.

I don't know how many thousands of low income Canadians have had their rebates taken back to pay back taxes. Usually the rebate would only cover the interest on these back taxes. I think the Minister of National Revenue should spend the weekend and report to the House as to how many people are in involved in the taking away from Canadians of their GST credits.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC'S REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Liberal Party of Canada and the Bloc Québécois condemned the minister and member for Roberval, the Hon. Benoît Bouchard, and Conservative members for the Conservative government's involvement in regional development in Quebec's resource areas. Today, after abandoning Abitibi—Témiscamingue, lac Saint-Jean, the North shore and the Gaspé, those same opposition members are asking Ottawa for greater federal involvement in the economic development of the Montreal region.

Since 1985, the Conservative government has been constantly involved in regional development in Quebec and has implemented programs to improve the economic situation of Quebecers.

* * *

[*English*]

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): One hundred years ago today a young Canada mourned the death of a political giant. Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first Prime Minister and a Father of Confederation, worked tirelessly to weave the fabric of a young land. From his dream of a national rail link to his battle against the veiled threat of treason of unrestricted reciprocity, Sir John A. shepherded a design for confederation that has held fast for over a century. "Whatever you do, adhere to the union", he stated, "We are a great country and shall become one of the greatest if we preserve it. We shall sink into insignificance if we suffer it to be broken."

Well, look around, Sir John A., wherever you are. Your contemporary successor is flouting your vision. When today's Prime Minister was first elected he trumpeted "Give us 20 years and you will not recognize this country". Sir John, seven years later we are at the brink of becoming, in your own words, "a country broken". I know, sir, you will agree when you look at your political contemporaries that they have no vision, and when there is no vision the people perish.

* * *

CANADA POST

Mr. Terry Clifford (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, now, more than ever, national symbols are vital to our Canadian identity. One such symbol, the heritage post office in Mossley, Ontario, is in imminent danger of disappearing. I was shocked to learn that at least 12 post offices of similar size to Mossley's have advertised recently for postmaster positions in Quebec and in other regions of Canada, as opposed to converting to a retail outlet.

Does Canada Post have different policies for the regions of our country? If so, why? Is that fair, Mr. Speaker?

Last year Canada Post amassed a profit of over $149 million. Does Canada Post really need to shut down the fourth-oldest post office in our country to improve its balance sheet? Don't the residents of Mossley deserve to keep their own Canadian national symbol, their piece of Canadiana, which they want to share with future generations of Canadians?

Will the minister change his decision?

* * *

MIDDLE EAST

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, as all people of good will seek justice and peace in the Middle East, we are shocked to learn that once again violence and conflict have erupted in the Middle East. This time the conflagration occurs between the old arch rivals, Lebanon, Syria and Israel. Questionable alliances have occurred between Syria and Lebanon during the last months, but now, seemingly unprovoked, Israel this week has launched air raid attacks on southern Lebanon. For more than a year, the UN has verified that no raids have emanated from the internationally recognized Lebanese border. Yet, in the Israeli attacks, Lebanese civilians and children have been left dead. In fact, it appears that the magnitude of these attacks surpass those of Israel's notorious 1982 attack.

• (1410)

In view of the very tense and fragile peace that is being sought in the whole of the Middle East, I ask our government to condemn these raids and to call upon the United Nations to intervene to prevent even greater tragedy from occurring.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Edna Anderson (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I believe Environment Week is the right time to send a signal to Canadian industry that we support greater production and use of ethanol from renewable resources in gasoline blends.

This government can help create new domestic markets for this product by encouraging the use of Gasohol in federal government vehicles wherever it is available in Canada.

In so doing, we would also show our support for the recommendations of the recent report of the Standing Committee on the Environment.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights has published a document which reveals that children from Haiti are brought illegally and deceptively into the Dominican Republic to work on sugar cane plantations.

These children are promised high wages. Once they arrive they are forced to work as slaves, receiving low wages, working under inhumane conditions, and most shocking of all, they are prevented from returning to their homes in Haiti.

The International Labour Organization has been denouncing this blatant abuse of human rights since 1983.

This is nothing less than the trafficking of children. Worse still, according to the report, the Dominican Republic is involved in this through a state-owned sugar producer. This same government also ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in January, 1990.

The Dominican Republic should respect its own law and convention. I ask the Government of Canada, in any deliberations with the Dominican Republic, to bring all influence to bear in having this monstrous system of child trafficking dismantled.

As a fellow signatory of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we can do nothing less.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT WEEK

Mr. Gaby Larrivée (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, this is the twentieth anniversary of National Environment Week, and this year the theme is: "A Time for Action".

This week, many Canadians will take part in more than 800 activities across this country.

I take great pride in drawing your attention to the official opening of the first Canadian arboretum for rare species on June 9 in Joliette.

This initiative by the *Association québécoise de lutte contre les pluies acides*, in co-operation with the town of Joliette, will provide a major conservation park for tree species that are rare or on the endangered list. This unique concept reflects the commitment of the people of my riding to protecting our environmental heritage.

On this occasion, 1,000 Norway Spruce seedlings will be distributed to the public, I hope that the many activities organized, for instance, by the CARA and by the ACEF in Lanaudière will be a tremendous success.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the riding of Joliette have once again shown that they know how to organize and how to act.

* * *

[*English*]

D-DAY ANNIVERSARY

Mr. Harry Chadwick (Bramalea—Gore—Malton): Mr. Speaker, 47 years ago today, freedom returned to the shores of Europe. June 6, 1944, D-Day, still rates as one of the most famous days in history. It marked the beginning of the end of Nazism and the brutality it represented.

Canadians can certainly look back to D-Day with considerable pride. All three of our services were involved in the masterly-planned invasion. Our seamen steered the landing craft and our naval gunners pummelled the enemy's beach defences. Our pilots helped to ensure that the allies had overwhelming air superiority when it really mattered.

Over 15,000 Canadian soldiers waded ashore on Juno Beach that morning, just one-fifth of the total allied invasion force.

By the end of the day most of them had reached their objectives, overcoming a combination of mines, booby traps, barbed wire, machine guns and hand grenades.

Over 350 Canadians were killed trying to reach their D-Day objectives.

Let us never forget that they forfeited their futures so that others would no longer be captives in their own lands.

Europeans have never forgotten D-day, neither should we.

* * *

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Mr. Speaker, I want to also add my voice to those who have brought before us the memory of the passing of Sir John A. Macdonald 100 years ago.

John A. would have been proud and delighted to see how much Canada has grown and prospered in those 100 years, to know that 100 years later, Canada, as judged by a recent United Nations study, is considered the second best country in the world to live in.

It was 130 years ago, in a speech delivered in 1861 that Macdonald cautioned: "Whatever you do adhere to the union. We are a great country, and shall become one of the greatest in the universe if we preserve it. We shall sink into insignificance and adversity if we suffer it to be broken."

Canadians have a great deal to be thankful for. We have accomplished much. This country united can accomplish a great deal more. There is, after all, first place and John A. liked being number one.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

Today, when giving an interview to the press, the minister said: "Mr. Raymond Chrétien believes he is due for an apology. He shall let me know, and I will respond."

Is this minister, with this offer of an apology, saying that he has made serious errors in the handling of this case?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, no.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, specifically, the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs a few weeks back made a statement on

national television that he had received an apology from the senior public servant, Raymond Chrétien.

Will the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs do the honourable thing and take this opportunity in the House to correct this statement which he now knows is clearly untrue?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, that matter was dealt with completely in committee this morning.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, it is not being dealt with publicly which is the place where that apology should be made.

I would go back to a final supplementary to the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

Again, in speaking to the press this morning, he said: "I regret all aspects of this matter," referring to the Al-Mashat affair. With the minister acknowledging these regrets, will this lead to an apology of all the ministers who are involved in unfairly blaming public servants, while taking no responsibility themselves for this very sorry affair that has been so bothersome to the Canadian people and to this government?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the short answer to that question is no.

I want also to add another point, that is, I think the behaviour of members in this House in this matter has not led to a greater esteem for Parliament among the people of this country.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Acting Prime Minister.

On May 15 in this House, the Prime Minister said: "There were administrative errors made in the system for which apologies have been conveyed."

In view of the fact that Raymond Chrétien denies conveying an apology, will the Acting Prime Minister now on behalf of the Government of Canada acknowledge that that statement made by the Prime Minister on May 15 was inaccurate and misleading? Will he, on behalf of the Government of Canada and this House convey an apology to Raymond Chrétien?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, both my former answers apply.

That was dealt with in the House and in committee: no.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, in a report that was made public on May 15, it says: "Mr. Chrétien has apologized."

The Acting Prime Minister, on television, referring to Raymond Chrétien, said: "He obviously very much regrets what happened. He apologized to me."

These statements are misstatements. They are false. They are misleading.

• (1420)

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment. I want it made very clear the questions that have just been asked by the hon. member's colleague have been allowed because they were in order. The question that the hon. member wants to pose may very well be in order. What is not in order are the accusatory words that have just been used in the preamble. The hon. member may want to put his question, and I will listen carefully to it.

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, this government has made public certain statements that are inaccurate, according to Mr. Raymond Chrétien, the person who was accused of making or conveying an apology.

I am asking the government today in the House of Commons in a public way to convey an apology to a civil servant who has served this country for the last 25 years. In view of the inaccuracies in those statements by the Government of Canada, will it now have the decency and apologize to Raymond Chrétien?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, that question was answered earlier this day.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, on March 12, Paul Tellier, the Clerk of the Privy Council, knew that former Iraqi Ambassador Al-Mashat had jumped to the front of the queue and was provisionally accepted as a retiree immigrant to Canada.

On April 8, Mr. Tellier learned Mr. Al-Mashat had in fact arrived in Canada, yet he did not tell the Prime Minister until April 30. In view of the fact that this minister blamed Raymond Chrétien and, for symmetry, David Daubney for not having alerted their bosses to

Al-Mashat's possible presence in Canada, how can the minister explain this very clear double standard?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): What requires explanation are the leaks in logic and the very creative interpretation of other people's language used with some consistency by my colleague who has put the question. He knows that Mr. Tellier was before the committee, answered questions put to him when he was allowed to respond and that closes that matter.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, it certainly does not close that matter at all.

I want to ask a question about another official of the Privy Council to the minister in his capacity as President of the Privy Council. The minister's Chief of Staff, David Daubney, said: "I was told that my name was put in for reasons of symmetry. I think essentially it was that given the surname of the official involved and his relationship to the Leader of the Opposition that they felt a political staffer should be offered".

I want to ask the minister: Does the minister stand by the statement of his Chief of Staff that they felt, they, the lynch-mob cabinet committee, should in fact be offering up a political staffer for symmetry?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there was no cabinet committee that acted in that way.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, the minister is now saying that his Chief of Staff did not tell the truth.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Svend baby.

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment. I have to remind the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway, as I have had to remind other members on both sides of the House, including yesterday the right hon. Prime Minister, that this line of questioning is not easy for the Speaker, nor is it easy for hon. members.

The hon. member may have a question which is acceptable. But what is not acceptable are preambles which are hurling accusations that are improper either against anybody in this place or anybody outside of it. I ask the hon. member to be very careful and put his question and I will listen to it.

Mr. Robinson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will put my question to Joe baby—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel.

Ms. Copps: He called him Svend baby.

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs. Last night at a press conference, the minister's chief of staff, Mr. Daubney, indicated that he and Mr. Raymond Chrétien had been blamed in the Al-Mashat affair for reasons of symmetry. Why would the government want to blame two senior officials for reasons of symmetry? We know a minister or ministers made the decision.

Could the minister tell us which minister made such a stupid decision? Second, the minister knows that in all parliamentary systems like ours, in a case like this the honourable thing to do for a minister is to offer his resignation. Why has no minister in this government done the honourable thing so far?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think the government's position was made quite clear in a paper tabled a few months ago about the issue of ministerial responsibility. A minister cannot be held responsible for matters that concern him if he was not informed. That is the case here. What we have here is a case of human error, errors of judgment and mistakes in the system. That is why the Parliament of Canada has formed a parliamentary committee to consider this matter, and I think the committee is still looking into this question—

I apologize for speaking French to my friend, Mr. Nunziata, but it is one of the official languages in this House, and I intend to speak French, even if they don't like it.

Ms. Copps: He should not use the French language like that!

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): I would like to give the minister another opportunity to speak French. But I think that he is going to be just as embarrassed whatever the language he uses.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I would like to know why Mr. Chrétien's name was added to that of Mr. Daubney. For reasons of symmetry?

Why do the government and the ministers, after stating publicly that errors were made by certain civil servants for which apologies were conveyed, when in fact none were conveyed, keep giving the impression that a civil servant made a mistake? They know full well that those responsible for this mistake did not convey any apologies or admit they did wrong.

Can the minister tell me, just for symmetry, if there should not be two ministers blamed for their incompetence, the same way the government tried to put the blame on two civil servants?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, these two individuals were mentioned because they were the two senior civil servants who were in charge, in this case, in the Department of External Affairs.

Mr. Daubney was my chief of staff at the time at External Affairs and the mistake he made was to read and deliver a memorandum intented for the eyes of the then Secretary of State for External Affairs.

As for Mr. Chrétien, the Associate Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, his was an error of judgement. He has let his minister travel to the Middle East while there was a controversy about Iraq. Although he was fully aware of what was going on concerning Mr. Al-Mashat, he did not breathe a word to his minister. He put the minister representing Canada in a situation where he could not be apprised of the case.

• (1430)

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

On May 14, at page 51 of *Hansard* the minister said:

> Mr. Speaker, this morning I made public a chronology of events explaining how this decision came about—The facts were disclosed this morning and we have been quite transparent about it all.

Mr. Speaker, we now know that material facts in the possession of the minister were omitted from the May 14 statement. Does the minister still stand by his statement of May 14 in the House?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I thought these people were interested in finding out what happened but I have found out differently. The display of the opposition members both in committee and in this House reminds me of the days of the kazoo's in the Senate. I am not surprised.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the same minister. The minister has admitted participating in a meeting on May 13 which we know decided to omit certain facts and blame two individuals while ignoring the inaction of others and of ministers.

Surely the minister must see that this was wrong. Will he do the honourable thing and apologize to this House and Canadians?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, never will I apologize for having Canadians know what really happened.

* * *

CANADA-U.S. FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. During the Canada-U.S. free trade talks, Canadians were fearful that the United States was after our fresh water and today our fears have been realized. A firm with United States links called Multinational Resources has announced today its intention to divert water from the North Thompson River, a major tributary of the Fraser, into the United States to serve the San Diego market. The governor of California days ago said that he was keen on buying Canadian fresh water.

Will the Acting Prime Minister stand in his place today and say to Canadians, and indeed to Americans, that this country will not divert its rivers wholly or partially into

the United States, that Canadian rivers are simply not for sale.

An hon. member: Another alarmist in the NDP.

An hon. member: That is a Reform Party policy, not ours.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member never ceases to come in with a question about this every two months, usually quoting some American wish list which will go nowhere. In fact, the free trade agreement made it clear that bulk exports of water are not part of the agreement and will not be part of the agreement.

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question concerning another free trade related issue is for the Minister of Communications. Traditionally, Canada and the U.S. have enjoyed relatively free movement of performing artists across our borders. Now the United States has imposed a barrier to Canadian artists performing in the United States as a protectionist lever in the upcoming trade negotiations.

I want to ask the minister whether he will acknowledge that such actions amount to a pre-emptive strike against Canadian cultural industries? Will he advise what remedy he has sought? Will he assure us that Canadian culture will not be used as a bargaining chip to be bargained away in the upcoming trilateral negotiations?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should remember that the Minister for International Trade already said that just a few days ago.

More important, I am very interested to hear the NDP now talking about the value of free movement of people back and forth across the border as a result of the free trade agreement.

I have been concerned, as indeed my colleagues have been concerned, about the lack of free movement in the past for performing artists into the United States from Canada. It is a concern. We have expressed that concern and are continuing to work on it, but we also will make sure we keep in place the free movement of people and of businesses under the free trade agreement.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister. On May 14 the Acting Prime Minister said on national television, speaking of Raymond Chrétien, the following: "He obviously very much regrets what happened. He has apologized to me and I say that ends the matter."

It does not end the matter because we know that the minister and Raymond Chrétien have not spoken together even to this day. Therefore it is impossible that Raymond Chrétien apologized to the minister.

My question is the following. Will the minister not take advantage of this opportunity now in Parliament and before the people of Canada to set the record straight, to indicate there was no apology, personally or indirectly to the minister and that to the extent the minister inadvertently, or any other way, misled the people of Canada, inadvertently or any other way maligned Mr. Chrétien, he apologizes for that. Do the decent thing, Joe.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, that question was raised and answered in committee this morning.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Acting Prime Minister this question, given that his statement of May 14 was made on national television potentially to millions of Canadians. The statement claimed an apology that never happened, a conversation that never took place. Given the importance of the credibility of this minister, the integrity of this minister, will he not now clear the air for his own sake and for the sake of decency for Raymond Chrétien?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chrétien knows, because I am sure he was paying attention to the testimony in committee this morning, that if he has a request to make of me he has only to make it. He has not made it.

With respect to the committee in which these questions were first posed today, I remind the House that that committee was established at the explicit desire of

this House to provide a parliamentary opportunity so that the facts could be known.

I think what is becoming increasingly clear is that while it is possible for the facts to be known in that committee, it is not possible for dramatic and sometimes misleading statements to be made on television, which is why the opposition keeps repeating these questions here in the House. They are interested in a sound bite, they are not interested in the facts.

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Privy Council.

This morning he told the press that he would be reviewing the transcripts of Mr. Shortliffe's statement about Mr. Chrétien's unsubstantiated apology. Has the minister spoken to Mr. Shortliffe since making this commitment? When will he review the transcripts?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have done both.

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

Will he review carefully the statement of ministers of May 14, which makes public an apology to ministers on the part of Mr. Chrétien and Mr. Daubney? Does it make a difference to this minister that this statement of apology on the part of Mr. Chrétien was made public in spite of the fact that Raymond Chrétien says he did not apologize.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): I do not want to stray into the area of testimony in committee, but I think the hon. member was there. She will know that Mr. Shortliffe, when faced with questions of this kind, indicated that Mr. Chrétien knew what would be in the statement issued the next day.

* * *

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

Business people across the country have pointed out yet another problem with the goods and services tax. When customers charge the purchase of a product to their credit card, the fee which the merchants must pay to the bank is calculated after the GST is added. This means that the banks will earn income in excess of $60 million this year at the expense of the merchant, as a result of the GST.

Will the minister justify this added expense to small business people? Why should small business be shoring up the profits of banks at this time of high business failures?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, they used to do that on 13.5 per cent, now they are doing it on 7 per cent. But we will be happy to look at it.

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, my supplemental. This government has stated an interest in assisting small business, yet is again helping its banking friends reap profits at merchants' expense.

• (1440)

Will the Minister of State for Small Businesses meet his responsibility and exert pressure on his banking friends to charge the merchant fee on the actual price of the items exclusive of the tax?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will know that banks pay taxes just like anybody else—

Some hon. members: Come on, come on.

Mr. Jelinek: A billion dollars. We know where the New Democrats stand on—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Jelinek: In any event, my answer to the hon. member's second question is the same as the first one. This is constant policy of the government.

We have brought in a new tax which is going to benefit the competitiveness of Canadians. There is no question in anyone's mind that the old manufacturers' sales tax was an impediment, an albatross around the necks of Canadian businesses, manufacturers and exporters, small and large, and the elimination of that tax and its replacement with a modern value-added tax like the GST, used in 48 other countries around the world, is going to benefit businesses and, therefore, all Canadians.

JUSTICE

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

I believe that Canadians are becoming impatient with our government's failure to introduce legislation to streamline and, indeed, speed up our extradition process. Therefore, my question to the minister is this. When will the minister address this problem to reduce the number of appeals open to fugitives such as Charles Ng and, in so doing, send a message that Canada is not a safe haven for fugitives?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the interest of the hon. member and a number of my colleagues in the House on this particular issue.

The government is undertaking a complete review of the extradition law. I am happy to report that I have asked my department to fast-track this. I expect to be able to introduce amendments to the provisions of the Extradition Act relating to appeal that address the concerns raised by the hon. member, namely the speed with which these issues can be dealt with prior to the rising of the House before the summer.

So, within this sitting, I will be introducing those amendments.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Public Works, about the lease his department signed with Transport Canada. After two years, we finally got a copy of the lease and it confirms what the opposition and myself were suspecting, namely that Public Works paid more to renew the lease with Campeau, at Place de Ville, than it would have cost to have a new tower built in the Outaouais. I would like the Minister of Public Works, who signed the lease for the government, to apologize for misleading the House in 1989?

[*English*]

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, the member, in bringing this matter up, gives me an opportunity to remind colleagues that this project was one of several capital projects that were cancelled in the name of budgetary restraint.

In saying that extra cost or an apology is in order, he ignores the fact that the lease is renewed at $35 per square metre less than the previous lease that was signed years ago by the Liberal government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to say to the minister that, under the present lease, it costs $250 per square meter, a lot more than what would have cost a 20-year lease in the Outaouais. I want to ask the minister why he changed the allocation rules for leases, by establishing criteria which do not take into account the situation in the Outaouais?

[*English*]

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, there were no rules changed. The project was terminated and there were many arguments that could be placed both ways.

Many public servants were pleased that this was cancelled. There was a substantial saving in terms of relocation, infrastructure demands and many colleagues in this House were very pleased that the government had followed this policy.

We have discussed this before and we can argue about it again, but the fact is that this project was one of several that were cancelled and, on a net basis, the renewal has not been a bad deal for the taxpayers of Canada.

* * *

NOISE POLLUTION

Mr. Harry Chadwick (Bramalea—Gore—Malton): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

I am very glad to acknowledge the progress made by the minister in proposing amendments to the Aeronautics Act. It will impose a significant fine on violators of noise regulations at our airports. A $10,000 fine against corporations should successfully deter violators, much to the relief of my constituents.

Could the minister please give consideration, when this bill is before the Standing Committee on Transport, to including an equally significant minimum fine for violators so that airports will be obliged to enforce a

significant fine and not the token fines presently being levied?

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I know, over the many years, that he has taken the concerns of his constituents in the area of the airport at Toronto very seriously, and worked hard on their behalf.

As he knows, the bill is now before committee, which will be looking at all the options. This is an amendment that I am sure will come up for debate and one that can be dealt with in the committee.

* * *

PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Public Works and it concerns the mother of all boondoggles, the lease on the Transport Canada building.

How can the minister justify the cancellation of the 1989 construction of the Transport Canada building at a cost of $200 million over 20 years, and instead grant a sweetheart deal of at least three times the cost to Campeau Corporation now led by the former chief of staff to the Prime Minister, Stanley Hartt?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows, because he is an objective and knowledgeable critic, that the sweetheart deal was the one I referred to when Judd Buchanan and Arthur Laing entered into the original lease many years ago at a cost much in excess of the one we are able to renegotiate the new lease.

He also knows that he is trying to compare apples and oranges. He is trying to compare a 20-year lease purchase with the renewal of an existing lease. He ignores all of the advantages that are gained in staying in the lease arrangement and renegotiating it.

He ignores the fact that we were able to make arrangements to have the asbestos cost shared. He ignores the fact that there was swing space arranged with Campeau Corporation. He ignores the fact that if there was any particular corporation which I would be disposed to make a deal, it would not be the Campeau Corporation.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, and I am sure pigs can fly as well.

I want to ask a supplementary question of the Acting Deputy Prime Minister concerning this new lease on life for Stanley Hartt.

[*Translation*]

My supplementary is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. When the tender process for the new Transport Canada building was cancelled, Mr. Stanley Hartt, the then Prime Minister's chief of staff, was the same person who later became president of the Campeau Corporation, three months after leaving the Prime Minister's office. Did the Acting Prime Minister ensure that both the letter and the intent of the code governing conflicts of interest and post-employment were observed? If not, does he intend to do so today?

[*English*]

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that particularly when he is dealing with merely an Acting Deputy Prime Minister, if he wants an answer to a question of that kind, he will be well served by giving me notice.

I did not have notice. I do not know the answer. I suspect the answer is in the negative but he does not want my suspicions. I will take it as notice and get back to him.

* * *

POST OFFICE

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Today is the anniversary of D-Day. Canadians are paying tribute at memorials and cenotaphs across this country. In Avonmore, Canada Post is attacking these symbols. Canada Post intends to close the post office. It has asked the township to remove the cenotaph so that it can sell the property.

Will the minister intervene on behalf of veterans and stop this horrendous attack on Canadian symbols and veterans?

• (1450)

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, when the question about the cenotaph in Avonmore came to my attention, I contacted the post office. They said that their intention, if they have not done so already and I think they might have, is to donate to the town of Avonmore the land, the cenotaph, and the surrounding land so it will be a long-lasting memorial to the veterans of Canada permanently in the hands of the town of Avonmore.

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the minister responsible for Canada Post. I would first commend him for his actions with Avonmore.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pickard: I would also remind him that Canada Post is attacking the very fabric of rural Canada. They have removed the word "Canada" from Canada Post. Flags and symbols across this country have been removed in hundreds of communities because of closures. In Avonmore the cenotaph question came up but again that question is going to be asked a hundredfold over with the hundreds of closings that are going on.

Will this minister reconsider his position in shutting down the symbols of Canada in closing post offices and maintaining rural dignity in this country?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, not only is this the day to remember D-Day, it is a day to remember because it is the first time in 20 years I have received applause from the other side of the House.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, as a result of the actions taken by the previous government—the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel was the minister at this time—in making Canada Post a Crown corporation so it could operate free from political interference, it has become the most efficient post office in the world.

Given that tremendous track record, of which all Canadians should be truly proud, I am not about to go second guessing the management and saying they should do this and do that. The representations the hon. member makes have been heard and acknowledged and I am sure that if we allow ourselves we will see that Canada Post is something we can all be proud of as a tremendous accomplishment by the employees who work there.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue and refers to a question which was asked last Friday in the House. It concerns the Canadian printing industry and the fact that the rule requiring material printed in the United States of America to state clearly on it that it is printed in the United States of America is not being enforced by Canada Customs in the way that the reverse rule is being enforced by American Customs, thus putting the Canadian printing industry at a disadvantage.

This was a concern raised by the industry when they were in Ottawa a week or so ago. Last Friday the government made a commitment to look into it and see what could be done about it. I am asking the Minister of National Revenue what the government will be doing and will they be moving to enforce this rule?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will know that we only had an opportunity to meet with representatives from the printing industry last week. As a result of that meeting I have asked my officials to review all aspects of the concerns that were raised at that meeting. The report has not been finalized. When it is and comes to my attention for review I will be very happy to share the information with my hon. friend.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the Minister of National Revenue could at least make it clear that the government intends to enforce its own rules, which is part of the problem. I wonder if the minister could at least give us that assurance.

While he is doing that, could he also assure us, because I have heard information to the contrary, that the government, particularly the Department of National Revenue itself, is not having GST information and other information printed across the border and coming back into Canada for distribution. Could he give us

assurance that his department is not cross-border shopping?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I can give the hon. member my assurances that my department is not cross-border shopping in any way, shape, or form.

I can also give the hon. member my commitment that we are enforcing all rules as they apply to Revenue Canada under existing legislation.

I will go even further than that and say that as a result of the meetings with the printing industry and the review that is under way now, we are looking at ways and government as a whole is looking at ways on an ongoing basis, to try to level the playing field wherever we find it is not level. If we find out that there is not a level playing field in this instance, we will take appropriate action to correct it.

* * *

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. It is urgent that we move ahead quickly to pass improvements to the Young Offenders Act. Many of the residents of my riding are demanding changes.

I raised this issue with the former Minister of Justice on June 12, 1989, two years ago. I submit that our laws must be changed to reflect greater concerns for the victims of criminals and society in general.

What major changes will be incorporated in Bill C-12, including amendments, and what changes are being considered in phase two of the Young Offenders Act?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question and, once again, for his interest in his particular area. Bill C-12, which is the reinstated version of Bill C-58, was introduced by my predecessor and is at report stage in the House. It deals with the question of the test for the transfer of a young person to adult court and the sentences available to the young offender in the adult courts for youth convicted of murder.

I am hoping that this legislation will come forward quickly. I understand a number of amendments have been proposed. I will be bringing forward the second phase of the Young Offenders Act amendments this fall which will address a broader application of youth in conflict with the law.

I cannot be more specific on it at this moment since the bill is not tabled, but I can assure the hon. member that we are in full consultation with the provinces and other interested parties and I hope to table phase two before the end of this calendar year.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): My question is for the Acting Prime Minister. I want to remind the Acting Prime Minister that in his new job as Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs he will require the trust and the confidence of all Canadians.

In that regard I would like to ask the minister once again to answer clearly in this House and to Canadians for a statement that he made on the May 14 to all Canadians in which he spoke about Mr. Raymond Chrétien in stating: "He very obviously regrets what happened. He has apologized to me, and as I say, that ends".

Obviously the minister must have known that statement was not true because he had never spoken to Mr. Raymond—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member said that the minister must obviously have known that that statement was not true, but there is no difference between saying that and saying that the hon. minister is a liar. That is not appropriate questioning.

I am going to hope that the hon. member did not mean an accusation like that, but that kind of language used in a preamble certainly creates that kind of an impression. The hon. member may put her question.

Ms. Copps: Does the minister stand by this statement he made on that date?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, no one is more conscious than I am of the need for me, and indeed the need for all members of this House, to earn the respect and trust of Canadians.

I try to conduct myself in a way that will attract and maintain that respect and trust.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): That is one of the reasons why this government, when this affair arose, agreed very quickly to establish a parliamentary committee that would allow more extensive discussion of these issues than Question Period permits.

We have a clear example of how right a decision that was today because that very question was asked and answered earlier this morning in the standing committee. The standing committee provides the latitude for there to be that kind of fullness of answer.

• (1500)

I do not think that there is much point or indeed much respect for this institution for me to repeat here what I said in committee established by the House of Commons when I was there as a witness earlier this morning.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I rise with some regret on a point of order concerning the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs who has just indicated that he tries to maintain himself in a position that will attract respect and trust.

He and his colleagues have called upon us on a regular basis to change our habits in an effort to raise the dignity and respect which this institution deserves.

During Question Period, the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs referred to my colleague from Burnaby—Kingsway as "Svend baby".

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, he did that and I do not think this adds to the decorum of this House. I do not think that attracts the trust and imagery that the minister would want to have. I want to provide him with an opportunity to stand in his place and withdraw those remarks.

Point of Order

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, certainly I would want to withdraw that statement.

While I am on my feet, may I say that I want to consult the "blues" to ensure that my response to the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell said what I wanted it to say.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I just want to make the point that I think the President of the Privy Council demonstrated by his response to that point of order the kind of dignity and respect for each other that we would like to see.

I would hope that the House leader of the New Democratic Party will notice that, take it back to his caucus colleagues and tell them how inappropriate it is to have questions with accusatory, inflammatory preambles, particularly the kind his colleague, the member from Burnaby, has frequently put forward to the House. He would be helping us all earn some respect in this House.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The right hon. President of the Privy Council was on his feet extending an apology with regard to my colleague from Burnaby. Perhaps he would avail himself of this opportunity to stand in the House and extend an apology to Raymond Chrétien.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, we seem to be in a period of some flexibility in the rules.

What I have said, and I welcome the opportunity to say it again although I am sure it has already been drawn to Mr. Chrétien's attention, is that if he believes that any of my comments give him reason to request an apology, he has only to ask me for that kind of apology and I will respond. I do not think that it is particularly helpful to the reputation of this House, nor does it serve the reputation or the interests of Mr. Chrétien to have this matter pursued in a partisan way.

He and I have known one another for eight or nine years. We have worked together very closely.

The House leader of the Liberal Party is asking if I will apologize. I do not think he has any authority from Mr. Chrétien to seek that. I have made it very clear that if

Mr. Chrétien believes that I have said something that would—

Mr. Dingwall: What an example for national unity. What an example.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): No. If Mr. Chrétien believes that there is some matter that I have said that should elicit from him a request for an apology, he has only to call me. We have spoken together on matters in the past and I am quite prepared to do that again.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, earlier in Question Period in the preamble to my third question I referred to the President of the Queen's Privy Council and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs as "Joe baby" in response to his statement to me.

Obviously in the same spirit in which the minister has withdrawn his reference, I too fully withdraw mine.

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Following the the generous atmosphere that has been established here in the House, I would like to follow up on the request made by the Liberal House leader. It is not good enough for the minister to claim that this is a private matter between himself and Raymond Chrétien. He tabled a statement in the House—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): What is the hon. member's point of order?

Ms. Copps: My point of order is that when a minister comes into this House and tables a document which makes false statements he has the responsibility to apologize to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I believe the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition wants to know about government House business. What is the point of order?

Ms. Copps: The point of order is this: Is there not a responsibility upon the Speaker when documents are tabled, as there was a document tabled on behalf of the former Secretary of State for External Affairs, which are patently at variance with the truth? Is it not the responsibility of the House to see those statements corrected publicly?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I do not know if they are patently untrue. I have not seen the documents. We will have a look at them and then I will come with a decision on it. The hon. leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I pose my question to the government House leader, and in doing so I remind him that my colleague from Ottawa West will have a specific question for him with regard to House business and I hope that he will be able to respond in kind.

Perhaps the government House leader could indicate to members on this side of the House what the business will be for Monday and Tuesday and for the remaining part of next week.

Mr. Prud'homme: Two full days of the Machete affair.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): That is serving the nation's interest. You are really interested in that, are you not? I know you have been here 25 years, but please do not interrupt.

Today we will continue with third reading of Bill C-11. Tomorrow was to be an NDP allotted day, but by House order it was agreed that we would not sit so that the NDP could attend its convention in Halifax. Monday will be an allotted day. Tuesday it is my intention to call for second reading of Bill C-10, Excise Tax Act dealing with tobacco, and also for second reading of Bill C-20, the budget implementation bill. At this time, subject to confirmation, Wednesday and Thursday of next week would be allotted days, Thursday being the final allotted day for the current supply period.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): I pursue a point of order. The hon. House leader for the government has indicated the business for Monday. Would he clarify whether there will be a vote on Monday? I thought we had an understanding between the House leaders that on that one bill the vote would be passing on division. That obviously did not take place. Will there be a vote on Monday and at what time on Monday?

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, the deferral of the vote on Bill C-17 was to six o'clock on Monday. It is an allotted day. Assuming the extension of hours until ten o'clock, it would be my intention as government Whip to defer that vote on the allotted day until Tuesday to give members a better chance to be present.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, in terms of business of the House, today the Supreme Court of Canada turned down the government's appeal and upheld the ruling of the Federal Court of Appeal that section 33(1) of the Public Service Employment Act, prohibiting public political activities by public servants, contravenes the charter and is an undue infringement of the right of freedom and association.

I would like to ask the House leader, now that all appeals are exhausted, does the government intend to bring in a bill to remove the part of the act that the Supreme Court of Canada has now confirmed to be contrary to the charter?

Mr. Andre: It is my understanding that the President of the Treasury Board is examining the ruling to see its implications and we will bring the Canadian law into compliance with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as interpreted by the Supreme Court of Canada.

* * *

• (1510)

POINT OF ORDER

INVESTIGATION INTO SHOOTING

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order. I have a question as well for the hon. government House leader.

There have been repeated requests to the Minister of Justice, including a request from the Prince Albert Friendship Centre and the Prince Albert Tribal Council for an investigation into the shooting of an Indian gentlemen, Leo La Chance, by the leader of the Aryan Nations in Saskatchewan, Carney Nerland. Many people are concerned with the relatively minor charge and light sentence that the Crown sought in that particular case. Many people feel that the connection to the Aryan Nations has not been properly explored.

Therefore, I would like to ask the government House leader if he would please request the Minister of Justice to respond to this situation at the next sitting of the House.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I would question whether the Minister of Justice or anybody else should respond to a request to interfere in the justice system. As I heard the case described, it is being proceeded with in the normal way.

However, I will bring the member's representation to the Minister of Justice and she may have a response. I remind the hon. member that questions, whether during Question Period or by points of order, on situations of *sub judice* are really not proper for the very good reason that we should not, through things we say here under the protections of this institution, jeopardize the fairness of our judicial system which we all believe to be as fair as we can make it.

With that reminder, I will, nevertheless, talk to the Minister of Justice.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would also like to add to that. It is not because of what the hon. government House leader has just said, but that kind of question should be put at Question Period. It is not a point of order.

Mr. Gauthier: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I did consult with my colleagues from all parties and I even consulted with the independent members. I think you would find unanimous consent to allow me to revert to presenting reports from special and standing committees.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

TABLING OF FIRST REPORT

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, with the unanimous consent of the House, I

wish to table the first report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, on the Main Estimates for 1991–1992.

[*English*]

Mr. Riis: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the hon. member and his committee report. Tomorrow the estimates are deemed to have been tabled and, as far as I can recall, this is the only committee that has been working and is actually now tabling its reaction to the estimates.

I think it is first rate. I think the committee and its members are to be commended. I only wish that other committees could do the same thing. However, because of the realities of the time on some of the impositions that have been placed on the committees, this is impossible.

I certainly want to acknowledge the first-rate work done and I hope that this can be a model for other committees in the future.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

RAILWAY ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (for the Minister of Transport) moved that Bill C-11, an act to amend the Railway Act (grain and flour subsidies), be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the bill now before the House seeks to eliminate a subsidy which has outlived its original purpose and has become a burden on the public purse.

The At and East subsidy program was originally introduced in the 1960s to ensure that Canadian grain and flour would move through Canadian ports. The program provided subsidies to the railways based on the difference between the railway's cost and the statutory freight rates dating back to the 1960s. It is worth noting that only a relatively small amount of Canada's export grain moved under this program, less than 3 per cent.

Various studies have been done on this subsidy over the past 15 years. Those subsidies indicated that the subsidy encouraged inefficient movement plus extra handling and storage. It was clear that the program was expensive and no longer necessary. As a result, the subsidy was terminated effective July 15, 1989, as announced in the April 1989 budget.

In order to minimize the impact on users, the legislation provided for a six month transition period to cover grain and flour inventories that were in the rail system on that day.

Members are aware that the government is undertaking a comprehensive review of agricultural policy, which includes an examination of related transportation issues and involves all stakeholders from the farm level through to the consumer.

The principal goal of growing together is to develop options for a national policy which will serve to prepare the Canadian agrifood industry for the challenges of the 1990s and beyond.

Virtually all of the witnesses who appeared before the legislative committee on this bill agreed that the At and East program should be terminated. However, some of the witnesses expressed concern about the impact that terminating the program would have on the two Atlantic grain elevators. In particular, people were worried about the implications that the possible closure of the Halifax grain elevator would have on Atlantic agriculture sectors.

In response to these concerns, the Minister of Agriculture and the minister responsible for grains and oilseeds jointly announced on May 16, 1990, the creation of a steering committee to study the viability of grain handling facilities in the Atlantic provinces.

The steering committee included representatives from industry and the ports, as well as both the federal and provincial governments. The study examined the financial viability of the elevators at Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Saint John, New Brunswick. It also examined the feasibility of a new elevator at Summerside, Prince Edward Island, to handle the increasing volumes of grain being grown in that province.

Proposals put forward by the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission and the Halifax—Dartmouth Port Development Commission, concerning alternatives to

the At and East program, were examined as part of the study.

The study concluded that virtually all export grain shipments by rail to both Halifax and Saint John stopped with the termination of the At and East subsidy. The Halifax elevator remained a viable operation because it serviced the Atlantic livestock industry and flour mill in addition to the grain export market.

Unlike the Saint John elevator, it can receive grain by either rail or water. However, the Halifax elevator could be at risk in the longer term unless more export grain can be brought through it.

The study indicated that livestock producers in Atlantic Canada would pay at least $10 more per tonne for feed grains if the Halifax terminal were to close.

The terminal provides an alternative to rail shipping and feed grain to the region as well as competition between rail and water for the feed grain business.

The Saint John elevator, which was almost exclusively handling export grain, closed in May 1990. Unlike the Halifax elevator it was not equipped to receive grain by water.

The study did identify a program that could ensure the long-term viability of the Halifax elevator which is more cost-effective than earlier proposals. This option would be to increase traffic through the Halifax elevator by an additional 200,000 tonnes per year, based on a subsidy of about $3 per tonne.

At the time of the study $3 per tonne was the amount required to equalize the freight rate to Halifax, relative to the St. Lawrence port for grain shipped by water from Thunder Bay. Members will appreciate that it is cheaper to transport bulk products, such as grain, by water than by rail.

One of the main deficiencies of the At and East program was that it subsidized the more expensive rail movements. The government acknowledges the importance of the Halifax grain elevator to the Atlantic livestock and flour milling industries.

I am pleased to advise members that the government is closely monitoring the situation and, if needed, is prepared to ensure that the Halifax elevator remains in operation for the benefit of the Atlantic livestock and flour milling industries.

With respect to the Saint John elevator, the construction of marine unloading facilities and additional storage would be required before the elevator could handle the amount of through-put required to ensure its long-term viability. However, the government is prepared to offer assistance to the Saint John elevator, comparable to what it offered to the Halifax elevator.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that the At and East subsidy is an expensive, inefficient and unnecessary mechanism for supporting grain handling on the east coast. Canadian taxpayers cannot afford a subsidy program based on a 1960 policy which is no longer required.

• (1520)

The government is prepared, however, to minimize the impact of terminating the program on the Atlantic livestock and flour milling industries. Therefore I ask members for their support and approval of Bill C-11.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, under normal circumstances I would be very happy to take part in a debate of this kind. However, as you well know, these are not normal times in our country. These are not normal circumstances. Witness the kinds of goings-on here in the House and elsewhere in the past few days. Witness the breakdown in national unity in this country. Witness the breakdown in the economy. These are not normal times and these are not normal circumstances.

The reason why I am not particularly happy about taking part in this debate is that this bill should not be here in the first place. It does not belong in this House at this particular time. At least, at the very minimum, we should not be debating this bill at third reading. At the very least, this is the day this bill should be introduced. We should not be debating it at third reading.

I say that because this particular bill was introduced a long time ago—more than a year ago—under another name or number and died with prorogation. It died. It died early in the month of May and it should not be in this House. The reason why it is here is that this government broke every tradition in this country, every tradition in this Parliament. It broke every convention that we know of and resurrected this bill along with four others.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall very well that we went through this kind of debate just a few days ago. Never before in the history of our Parliament have we ever resurrected a bill without unanimous consent. It has never happened in the Mother of our Parliaments in England, in Great Britain.

In my opinion we are debating this bill today as a result of contempt for our traditions, contempt for this House, and ultimately I believe contempt for the Canadian people. Nevertheless, we have it here. I just want to remind you that this bill, in its previous incarnation, was brought out of committee on May 31, 1989. That is more than a year ago. It was debated at report stage and concurred in on June 5, 1990. That is a year and one day ago.

This government had all the time in the world to finish this bill. It had ample time, but it mismanaged and bungled as usual. Here we are, the government breaking tradition, breaking convention and resurrecting a bill that really died at prorogation in early May.

It is little wonder that this kind of debate at this particular time is kind of vexing. It leaves me a little angry, but we have it. I guess we are going to have to live with it and we are going to debate it.

We might recall—I will just provide a little more history—that the bill, which was designed to eliminate the At and East subsidies, was actually brought in after the subsidies were already eliminated.

The subsidies were eliminated back in July 1989. Some time after that the bill was brought in to confirm something that the government had already done.

In my opinion, that is just more contempt for the traditions of this House.

It was said at the time the bill was brought in, more than a year ago, that it would have harmful effects across the board, particularly in the maritimes.

I am sad to say that some of those forecasts have already come true. I would think that most of the other forecasts will be confirmed in the months to come or at least in the years to come.

Let us look at the facts. They are indisputable. First of all, the elevator at Saint John is gone. It is closed. It is no more. There were 55 jobs lost. In a region of Canada like Atlantic Canada that is particularly painful. Losing 55 jobs is nothing to be sneezed at.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport said a few minutes ago in his remarks that this legislation, the At and East legislation, had outlived its usefulness and had become a burden on the public treasury.

Of course, we all know that this government does everything in the name of deficit reduction.

It has outlived its usefulness. I wish that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport would say that to the 55 people in Saint John who lost their jobs. I wonder whether they would agree. I doubt it very much.

Not only that, it has already had an impact on the elevator at Halifax, Nova Scotia. There are serious ramifications for that facility. Already, according to figures that I secured just today, 27 jobs have been lost at the Halifax elevator.

That is a loss of $14.4 million to the Halifax economy. If that elevator, which is in a precarious situation, closes it will mean an additional $13.2 million lost to the economy in Halifax. When it comes to jobs it will mean an additional loss of 220 person-years.

We are talking about a very serious situation.

The Halifax elevator, according to information that was given to me today, needs about 260,000 tonnes to break even. It is just at that figure now. It is operating at around that figure, so if it drops below that the Halifax facility is in trouble and it could close.

That is very disturbing. It is a very important facility to the city of Halifax.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind you of something that my colleague from Halifax said in this House back on February 12, 1990. She was taking part in the debate on the legislation at the time and she said: "Halifax is a city that depends on its ports. The grain elevators, the activity produced by the grain elevators and the jobs created thereto are part of the relative economic health of the city of Halifax."

• (1530)

I say relative because it is relative to the ill health of the rest of the region. That ill health in the rest of the region has been caused by the poison dart of government policy.

Then my hon. friend from Halifax continued, and I quote again:

> There is no particular reason, other than a government devoted to a Canada that does not exist outside the very central part of our geography, to see our regions die, and yet they are dying. They are dying from a lack of interest. They are dying from an interest that can only be described as poisonous and that can only be described as anti the best interests of large numbers of Canadian citizens.

That is what my colleague from Halifax said in this House on February 12, 1990. When we are talking about the Halifax elevator, we are talking about something that is crucial to the economy of that city.

As a result of the At and East subsidy elimination, there has been an increase in the cost of transportation to the tune of about $10 a metric ton. This is in line with predictions and forecasts that were made by the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission some time ago. Unfortunately the assessment—I say unfortunately because the assessment by the APTC was somewhat alarming—their forecasts are coming true.

While I am talking about the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission, this is what it said about the termination of the At and East program. It said that when it comes to grain elevators, the impact—that is, a loss to the economy— would be $3,735,000; the flour mill in Halifax, another $3,200,000; additional cost of livestock and poultry feed, another $8 million; local grain production, $950,000; port and railway employment, $8,280,000. The total identifiable impact on the Atlantic provinces through the termination of the At and East program came to just over $34 million.

Also the Canadian Transport Commission some time ago in its assessment of the At and East program pointed out that the program was responsible in the way of transportation for about 330 jobs; milling in western Canada, another 295 jobs; 75 more jobs at Georgian Bay port; 85 more jobs at Halifax and St. John's; and 402 jobs when it comes to milling in central Canada.

Another thing that the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission pointed out is that if the At and East legislation proceeded to the bitter end, and it looks like it is going to happen—of course the subsidies are all gone—the buyers in the provinces who normally relied on grain from western Canada would have to turn elsewhere. They would have to turn to countries like the United States and to countries in western Europe.

I do not think that makes the people in Atlantic Canada very happy. In fact, I was listening to a speaker from Atlantic Canada in one of our earlier debate. He in effect said that Atlantic Canadians are good Canadians. They want to belong to Canada. They want to participate fully in the Canadian economy. It pains them, it grieves them a lot, if they are forced to turn to other countries for their supplies.

I think it is a darn shame that the Atlantic provinces will have to look elsewhere for their feed grain. In fact, the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Committee has already suggested that there be an elimination of the countervail on U.S. corn. It is a ridiculous situation. Here we have a countervail to protect our producers in this country, and now we have in effect Canadians pitted against Canadians. This is the situation we face. Atlantic Canadians who normally buy their feed grain from other Canadians, especially in western Canada, will perhaps have to turn to the United States or to western Europe. Does that make sense? I do not think it does. Of course it is a blow to the west, particularly at this time. I do not have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that it is tough times down on the farm these days. Farmers will be very happy to grab on to any market, small or big, to maintain their survival. Western farmers do not want to lose one dollar of market in Atlantic Canada. This is what the elimination of the At and East subsidies has done.

I think that perhaps one of the problems we have here is that this government never really understood the purpose of the At and East legislation. Earlier we heard the parliamentary secretary talk about the legislation outliving its purpose. Well, what was its purpose?

Let me go back exactly 25 years to 1966 when the legislation was brought in. At that time the new legislation or the proposed legislation was spoken to by a very venerable, honourable occupant of this House, a man no less than J. W. Pickersgill. You probably know him. What did Mr. Pickersgill say at the time? Describing the purpose of the At and East legislation Mr. Pickersgill said: "To ensure that we will have rates which will provide some inducement and incentive to shippers to use the facilities of the Atlantic ports".

In other words what Mr. Pickersgill was saying at the time, in addition to ensuring that eastern Canadian ports could compete with U.S. ports, was that the At and East rates were also intended to enable the ports of Halifax and Saint John to compete with Montreal and other St. Lawrence River ports. That was the original purpose of the At and East legislation.

The other thing I would like to point out is that the At and East legislation really was in keeping with the history of this country. What we have done over 124 years is defy the physical make-up of this country, defy our geography. What we did was build up parallel systems to what was available in the United States because under normal conditions and forces the pull north-south. If the nation-builders in the early days of this country had ignored the realities of Canada and the north-south forces, this country might not have lasted. It certainly would not have lasted 124 years. But it lasted and prospered because we had statesmen, politicians, and nation-builders with vision and a strong belief in this country. They established programs and legislation to ensure the future of this country. The building of the CPR is an example, as is the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the creation of the Canadian Wheat Board and the At and East program. I could go on and on.

The At and East program is in keeping with our heritage. It is in keeping with our history. It really carries the spirit of Canada, yet this government is saying to heck with all that. It does not care about that. It is not interested in that. It is interested in something else.

• (1540)

No wonder this country is in a state of confusion. No wonder this country is going down hill. No wonder Canadians feel alienated. No wonder Canadians are obsessed with their cynicism. They have a government and particularly a Prime Minister who does not understand the history of this country, who does not understand what this country is all about. At and East is part of that.

At and East was just part and parcel of an orderly marketing system which we had built up over many long years. These things did not happen just overnight. These things did not happen over a weekend or two. It took years and years to build.

Over the years we have built up an orderly marketing system. In that orderly marketing system we have now all kinds of marketing boards. Also within that orderly marketing system we have a supply management system.

Despite some of the grievous problems that we have, particularly when it comes to grain farming in this country, those institutions that we have developed over the last number of decades have served Canadians well, are serving Canadians well and I would submit will continue to serve Canadians well provided that this government stops its darn tinkering and tampering.

There is concern that under this government the unravelling of our programs will continue. It is not just a matter of At and East, it goes well beyond that.

In this House about a year ago or so we witnessed the government putting the kibosh on the interest-free advance payments for crops. There was a great outcry because of that. Prairie producers in particular said: "No, it was wrong. It was an effective program. It was not a costly program. It paid all Canadians in the long run". Fortunately, after a great outcry, after a lot of pressure on the government, the government did change its mind. For how long? We can never be sure. When it comes to this government we have to be ever vigilant.

There is more. It is not only At and East and the interest-free advance payments for crops, there are other programs and institutions at risk. Take for example the Canadian Wheat Board, the venerable Canadian Wheat Board which has served Canadians well. In particular, it has served grain farmers well in this country.

The wheat board is in great danger, I submit. We know that it is now in a serious deficit situation. It is perhaps looking at a deficit of somewhere in the neighbourhood of $700 million, $800 million, $900 million, perhaps as much as $1 billion. I am not suggesting when I cite those figures that the government is totally responsible for that deficit. There is a terrible international subsidy war going on and it is costing the wheat board a lot of money. Where does the wheat board get its money? From Canadian taxpayers.

I do submit that the government has put the Canadian Wheat Board at risk. How? One way is by allowing American wheat into this country.

Under the free trade agreement if the subsidy level in Canada reached that of American subsidies, there was a clause triggered in the FTA that meant Americans would have the right to come in and sell their wheat in Canada.

Unfortunately, the subsidy levels in the two countries met some months ago and it was decided just a few weeks ago that American wheat had to come in.

That poses a terrible risk to the Canadian Wheat Board.

Right off the bat, it cost the Canadian taxpayers $25 million. For the Canadian Wheat Board to compete with the lower priced subsidized American wheat, it would have to drop its prices, and it did. It will cost the Canadian taxpayers $25 million.

There is more to it than that. Once you allow American wheat to come in, you trigger another set of dynamics. I think I have said it before in this House and I will say it again.

When farmers, especially those who live near the U.S. border, see American wheat coming into this country, they are going to look at the American market and say to themselves: "If American wheat can come into our country, maybe we can sell our wheat directly into the American market. We will not have to go through the Canadian Wheat Board. We will find a little niche market here and there, and we will sell our wheat at perhaps a higher price than that offered by the Canadian Wheat Board."

If that happens, and it surely will, one can appreciate the kind of pressure that is going to put on the Canadian Wheat Board.

You cannot have the Canadian Wheat Board, in effect, selling wheat for some Canadian farmers and not for others. You cannot have it that way.

It has to have exclusive jurisdiction or it is going to be out of action completely. I am really afraid for the future of the Canadian Wheat Board.

We hear all kinds of comments from the Conservatives on the other side, this government, saying: "Our faith in the Canadian Wheat Board is solid. Do not worry. We are right behind the Canadian Wheat Board 100 per cent, so all your talk about possible doom and gloom when it comes to the Canadian Wheat Board is totally and completely off the mark."

I do not think I am wrong, and I also know that this is a right wing government. It really does not believe that the government has a place in the economy. It really believes in *laissez faire*, and so when it talks about supporting the Canadian Wheat Board I really wonder.

The other thing when we are talking about American wheat coming into this country is what the Canadian Federation of Agriculture said: "Hold it. We do not want American wheat coming into Canada at this particular time because we have some unfinished business."

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture took the position that its members were not afraid of competition. They were not afraid of taking on the Americans. Their product is just as good as that of the Americans. They are just as efficient as the Americans and so they were not afraid of competing with the Americans. However, as I said, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture took the position that there was some unfinished business. As long as Americans were raiding our traditional export markets, as long as the Americans were using their so-called Export Enhancement Program to raid our markets, it was the position of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture to say and say bluntly to the Canadian government: "Don't let American wheat come into this country until that other serious matter is resolved".

• (1550)

In my opinion the position taken by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and others made a lot of sense. The Americans play hardball; they are tough negotiators. You don't mess around with the Americans. If you are going to deal with the Americans, you take them on and you take them on frontally, directly. You don't mess round. You don't play games. You take them on directly. I think that the Canadian Federation of Agriculture had the right idea. If the Americans want access to our market when it comes to their wheat, then they had better lay off our traditional markets elsewhere around the world.

Now you ask why they should lay off our traditional markets elsewhere around the world. After all, is competition not just competition? It may sound that way, but under the free trade agreement, the infamous free trade agreement, there was an agreement with respect to this matter of one country raiding the traditional markets of the other. I refer to Article 701.4 of the free trade agreement. In that article it says: "The U.S. and Canada

are to take into account the effects of their export subsidies on other nations to avoid prejudicing each other's markets".

That is a direct quote. That is what Article 701.4 of the FTA says. There is another article as well and that article is 2011. What does it say? That article stipulates that if one party causes nullification or impairment of any benefit reasonably expected to access to that party directly or indirectly under the provisions of this agreement, that party may, with a view to the satisfactory resolution of the matter, invoke the consultation provisions of the Article 1804 and, if it considers it appropriate, proceed to dispute settlement pursuant to Articles 1805-1807 or, with consent of the other party, proceed pursuant to Article 1806.

There you have it, Mr. Speaker. Under the free trade agreement we had a right to take the Americans on, to resolve this matter with respect to their raiding of our traditional markets. As I said, I think the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and others had it right when they said: "Until that Export Enhancement Program problem is resolved, don't let any American wheat come into our country".

Do you know what members of the government said or did? Absolutely nothing. They did nothing. They would not go to bat for our producers. They would not go to bat for our consumers. They would not go to bat for the country. They had all the right. Not only did they have the legal right under the FTA, I submit to you that they had the moral right on behalf of all Canadians to get some kind of justice out of the situation. However they said no, and I think that is abominable.

I think it is terrible that our government would not go to bat on behalf of our farmers. Then again, I guess it really should not come as any great surprise. As I said earlier, this is a *laissez-faire* government. It believes in the unfettered market driven economy.

An hon. member: Hear, hear.

Mr. Harvard: Yes, there is my hon. friend from Calgary confirming it. According to these anti-diluvian thinkers, according to these dinosaurs, we should close down our democracy, close down our governments. "There is no place for government in the economy. We will just leave it to the boys out there in the marketplace. We will just leave it to the boys and they will do us justice and they will do well. We will have the old trickle down theory and all that nonsense".

You know darn well that is pure, utter hogwash, pure, utter nonsense.

It is not an accident that just days ago the United Nations declared Canada, according to its human development index, the second best country in the world. The United States is number seven, by the way.

Do you think it is really just an accident that relative to other countries in the world Canada is a veritable paradise? Was that just an accident? Not on your life.

We are a great country. This a country that is one of the greatest in the world because we had visionary leaders in this country. Through our democracy they wisely and very judiciously used the instrument of government for the betterment of human development to build our economy and raise our standard of living.

I do not ask government to be oppressive. I do not ask government to take over and run everything. I do not ask government to own everything. There is a place for government. After all, if we are a democracy—and this is a democracy—we must have an instrument to express our democratic will. We do that through the instrument of government, yet we have this anti-diluvian government that is more like a 19th century or 17th century government that says: "to heck with all that tradition, to heck with our history, and to heck with all our economic successes of the past number of decades, we have a better way. We have a *laissez-faire* way. We have a right wing agenda to pursue and, you know what, they don't listen to us".

I think that we have seen in the past little while that government policies are not working. Just look at the economic indices. Look at the economic numbers. The Tory approach is the wrong way. They are taking us down the hill. I want to say that I think it unfortunate, as I conclude my remarks, that we are debating this bill at this particular time.

As I said at the top, it should not be here at all. I wish the government would rethink, but I know that is hoping

in vain. The subsidy is all wrong. That is their opinion. I guess we are wasting our time, but I think it is important we put these thoughts and these comments on the record. I have done that.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is again hardly a delight to participate in the debate today on Bill C–11, an act to amend the Railway Act regarding grain and flour subsidies. I do want to say from the start that the purpose of this bill, interestingly enough, is to eliminate the At and East grain transportation subsidy given to shippers of export grain and flour from Thunder Bay through the ports of Saint John and Halifax in Atlantic Canada.

• (1600)

What is interesting about this legislation that the government has brought forward is really two points in terms of process. One is that this is all after the fact. This particular support for the grain industry, to encourage the viability of the elevator at Halifax and the elevator at Saint John, as well as the viability of the livestock industry throughout Atlantic Canada and to provide an essential role in the delivery of competitive priced feed grains to the maritimes, to say nothing of the flour mills and the thousands of thousands of people both directly and indirectly employed by the movement of grain into the Atlantic region, was done away with months ago. As a matter of fact, it was months and months ago. Now we are debating legislation to legitimize what the government did in the past. This is retroactive legislation.

This is not the way to run a government. No wonder the people of Canada are cynical, disappointed and disillusioned. It is no wonder that so many Conservative friends of mine in western Canada shudder when the name of the Prime Minister is mentioned. They are now joining the Reform Party in leaps and bounds as a legitimate, I suppose, conservative party in western Canada and elsewhere, as we are seeing in the papers.

They feel if you have a government and you want to pursue a particular course of action, the usual process is to introduce legislation, take it through the various stages: first reading, second reading, committee stage, report stage, third reading, and then through the other House.

This government has that sort of "father knows best" approach. It has this big brother approach to government that says: "We know what is best for this industry, this region, this community or this sector of the economy, and we are going to just do this with the stroke of a pen or a hack of an axe. Later, if we have the opportunity or some time in the future, we will legitimize what we have done". That is how dictatorships work. That is how totalitarian regimes operate. That is not how a democracy operates, where the duly elected people of Canada participate in a decision: a vote is taken and, if the majority supports an initiative, then that is that.

It is a bit biased, because in this case we have a large Conservative majority and it tends to carry the day. Nevertheless, normally one would expect Parliament to go through those various stages.

Mr. Belsher: You are a little biased in your remarks, Nelson.

Mr. Riis: My hon. friend says I am biased in my remarks. Indeed, as my good colleague indicates, I am. I cannot believe we are actually doing this. I feel dirtied by participating in this process, which I really deem to be bordering on totalitarianism. The government just says: "Forget about Parliament. Forget about democracy. Forget about the opposition voices. Forget about the legislative committees we have in the House of Commons. Forget about the backbenchers of the Conservative Party. The cabinet just made a decision and that is it, and you had bloody well better accept it. If you do not, it does not matter anyway because we have abandoned all this support for the Atlantic grain industry".

That troubles me. It troubles me as a parliamentarian. It troubles me a democrat. It troubles me as a New Democrat, that somehow we are once again seeing the government ignore and abuse the House of Commons. However that has now become a theme. I guess we just have to simply be part of this process and do the best we can.

That is why we have opposed this legislation. Not only do we think it is bad legislation for Canada and a terrible legislation for the Atlantic region, but it is an inappropriate way to proceed.

I know my hon. friend across the way, who is sitting in listening to these debates, shares my concerns. I know he must share the feelings I have, but unfortunately he is

not in a position to really do much. However I sense in his heart of hearts that he has agreed with my comments and particularly those of the previous speaker who had a very thorough deliberation on this issue.

That is one concern. Another concern is that this bill used to be called not Bill C-11 but Bill C-26. Bill C-26 was a bill from the previous session. I emphasize the previous session because at the end of the previous session all of the bills the government was dealing with normally just die on the Order Paper. That is the end. It is a new beginning. It is the end of that session and the beginning of a new session. The government introduces a throne speech, the Governor General sits in the Senate and reads out the new agenda for the government and it starts anew.

That is what usually takes place and it is what most governments have done. As a matter of fact, it is what all governments have done in Canadian history. It is what has happened in the United Kingdom year after year, decade after decade for hundreds of years.

However, this government said: "We have a new idea. We are going to ignore what happens at prorogation". Bill C-26 ought to have died on the Order Paper, as has been done now for hundreds of years in the parliamentary tradition. The government decided to bring in a Draconian piece of legislation, a motion that reinstated this bill and simply said: "Let us now call it C-11 and we will pick up where we left off".

That is not right. It is not the parliamentary thing to do. It is not the democratic thing to do. It is not something that would be done in any serious Parliament of the world, and yet that is what we have had done here.

It is very discouraging to have to participate in this process which I consider to be inappropriate democratically. Also, the fact that we are debating legislation to legitimize a decision the cabinet took months and months ago seems obviously not to be the kind of practice found in a democratic society and during the continuation of a democratic process.

However, having said that, let me just indicate why some of us have been so intent on stopping this legislation. This legislation would have done a great deal for Atlantic Canada. I do not think there is anybody in Canada who would disagree that any support, encouragement and development that we can encourage and initiate in Atlantic Canada is good, not just for the people living in Atlantic Canada, but good for the country. If it is good for the country it is good for all regions of Canada.

As a result of the At and East Program, as it has been referred to, a few years ago the grain elevators in Saint John and Halifax had an economic impact of $3,735,600 a year. That is substantial. The flour mill in Halifax alone had an economic positive impact of $3,200,000 each year. For the hundreds and hundreds of families involved in the livestock industry in Atlantic Canada the cost saving to allow them to participate, not only in livestock but in the poultry business as well, amounted to an annual amount of $18,160,000. That was a tremendous level of support the federal government was providing for the livestock producers and people using grain, as I say, poultry growers as well.

Local grain production benefited by $950,000 a year. The port and railway employment benefited by $8,280,700 a year. Those were the men and women involved with the elevators, the port facilities and the railway systems in that area, a substantial number of people, hundreds and hundreds of them.

The total identifiable impact on the Atlantic provinces amounted to $34 million-plus each year.

I read the other day with interest an account in one of the financial papers commenting on the situation in Atlantic Canada regarding this legislation. It said that the Halifax-Dartmouth Port Development Commission indicated that the economics of grain traffic at the port in 1988 amounted to $25.9 million in revenues and 263 jobs, while flour traffic resulted in $28.4 million in revenues and 220 jobs.

• (1610)

A substantial number of people are employed, then, in the elevator industry as well as the flour industry. In Saint John, the Saint John Port Commission put out an information program which indicated that the movement of bulk grains through its port back in 1988 under At and East program amounted to $8.5 million and was responsible for 90 direct jobs.

That in itself is very impressive. In other words, because of the At and East program, hundreds and hundreds of Atlantic Canadian men and women were meaningfully employed. Those were direct jobs. As we know, for everyone directly employed at the elevator, at the flour mill, at the port, on the railway or in other related activities like livestock producers and so on, there are other people that depend on them. I am talking now about the dentists, the school teachers, the bus drivers, people working in retail stores and so on and so forth. In other words, we can talk about the hundreds of

direct jobs, but also let us be cognizant of the fact that there are hundreds and hundreds of indirect jobs that are related to these permanent positions.

The government, in its wisdom, has decided to eliminate the grain support from central and western Canada. The Halifax elevator plays a vital role as a grain storage facility. Without it Cover Flour Mill, the only flour mill in Atlantic Canada, would likely be forced to close.

The Halifax elevator requires 260,000 tonnes a year to make it a viable facility. At the moment it is perilously close to moving below that. If that occurs in any substantive way the elevator would be forced to close down its operations partly or wholly and move hundreds of people out of full-time meaningful employment.

Without the Halifax elevator shipping feed grains by light vessel through the Port of Halifax, the only competitive alternative to rail transport, would no longer be possible. Based on past experience, this would result in an increase in the rail rates for domestic feed grains of at least $10 a tonne.

The livestock industry in the maritimes depends on grain from Ontario and western Canada. If the transport costs go up by $10 a tonne it is estimated that 5,000 jobs will be lost in the livestock industry, the feed mills, meat packing plants and dairies. I think that bears repeating. If the transportation costs go up by $10 a tonne it is estimated that 5,000 jobs will be lost.

For some people in the House of Commons losing 5,000 jobs may not be considered a major issue. Large plants in central Canada can close down and 2,000 or 3,000 people lose their jobs. Unfortunately, under the free trade agreement that has become a reality, a regular news item now in many of the regional newspapers. This is sad, it is disappointing, it is regretful, but under the free trade agreement this has become a reality.

In Atlantic Canada losing five jobs is serious. Fifty jobs is a major issue. Five hundred jobs is a regional crisis, and 5,000 jobs is an absolute, total disaster. Yet, that is what the impact of this legislation will do to Atlantic Canada.

I do not understand why people, particularly on the government side from Atlantic Canada, are not standing up and ranting and raving about the absolute lunacy of proceeding with this legislation, are not lobbying the cabinet and lobbying their colleagues to stop this sort of pell-mell run into a major economic crisis. Yet, there seems to be no sound whatsoever coming from the government benches.

If the Halifax grain elevator is required to close because the 260,000 tonnes a year are not realized, that will result in the loss of 283 jobs in the port itself. Another 250 indirect jobs may be lost as well, as I said earlier. Closure of the Dover Flour Mills would result in another 45 jobs being lost and the loss of a local market for producers of milling wheat.

In Ontario four grain elevators have been shut down because At and East has been cancelled—two in Midland, one in Port McNicoll and one in Prescott.

The Ontario flour mills have lost export contracts and require lower wheat prices to compete with Quebec mills for CIDA contracts. At the same time, Ontario farmers are already receiving record low prices and cannot afford to see their prices drop any further.

One can go on and on. I do not think that is necessary. We have to ask: "Who gains by this? Who benefits from this legislation?"

Previous speakers and I have pointed out that hundreds and hundreds of people who live in Atlantic Canada will be losers. A major livestock sector will be a loser. The poultry sector will be a loser. The flour milling will be a loser. Local grain producers will be in difficulty. The people who work in ports and elevators will be losers.

Who gains? Surely, the government must be helping somebody with this particular initiative. Interestingly enough, the winners of the loss of the At and East program are places in central Canada, primarily Montreal, but also ports in Ontario since Halifax and Saint John cannot compete with the St. Lawrence rates.

There is a deep unfairness in that the St. Lawrence seaway is subsidized several millions of dollars annually by the federal government through the provision of free ice-breaking, dredging and other Transport Canada services. While the support for the Great Lakes and the

St. Lawrence seaway operations continue, the support for the Atlantic system is removed, which essentially is cutting off the lifeline for all those people in Atlantic Canada.

I simply want to summarize my remarks by suggesting that this is part of the way the Conservative government has been progressing.

In other words, let the free market decide what happens in Canada. Imagine if previous governments had done that. If they had simply allowed the American and the Yankee to and fro economic forces to dominate right across Canada, we would not have a country. There would be no Canada.

We were celebrating today the 100th anniversary of John A. Macdonald's death. One hundred years. Here was a leader of the Conservative Party with a vision of Canada: rails across the country and appropriate programs to support Canadian industry and create jobs from coast to coast to coast. He had a vision and a commitment to Canada as a country; something separate, an identity separate from the United States. It would be a way of life, a country and a vision of the future that was separated completely from that of the United States.

Today, we have exactly the opposite. We have a government with no vision at all, quite prepared to sell Canada to the United States in whatever form, and the sooner the better. Here is a government that is removing all sorts of programs which link up Canada and Canadians.

Today we are debating one. It is an opportunity for Canadians in the House of Commons to stand up and say: "Enough is enough". The At and East legislation will eliminate one of the critical and crucial lifeblood systems in the economics of Atlantic Canada forever.

We do not have to allow this to happen. We do not have to see this occur. That is why I am begging my colleagues opposite to do the right thing: stand up and support Atlantic Canada.

If we do not, all of the action is going to continue to flow economically into central Canada. As a result of the free trade agreement with the United States—God forbid if we ever get into the free trade agreement with Mexico as well—if we continue erosion of the economic activity southward into the sun belt and into northern Mexico, that is where the economic action will be in North America.

That is where the jobs will be. That is where the synergy of economics and financial investment will occur. It will not be in Atlantic Canada. It will not be in Canada, period.

This is an opportunity for us within our own area of jurisdiction to stand up and say: "Let's do something for Atlantic Canada that is meaningful."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, National Defence; the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby, Environment; the hon. member for Ottawa West, Public Service; and the hon. member for Hamilton East, Immigration.

• (1620)

Mr. Howard Crosby (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address remarks to Bill C-11 amending the Railway Act. I say to the member from British Columbia of the New Democratic Party, first and foremost, the At and East is dead. It has been dead since July 16, 1989. There is absolutely no point voting against the bill because nothing in the world will resurrect the At and East.

The grain products that were moving under the At and East subsidies ceased to move prior to July 16, 1989, and all we are dealing with is a legal technicality, one that should have been put to rest in the last session of Parliament. Why should it have been put to rest? Apparently the member from British Columbia of the New Democratic Party does not know. It should have been put to rest so we can get on with remedying the situation and to establish set-offs to the cancellation of the At and East that will benefit the port of Halifax and hopefully other east coast ports.

It is very disturbing to hear members of Parliament from other regions of Canada, no matter how well meaning or how good their intentions, to wax so eloquently on an issue that now has been put to rest in the area affected; Nova Scotia and the east coast ports. Let me explain why. There has not been one gallon, not one tonne of grain or grain products moving through the port of Halifax or any other east coast port under the At and

East for approximately two years. Everybody should be clear on that.

Let us look at the positive side to which we have been trying to move for that same two year period, the assets to At and East. Even organizations like the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission representing the governments of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island have said: "Eliminate the At and East."

The At and East was involved in expenditure over the years of approximately $40 million by the Government of Canada. What the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission wanted was all or a portion of that money to be spent on other transportation initiatives affecting not only marine transportation but the agriculture industry.

What were some of those offsets? We have had this in the House of Commons before. They are all on record. They have been before standing committees on transport and in various other places. Let me briefly list some of the offsetting items that were talked about by the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission, by the Halifax-Dartmouth Port Commission and by many other organizations.

One of the things that would offset the cancellation of the At and East and reduce the negative and adverse aspects of the cancellation would be utilization of unit trains to move grain to Halifax. We have for other reasons the possibility of the double-stacking of railway containers which would perhaps be a part of those kinds of railway line improvements.

This has been done in western Canada. Under the grain transportation system additional cars were provided by other agencies such as the government of Alberta, and so more people and agencies can provide better facilities for land transportation of grain. We can make better use of water transportation systems to Atlantic ports for feed grains. We can eliminate countervails on some of the U.S. products such as corn and use those products in Atlantic Canada. We could help the port of Saint John by improving the facilities there for the handling of grain products, and we could promote the export of flour from the port of Halifax with suitable attractions. We could also provide for export permits for feed grains to and from other foreign countries including the United States. We have all of these possible offsets listed, but we are not able to get on with the business of reducing and mitigating the impact of the cancellation of the At and East because it has been held up in Parliament. It has been in limbo for two years. That limbo was created by the opposition, and not always opposition members from Atlantic Canada who knew what was at stake but opposition members like the member of the New Democratic Party from British Columbia.

Let me digress to say that this very weekend the New Democratic Party is having a convention in Halifax. I hope while the New Democratic Party members are in Halifax they will seek the opportunity to consult with port officials and others actually involved, not armchair socialists but people actually involved in marine transportation and in the shipment of grain and grain products. I hope they will say to them: "What do you want us to do in Parliament? Do you want us to continue to hold up the finalization of the cancellation of the At and East, or do you want us to pass the legislation and get on with mitigating the disadvantages of the cancellation of the At and East?"

I am sure they will hear from everyone—port officials, stevedores—to get on with the business of mitigating the adverse impact of the cancellation of At and East.

I stand in the House once more to appeal to the opposition to get this legislation passed. The At and East is gone. There are no grain products moving in Canada on the basis of subsidization through the At and East provision. It is over. As I said at the outset, it is a dead issue; do not prolong it.

Let me talk about the port of Halifax and marine transportation in general. Again, we have those awful armchair socialists in the New Democratic Party reading briefing notes supplied by God knows who and getting up in the House of Commons making speeches about subjects of which they have little or no knowledge.

I am not trying to make remarks in their absence. I know they are all heading to Halifax, and I hope they spend their money there, but unfortunately there are no members of the New Democratic Party present in the House. However, in case they read the record, and I am not saying that any of them take the trouble to read any

good material, let them note this. The marine transportation industry is international. It goes across the world.

If you are building a $50 million to a $100 million vessel and you are providing a crew and all the equipment necessary, you take that vessel anywhere you want to go in the world. Anyone in the marine transportation business knows that they have to compete world-wide. It has nothing to do with arrangements with the United States of America. It has nothing to do with loyalty to the North Atlantic routes. They are captive of no one in the marine transportation industry. They go where they get the best deal. They go where they get the best facility.

If Canadian ports do not provide the best facilities and the best arrangements, the marine transportation community operating massive fourth generation container ships and other vessels will go elsewhere. We have got to compete.

There is no way to protect Canada or Canadians in the marine transportation industry. Get it through your heads in the New Democratic Party and in the Liberal Party that this is not Canadianism at stake. We cannot have a made-in-Canada marine transportation policy. We might have a made-in-Canada shipbuilding policy—and we can debate that at another time—but we cannot have a made-in-Canada marine transportation policy.

Do not talk about the United States of America. Do not talk about arrangements with Europe. We have to compete with everyone, and they are from Hong Kong. They are from Taiwan. They are from Korea. They have massive ships. They have the crews to operate them, and they do not have to go to any ports. There is always a port they can find that will accommodate them. The issue is competition. You have to be competitive. The very word these armchair socialists don't like. They hate that word "competition". What happens is they come into the House of Commons and they tell members and the public that we do not need to compete, and that is simply not true. It might be true when you are growing grain and subsidizing it. I don't know about that. It may be true in some areas. But, for heaven's sake, understand it is not true in marine transportation. It is not true in the port business. This is why I want everybody to know, and if I have to say it louder I will: "We have to compete".

• (1630)

They understand that in the port of Halifax. The Halifax-Dartmouth Port Development Commission, the Halifax Port Commission, everybody connected with marine transportation understands it. It is the first thing they will tell you: you have to compete. You have to compete with New York. You have to compete with Montreal. You have to compete with Baltimore. In order to get the business you have to provide the facilities.

Now, let me talk about the port of Halifax, if I finally got that point through to anybody who is interested in that subject. My questions are about the port of Halifax, as an example. Somebody else can make a speech for the port of Saint John. Maybe my good friend from Carleton County will make that speech. For the moment I am going to talk about the port of Halifax, because there are real difficulties in the port of Halifax. They are caused by the pressure of international competition. How are we going to react to these pressures that make the port of Halifax not competitive in some areas?

First of all, we have to have a level field among Canadian ports. That is to say, neither the port of Halifax nor the port of Montreal, nor any other east coast port can have an advantage over the other ports, based on government intervention and subsidization. For decades the complaint in the port of Halifax has been that the government policies favour the port of Montreal. I have nothing against the port of Montreal. I have nothing against appropriate and proper competition among ports. But I, like most people in Halifax, think that the port of Montreal is given advantages over the port of Halifax on the basis of government policy.

I could go back in history in other speeches I have made and detail those specific areas of advantage or disadvantage. Many years ago, the Government of Canada built substantial infrastructure within the port of Montreal. It gave the port of Montreal tremendous facilities at government cost, at taxpayers' expense, and then wrote off the debt. When the Government of Canada under the Liberals—and I do not blame my good friend from Newfoundland about that, those things

happen—wrote off the debts for the Canadian ports, the debt they wrote off for the port of Montreal was in the area of $600 million. The debt they wrote off for the port of Halifax was in the area of $100 million. I have the statistics. I presented them years ago to the House, but that is the kind of thing that has happened.

But the big gripe, the continuing gripe, the everyday gripe is the facilities that are made available to the port of Montreal for ice-breaking and navigation. Let me tell you as quickly as possible why that complaint exists.

Halifax is one of the greatest deep water ports in the world. You can get any kind of ship, any size of ship in. Mr. Speaker, as you are from Edmonton you may not be interested in this; you couldn't get a rowboat into Edmonton. In the port of Halifax any day of the week, any time of the day, you can get the largest ship in the world right up to the dock, no problem at all.

You cannot do that in the port of Saint John. I am not going to argue that point. But, in order to get that kind of vessel into the port of Montreal, you pretty nearly have to pick it up and carry it in. It is not quite that bad, but you have to have all kinds of navigational aids. You have to have all kinds of harbour dredging. You have to have all kinds of assistance, and you have to keep the shipping lane free of ice. Who does that for the port of Montreal? The taxpayers of Canada do it for the port of Montreal, because the Government of Canada provides that service and it is not charged to anybody. What we say in the Port of Halifax is: charge those services out to the users.

It is unbelievable from the perspective of Edmonton. For years the port of Halifax was saying: "charge those expenses out to the shippers, charge those expenses out to the users of the facilities". For years the Liberal government refused to do that. Finally, when the Conservative government came to power in 1984, it said that it was time to end this anomaly. It was time to end this unlevel field. It was time to create a proper atmosphere for competition.

The Government of Canada brought in Canada Shipping Act changes in Bill C-75. In that act there was placed a provision that would allow for services such as ice-breaking and navigation to be charged back to the users. The international shipping companies, from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, Europe, Hapag Lloyd from Hamburg—all those organizations—would have to pay the cost of ice-breaking, navigational aids and so on.

Do you know what happened? I do not want to embarrass the member from Newfoundland, but another member from Newfoundland, from Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, personally, individually stopped the passage of this legislation in this House of Commons by standing up for seven hours on third reading and stopping that legislation.

Do you know what he said in the House of Commons on October 31, 1986, which was more or less something he said earlier on June 27, 1986? He said that there was no way the Liberal Party was going to allow such a provision to be passed.

He said on June 27, 1986: "I think it is extremely important that the record be set straight, because we would not want the House to inadverently or accidentally get the impression that anyone in Canada is warped enough or misinformed enough to endorse clause 4 of Bill C-75".

Later, on another occasion, October 31, 1986, he spoke of Bill C-75, clause 4, and he said: "That bill died on the vine because we in the Liberal Party opposed it". The Liberal Party opposed clause 4 of Bill C-74, which he said in his speech would allow the imposition of user fees. He said: "User fees for what?" User fees for Coast Guard service, navigational aids and ice-breaking services.

A member from Atlantic Canada stopped the legislative position that would have allowed for a level field between the port of Halifax and other east coast ports and the port of Montreal. It is on record; it is undeniable. Today, five years later and for the last 500 years since John Cabot or somebody sailed up some kind of strait, the port of Montreal has had an advantage over the port of Halifax. We can lay the blame on the Liberal Party of Canada.

They are still at it. They are still stopping measures that could be used to rebuild the competitive base, that could give the port certain advantage, that could provide for offsets to the At and East, that could get us on with the business of improving the port of Halifax.

Let me tell you what the most serious difficulty is now. It is inland transportation. It is the Canadian National Railway system. Unless the Canadian National Railway changes its attitude, unless it provides better facilities, unless we get better service through double stacking, rail

line improvements and lower rates, then we cannot be competitive.

People in the marine transportation industry are saying that if Halifax does not get competitive the port can die. It is almost impossible under the present situation for the port of Halifax to compete with the port of Montreal. Forget the port of Montreal. If was not them—and thank God it is—it would be the American ports. At least the business is staying in Canada. But in a short time it will be the American ports that are going to take all the business with the help of Canadian corporations like Canadian Pacific. They are buying railways and providing facilities that will allow Canadian destined cargo to go through American ports.

It is a very difficult situation. It will not be resolved unless we take the initial steps to correct the situation we now have: get rid of the subsidization that now exists, provide effective and constructive assistance , and get on with the matter of competition. There is in no other answer in international trade.

• (1640)

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the hon. member for Halifax West and, first of all, I want to respond to the remarks he made about the member from Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte.

The member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte did, as the hon. member just suggested, stand in the House of Commons for six or seven hours and spoke to the House. He dragged out the debate. He spoke all afternoon, all evening, and he was prepared to speak all night. In fact, I am sure he would have spoken for 48 hours or 72 hours if need be.

I want it on the record why the hon. member from Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte stood here in the House of Commons last year and single-handedly filibustered a bill presented by the Government of Canada.

The hon. member who just spoke was absolutely correct. The member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte spoke against clause 4 of Bill C-75. I do not recall exactly what the number was, but the clause had to do with imposing user fees for ice-breaker services in Canada.

I would like to put it on the record, in this way, why the member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte did what he did.

Today I had telephone calls in my office from two people who lived on an island called Long Island on the east coast of Newfoundland. One gentleman had to go to the doctor because he was having what he called radiation sickness. He was being treated for cancer. He was very sick and he felt very bad. He wanted to go from Beaumont, Long Island into Robert's Arm in Newfoundland to see the doctor there in order to be prescribed some pills because he was feeling so bad after he had taken the radiation treatment, which he told me he takes once a month in the Health Sciences Complex in St. John's.

He telephoned me, and his voice was not very good because the radiation had affected it. He said: "Look, I'm stuck here on this island and I cannot get in to see the doctor. The ice is all piled up around the shore and I cannot get in to see a doctor".

Now there are four islands in a row: Little Bay Islands that the hon. member for Labrador knows quite well; Long Island; then there is Change Islands further on; and then there is Fogo Island. Each one of those islands has ferry boats going back and forth, except right now the ice has clogged up everything. It goes out for about 180 miles.

This gentleman was saying: "Look, there is no helicopter service and planes cannot land". This is today, and he wanted to get in to see the doctor.

I checked with the Coast Guard and it said: "Well, we have one ice-breaker assigned to those four islands to try to keep it ice free. But we needed the ice-breaker today because there was a paper boat going into Beaumont and there was an oil boat that needed to go into Lewisporte and we only have one ice-breaker on all of that east coast of Newfoundland".

I phoned up the Coast Guard and I said: "Now, where are your ice-breakers? Don't you provide ice-breaker service anymore to these ferry boats along the coast?" It said: "Well, you know we have got a lot of business accumulated and we have got one ice-breaker on dry dock and we have another one with the propeller that was damaged". I said: "Well, where are all the other ice-breakers?" The Coast Guard said: "Well, there are seven sitting tied up to the dock in Quebec City."

I said: "Are those working?" The answer was: "No, no, those aren't working, but a couple of them are on stand-by. You see, we do not send anymore ice-breakers to accompany ships that go through the Arctic. We found that it is more cost-effective to leave the ice-breaker in Quebec City tied up and if the ship gets stuck, we will send up the ice-breaker then—more cost effective".

There are another five tied up in Nova Scotia. I said to the Coast Guard: "Now, come on, you have islands that are being totally isolated because of ice. Can't you assign more ice-breakers to keep these islands open?" The answer was: "No, that is not the policy of the Coast Guard anymore. You see, we are into a policy of trying to save money".

See how things have changed. The hon. member a moment ago said: "The hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte stood in the House and he was opposed to user fees with ice-breakers".

Of course he was, of course he was. Why, if the Government of Canada brought in that policy there would not be any ferry boats operating. There would not be any because the ferry boats are no longer owned or subsidized by the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada did away with the subsidies for all those ferry boats, didn't they Mr. member for Labrador. He knows quite well. The government did away with that. Now it is whoever uses the ferry boats has to pay for them, not the Government of Canada.

In fact, when we think about this policy of subsidies and trying to save money we know quite a change has taken place in Atlantic Canada. The hon. member spoke about marine transportation, but that is only half the story. Marine Atlantic moves our freight and people throughout Atlantic Canada. Yet, Marine Atlantic has no 1-800 number anymore. We cannot pick up the phone anywhere in Canada and phone a 1-800 number to find out when the ferry boats are going to operate in Atlantic Canada. It was cut out this year by the Government of Canada.

We can no longer phone a 1-800 number to find out or make reservations on Marine Atlantic, but if we were in the United States we can.

Mr. Rideout: That can't be true.

Mr. Baker Oh yes, oh yes. In other words, in Texas we can phone to find out when the ferries are operating. To make a reservation to go to Newfoundland on a ferry or to P.E.I. phoning from Texas you can do it free of charge, but if you are living in Canada you cannot do it anymore. The Government of Canada through Marine Atlantic says it was because of the high costs that it wanted to keep the 1-800 number from the United States because fewer people were using the 1-800 number. Those are the decisions that have been made by the Government of Canada in trying to reduce subsidies for transportation in eastern Canada.

• (1650)

I was looking at the books the other day for marine transportation and I noticed that three vessels now used for the movement of freight on the east coast are not even registered in Canada. In fact, the last vessel that was hired by CN is actually not only registered in a foreign country, but owned in a foreign country.

Quite a change has taken place. If you picked up the telephone in that same area we are talking about, from Labrador down to the northeast coast of Newfoundland, you would no longer speak into the receiver of a company that is a subsidiary of the Government of Canada. That was sold last year.

An hon. member: Really?

Mr. Baker: Yes, and it was sold—this is a long story, but I am going to make it very short.

An hon. member: Oh, no, no, we want the story.

Mr. Baker: The successful bidder was the bigger telephone company in the province, represented of course by a consultant who happened to be yes, a former member of the House of Commons. That is the telephone company. We can no longer pick up the telephone and phone through a telephone company that was called TNT at the time, up until a couple of years ago—Terra Nova Tel.

An hon. member: That is an explosive.

Mr. Baker: It was an explosive telephone company. It was an excellent telephone company. You could phone and ask information what the number was for such and such and it would be able to tell you, because it was living locally in those areas.

The telephone company is gone. Now you go down to the airport. There is no longer a sign saying Air Canada. That is gone since this government took over. You can no longer pick up the telephone and phone through the government subsidized company, a subsidiary of the

Government of Canada that was making money every year. The government sold it.

There is no sign that says Air Canada anymore. Then there is the ultimate insult. In this bill we are talking about railway subsidies. We know what the government did to the railway. Every weekend when I am in my riding, I usually try to get a little bit of exercise and go for a walk. I go for a walk along where the railway line used to be.

An hon. member: That is pretty safe, eh, George.

Mr. Baker: Pretty safe. You will never get knocked down by a train because there is no track anymore.

An hon. member: You mean the government even took the track away?

Mr. Baker: It even took the track away. It not only took the trains away but took the track away. Not only that, but if you go a short distance to one of our smaller communities you will find a fellow who does not pick up the phone anymore through a government-run outfit to make a reservation on Air Canada, which is gone, or check on the train, which is no longer operating. Also, there is no post office in the community.

An hon. member: What. Oh, shame.

Mr. Baker: There is no post office in the community. Where is the federal identity at all in those communities? There is no federal presence at all. There is nothing. That is the policy of the Government of Canada.

What are we doing here today? Today we are dealing with a bill, Bill C-11, that says that if you loaded flour on a railway car after July 15, 1989, and it has not arrived yet, then it is not going to be subsidized.

That is what the bill says. If you loaded the flour on the train after July 15, 1989, and it has not yet arrived, then it is not subsidized.

I just hope that it is not what they call bread and roll mix because those railway cars would have blown up by now. I do not know if there is any date on flour but maybe that is what I am doing wrong.

That is what the bill is. The bill is to do away with a subsidy that it did away with several years ago. The Government of Canada is not interested any more in paying a subsidy for anything going to the east coast of Canada.

Hon. members know today where the grain comes from for the livestock feed. Only 380,000 tonnes of it come from domestic places; 320,000 tonnes now come from the EEC or the United States. The government member stands up and says: "We've got to be in a competitive market. We've got to do away with all of these subsidies for moving grain and flour to eastern Canada". The most highly subsidized grain movements in the world are those in the EEC, which now exports grain to eastern Canadian markets and grain movements throughout the United States of America.

All in all, this bill is part of a general philosophy of the Government of Canada which says it is going to set people adrift. It is no longer going to be responsible for an even, fair and level playing field in Canada because it is going to say that those who have it will always have it and those who cannot afford it are never going to be able to get it.

Those people set adrift are the people in eastern Canada, the people in Atlantic Canada. It is the Government of Canada that is totally to blame.

I would suggest that the Government of Canada take a second look at this particular piece of legislation. I do not know what would happen if the bill did not pass. What would happen if the bill did not pass? Is there flour and grain aboard railway cars in Canada that has been there since July 15, 1989 waiting for export which was not completed until after January 31, 1990? What would be the legality? It is an interesting question.

If someone took the federal government to court and said: "Look, you are going to have to pay this subsidy because it is presently a part of the Railway Act and it was never amended by the Government of Canada", it would bring up the question of the supremacy of Parliament. Can the Government of Canada pass a bill which says it is going to discontinue a direct subsidy on a product from point A to point B without amending the legislation to end that subsidy? What would the judge say?

We all know the way legislation is treated. We have all appeared before judges on behalf of our constituents and we have presented arguments on everything under the sun. I have grave doubts whether the Government of Canada would be able to answer the question of why it discontinued a subsidy without amending the appropriate

legislation to end it. The Government of Canada should reinstate the subsidy and be true to its word.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The next time the bill comes up, the hon. member will have 10 minutes questions and comments. I hope that you will all be there when the debate is all over.

I have received written notice from the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Mr. Allmand, that he is unable to move his motion during private members' hour on Monday, June 10, 1991. It has not been possible to arrange an exchange of positions in order of precedence pursuant to Standing Order 94(2).

Accordingly, I am directing the table officers to drop the item of business to the bottom of the order of precedence.

Private members' hour will thus be cancelled. Pursuant to Standing Order 99(2) the House will meet to consider Government Orders at 11 o'clock a.m.

It being five o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 37, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of directing financial assistance to Co-operative Development Agencies, pilot co-op projects, and Community-based Economic Development Organizations.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is again a privilege to rise under private members' business to discuss an item of business which I think is very important to a great many Canadians, but which is not very easy to cover within the regular business of the House because co-operatives and community development organizations enjoy a very low priority with the present government.

When we are talking about co-operatives and community development organizations, I think we are talking about something that is part of a larger trend in our society.

Certainly when Canadians are discussing the political and constitutional future of their country, we hear a lot of talk about Canadians wanting to be directly involved in determining the future of the country.

They want to be directly involved in making the decisions that affect their political and economic future. It could well be said that the low standing which the government currently enjoys in public opinion polls is a direct result of its inability or unwillingness to involve Canadians directly in their political future.

I think this feeling on behalf of Canadians that the future is out of their control and their deep concerns about the future of their community, their children and themselves is also very evident when it comes to their economic future. People ought to be involved just as much in their economic future and ought to have just as much control over their economic future as they do over their political future.

If I could review just briefly the general trends when it comes to economic development in this country, I think it is fair to say that we have seen two major trends since the Second World War.

The general policy pursued by Liberal governments through the years relied very much on attracting branch plants to the country and developing an the economy that was very closely linked to that of the United States.

There was very little opportunity within that economic structuring for local control or development of local economies.

With the Progressive Conservative government which we have seen since 1984, those trends have become much more evident. The trend toward the loss of local control has become much more serious through two specific trends which the government has introduced, those being its reliance on megaprojects which are directly tied to its reliance on the major corporations, the large corporations in this country and in other countries.

That again is tied directly to its reliance on the free trade deal to attempt to move the economy of this country forward.

As a result, what we see is an economy that is reeling. It is not only reeling at the national level when it comes to the macroeconomic trends, but it is expressed very much at the local level in the loss of confidence in the future by many people in local communities and the loss of control over what is happening to people's jobs and economic livelihoods.

At the same time, we see the exacerbation of a trend which Canada has noticed for a long time, that is the widening gap between the rich and poor in this country. Canada has one of the worst records in the world when it comes to the gap between rich and poor in this country and that gap is only becoming wider. However, there is an option and that is the option represented by the democratic economic system.

From coast to coast we see Canadians very much involved in the democratic economic system. On the east coast we see the Antigonish movement. In northern Canada we see Arctic co-ops. On the west coast we see fishing co-ops, In Quebec we see the Desjardins movement. In the large cities and metropolitan areas we see the development of housing co-operatives. On the prairies we see the pools and federated co-ops. There are credit unions from coast to coast. There are community economic development organizations in many communities, and these are particularly successful in many of the native communities in this country.

In fact when we look at this sector, we look at 12 million Canadians who have a direct stake in the economic future of their community, 12 million Canadians who are direct stakeholders in their economic future. This is many times the number of Canadians who own shares in corporations through stock exchanges or own and have interest in private businesses. This is the most effective way to get people directly involved in their economic future and that of the country.

When you look at the size and strength of the co-operative sector, seven of the ten largest enterprises in agriculture handling over 40 per cent of the receipts in agriculture are co-operatives. Hundreds of thousands of Canadians are involved in community economic development corporations of one sort or another. We must say that these organizations have grown up largely on their own. At best they have experienced benign neglect from governments both provincial and federal and have in fact developed on their own. In some ways this is appropriate to grass roots economic organizations, but it also demonstrates the strength of bottom-up organizations as opposed to top-down approaches to economic organization. It boggles the mind to think of what these organizations could be doing if in fact they had the appropriate kind of assistance, some of which I plan to outline in my presentation.

In 1984 the co-operative sector, through the Canadian Co-operative Association, undertook a major study on the future direction of co-operatives and how governments could relate to them. There were four major recommendations coming from that task force, including the appointment of a minister of state for co-operatives, the formation of a co-op savings plan, more funds for co-op research and education, and the promotion of housing, worker health, and resource co-ops.

Since then we have seen the formation of the co-operative secretariat and the appointment of a minister in 1987. But it has been a very tentative step and it has fallen very much short of the expectations of the co-op sector and the realization of the potential of this sector. In fact there are only nine people in the co-op secretariat. Certainly when you view the vast mandate to promote co-ops, to organize federal-provincial conferences, to follow up on initiatives from those conferences, to co-ordinate co-operative development through other government departments, nine people arrayed against the vast federal bureaucracy is a mere drop in the bucket. It is a credit to the dedication and competence of those people that we get as much activity out of that secretariat as we do.

One direct result of the fact that those resources are inadequate is what we see happening with regard to the GST and co-ops. I have repeatedly asked in this House over the last year—and the co-op sector has made numerous representations—for equal treatment under the GST for co-ops. As it stands now, the government argues that membership and shareholding in a co-op is the same as membership in a golf course. This is preposterous and indicates what a fundamental lack of understanding there is for how the co-op sector operates

among both government bureaucrats and members opposite.

It seems as well that regional development organizations and organizations promoting economic development like the FBDB are inoculated against involvement with co-ops because when you look at the regulations, the pro-active activities they undertake, co-ops and community development organizations very often seem to be the last thing on their mind.

• (1710)

There are a number of specific co-operative initiatives that I would like to outline as being very worthy of public sector support.

First of all, in the area of co-operative housing, we have the sad spectacle of a promise the government made to build 5,000 co-op housing units a year. Has this promise been kept? No, Mr. Speaker. We are now down to about 1,500 units a year. These units are being built under a constant barrage of criticism within this House, misplaced criticism that could only be politically motivated by members of both the government and the political opposition. They attempt to use the fact that several members of Parliament have been involved in organizing and maintaining co-op housing and are trying to use this to discredit the co-op housing movement in general.

When you look at the record, CMHC's own studies show that co-op housing is by far the most cost-effective way to provide housing for Canadians who are now sleeping in streets, sleeping 20 to a home in northern Canada, and in desperate need of moderately priced and affordable housing.

At the same time, I do not hear anything from these members attacking the fact that we subsidize luxury condominiums by an average of $20,000 per unit through the MURB Program.

A second initiative that I think is very worthy of support is the whole area of worker co-ops. A study done in Atlantic Canada showed that worker co-ops use only approximately $1,500 in capital per job to provide jobs through the formation of worker co-ops. At the same time, the government's operation ACOA spends an average of $150,000 to create a single job; that is $1,500 as opposed to $150,000 when you compare worker co-ops to the jobs that are created through ACOA.

It is no wonder that the premiers of Atlantic Canada have noted this phenomenon. They are, at this very time, organizing themselves to provide a major initiative in Atlantic Canada to provide jobs, to develop communities through the development of not only worker co-ops but community based co-ops of all sorts.

I am very pleased to see this and I commend the premiers of Atlantic Canada for recognizing the tremendous potential of worker co-ops and other co-operatives.

At the same time, in other parts of Canada, we see a massive job loss through free trade and economic decisions related to free trade. We see plants being shut down that are perfectly profitable, where those jobs could go on for a long time if it were based only on the economics of the particular plant or enterprise. These kind of enterprises are surely ripe for worker co-operative ownership.

In that respect, I would like to commend my colleague from Sault Ste. Marie for bringing forward a private member's bill that would enhance worker ownership in this country and make it much more feasible to undertake worker ownership. I think this is certainly one of the key factors or mechanisms that we could be using against the very sad trend toward job loss and the loss of economic futures in many communities.

In fact, I would like to say to government members that when the government promised adjustment mechanisms to cope with the fall-out from free trade, surely pilot projects in the area of worker co-operatives are something the government could and should be looking at very closely.

I would also like to say that the government might well look at some of the proposals made by the Canadian Co-operative Association for a worker co-op investment fund and the establishment of worker co-op enterprise centres to spur the development of worker co-ops in this country.

A third area where co-operative development has a bright future and could help economic development is in the whole area of the resource sector. There are farming, fishing and forestry communities from coast to coast in this country under tremendous economic stress and see themselves as having very little economic future if present trends continue. I personally undertook an economic consultation tour in my own constituency recently. My own constituency combines all of those

resource industries. It has farming as a major industry. There is a sizeable inland fishery and there is a significant forestry sector in that community. Every community I went to and virtually every group I talked to said the problem is that they have lost local control of the resource, that they can no longer make the economic decisions on resource allocation which would make it possible to sustain their jobs into the future.

Therefore, I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that co-operative development in the resource sector, the use of regional development money to finance these kinds of projects, is exactly what we need. We do not need any more megaprojects. We do not need any more fancy schemes cooked up in the capitals to try and prop up these industries. What we need is support for local control, support for local co-operative and community enterprises.

The fourth area that shows a lot of promise when it comes to community and local control is the area of health. A study in Saskatchewan has shown that there is a potential 17 per cent saving in health care costs over all through the use of co-operative and community based health associations.

This is a tremendous saving at a time when our medicare system is under threat from both provincial and federal governments due both to a lack of a philosophical belief in medicare and publicly funded health and the costs associated with it. These savings are possible because these kinds of organizations can provide the kind of integrated health care and the kind of preventive measures that make it possible for Canadians to stay healthy without the high cost intervention of the current medical model.

I would like to commend the community health associations in this country which in the last few days came together to try and form an association of community health centres to promote this kind of development from coast to coast. I would encourage the government very much to support that movement with all the resources that it has and to make a basic commitment to this major change in how we approach health care.

Child care is another area where co-operative involvement has shown itself to be not only effective in giving parents control but also effective in providing low cost quality child care for the many children in this country who do not have it.

We talk about being competitive and productive in this country, but there are hundreds of thousands of parents, particularly women, who are unable to become competitive and productive because they cannot undertake the training or take the jobs that might be available because of the lack of adequate child care. I might note that the national association of those organizations tries to make do with budget of $11,000 a year.

As well, frontier co-ops, as demonstrated by Arctic co-ops and the co-operative development fund in the north, show very clearly that this kind of development is most appropriate to the economic development of native communities and isolated communities in this country where unemployment often runs as high as 85 to 90 per cent, with the resulting despair, stress and social breakdown that comes with it.

I turn briefly to the whole area of community economic development. There is a huge number of these organizations across the country, but they are plagued with several things. They have lurched from one program to another as governments tried to come to terms with this phenomenon, without any real vision or without any real co-ordination. In fact, the Economic Council of Canada in a major report called *From the Bottom Up* says, and I quote:

> People banding together at the local level to promote community economic development can make a real difference to many places across the country. Local residents are often in a better position to judge the economic problems and possibilities of their communities than are federal and provincial bureaucrats.

As part of that report, the Economic Council of Canada recommends several things. It recommends, first of all, that support should be channelled into the establishment of community economic development organizations and their organizational support. They need better information networks. need training. They need access to market opportunities. The council recommends that business funding should in fact come through existing channels while funding for these organizations should go toward promoting their establishment and organization. They say too that priority should be given to rural and remote areas and that an integrated approach to community development should include not only economics but the provision of services and enhancing the quality of life.

• (1720)

Therefore, in conclusion, I would like to say that there is another option to the way that we have been going in this country, to the regime of free trade and letting the big corporations look after our economic future. This is the community based economic option. The potential of this sector is a sleeping giant. We have seen its potential, but this potential is still untapped.

Therefore I would like to call on the government to exhibit the imagination and political will to realize this potential. Not only would individuals and communities benefit, but we as a country would be very much stronger.

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to say a few words on what is not only an important issue but an important movement in the sense that co-ops have been a very integral part of Canada for many decades, and that is particularly true, as the hon. member has just indicated, for rural Canada which in a very real sense each of us represents.

I would like, as a member from western Canada, from the province of Manitoba, representing Brandon—Souris, just to say one or two words by way of introduction with respect to the role of co-ops in the history of western Canada as I have perceived them to be, and then to discuss in greater detail the specific point which is before us this evening.

I think it is probably true that the history of the co-operative movement has not yet been written in any definitive sense. I believe when it is written, or when it is more generally appreciated than is the case now, that there will be a greater awareness of the fact that the co-operative movement for rural Canada has in many cases filled a void which had been there for some time and might have continued to exist into the distant future, had it not been for the co-operative movement and the response of those who lived within the areas.

One of the advantages of course which the co-operative movement had was the fact that it enabled people to a very large degree to look to themselves for solutions to their own problems, whatever the nature of the problems may have been. That is true in terms of the origin of the wheat pools in western Canada, in what we now know as Saskatchewan, then part of the territories, or whether it is in the more recent development of child care co-operatives, day care centres, that are very much a part of most of our urban communities.

One of the great difficulties in rural Canada in the past—and certainly it continues to be now—is the component of size. Very often the private sector is not as interested in meeting what it perceives to be the limited market perspectives of the area. Unfortunately, as a result of that, the alternatives to those who live within the area, the resources available to those who live within the area, were not as great as they would have been.

When I go back and think about the history of the co-operative movement with respect to the marketing of grain, I recall the fact with some clarity that western Canadian grain farmers were faced not with the fact that there were no services made available to meet their needs, but with the fact that very often they were indeed a monopoly. As we know very well, it is the essence of the private sector that it should depend upon the competitive factor to protect the interests of the consumers. Where that is not the case, then very often the consumer is at a disadvantage.

What happened in western Canada in many of our smaller communities is that people began to rally together either to provide a service that was not present at all or to act as a competitive factor with services which already existed and often were operated in a monopolistic fashion.

Thus was born the wheat pools, which today of course is a major agribusiness throughout western Canada, a huge business, perhaps one of the largest that we have, although I do not have the statistics before me.

Another advantage of course of the co-operative movement was that it permitted people to make decisions or have decisions made within their own community, and not to depend upon the headquarters of a business whether it be in Winnipeg, Regina, Toronto or wherever it may be. Very often decisions made by the co-operative movement then, and to a significant degree now, were made by local people in response to local conditions.

The other advantage is that it has provided a tremendous opportunity for the emergence of local leadership. Within all of our communities—and this becomes evident to those of us who are politicians at election time—there is a tremendous talent, a reservoir of leadership talent which is not always tapped. Those of us who get elected as a result of volunteers, in essence often coming out of the woodwork, discover there are many people who have talent for leadership which is not always recognized.

That was true in the emergence of the co-operative movement in the past and I continue to believe so now.

When we look today to the role of the co-operative movement and where I see it as being particularly important and where the government recognizes its importance, is in two areas that I would identify, one, of course, being the north, in the area of the Arctic.

Many of the conditions that exist in the Arctic now are not unlike the conditions which existed in western Canada in days gone by. The reason why the co-operative movement is emerging now, as it did then, is because those conditions are very similar. In fact, if I recall correctly, in the last 30 years some 52 new co-ops have emerged in northern Canada, which of course is a testimony to the fact that the needs which were there in the past are there at present.

The government is delighted that as a result of the emergence of the co-operative movement in Arctic Canada, people have economic opportunities they did not have before. For example, in the area of local community development, we see major management training programs being provided in some cases by the Arctic Co-Operatives Limited. In other cases we see sales outlets being developed in southern Canada for product which otherwise might not reach the market with ease.

The federal government has been happy to play a partnership role in that process through the co-operative secretariat which was established in 1987 and by working in close co-operation with provincial governments in some cases and with territorial governments in others.

The establishment of three community development organizations have occurred in the north and some financial assistance has been provided to them. In addition, looking into the broader area of the co-operative movement today we see the renewal of the co-operative housing program. This, of course, has been important for many of our communities. I have such projects in my constituency of Brandon—Souris and very often it provides a stimulation to the construction industry which is much appreciated and very often much needed. In addition, it often provides a source of stable and affordable housing for those to whom such housing might not have otherwise been available.

The government is pleased to work with the child care co-ops, recognizing that in a changing world there is a recognized need for child care facilities that was not there two and three decades ago. In saying that, I am not suggesting that the need was not there, I am suggesting that the recognition of the need was not there. This provides an excellent opportunity, as I said before, for people to gather together the resources of their own community.

Very often the co-ops are not looking for substantial amounts of federal government assistance. They are to be complimented on that. In fact, what they are basically saying, at least to my understanding, is that they really are not generally seeking anything more than is available to any other institution trying to provide a comparable level of service.

As I say that, I am conscious of the fact that there is some division within the child care community in terms of how services should be provided and who receives what assistance. But I think the generalization which I have issued is reasonably valid.

The other area which I would like to address in a moment is the fact that I believe the co-op movement is extremely important in Atlantic Canada, as it has been in the past.

There are many Atlantic Canada co-operatives that have benefited from some federal assistance. The figures are not huge. In fact, they were talking in terms of, for example, a community development co-operative in Nova Scotia receiving $25,000 in assistance. I think what is noteworthy about that is perhaps not the fact that they received $25,000 but the fact that it is only $25,000 because as we know in this House, we live in a world where now that is not considered to be a huge amount of money.

• (1730)

There is a fisheries co-op in the maritimes that has received assistance of $50,000 to identify ways to pull themselves out of some financial difficulty. The list goes on and if I had more time—I realize the rules do not provide me with more time—but there are many such examples. Perhaps other members in the House will address some of those, and particularly with respect to Atlantic Canada.

I think the history of the co-operative movement in Canada is one of partnership, partnership between people who have the capacity and the desire to assist themselves and the federal and the provincial levels of government trying to assist them wherever they can. I think it is partnership that has been working and I would encourage hon. members to join together to ensure that that partnership continues to function in the future as it has in the past.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure as well to join in the debate on this motion. I think that I in particular am very pleased to be speaking on this motion because my community has a very large co-op in it. The Co-op Atlantic, which is the main co-operative in Atlantic Canada, is headquartered in Moncton and it has made a very valuable contribution to our economy.

I believe that when you look at our economy in Moncton it is the proper mix of those types of enterprises, some large—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. Point of order, the hon. member for Kamloops.

Mr. Riis: First of all, let me apologize to my colleague for a short intervention.

There have been discussions among the parties and I think you would find unanimous consent to pass the following motion.

> Notwithstanding any previous proceedings of this House, Bill C-17, an act to amend the Criminal Code and Customs Tariff in consequence thereof be deemed read a second time and passed on division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Members have heard the terms of the motion. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There is no agreement.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying before I was interrupted, Moncton has an economy that has the kind of mix that indicated how well a good positive economy can function and in that the co-op movement makes a very valuable contribution.

As I was stating, Co-op Atlantic is the largest co-operative organization in Atlantic Canada and its headquarters is in Moncton. It employs a large number of people and makes a very substantial contribution to our economy. We are proud of the association that our community has with the co-op movement and with Co-op Atlantic in particular.

If you have ever been to Moncton you can see there are large office buildings on Commercial Street, Record Street, you can see the large buildings on Halifax Street and you can appreciate the tremendous contribution that is being made.

In addition, we have a co-op housing organization called Atlantic People's Housing and, again, that is a co-operative that has made just tremendous contributions in the housing field. They have had a concern for people and they have provided low-cost individual housing and, as well, they have provided good, substantial senior citizen's housing.

In my own neighbourhood there is a large apartment building for seniors. It was erected by the Atlantic People's Co-op and it has done just a tremendous job. In fact, they are always having people trying to get into that particular co-op because of the quality of the building and the quality of the lifestyle. It is a co-operative and people have a say in how it functions. They have input and they have a say. That, I think, is the distinction.

We have also seen the tremendous contribution that credit unions have made to our community and to Atlantic Canada. For that reason we can see the excellent results that the Caisse Populaire, the Desjardins organization in Quebec is having. It is really fuelling the Quebec economy. It has been the small credit unions who know the people, who know the players, who have made those decisions, not on the basis of dollars and cents, but on the basis of people. That is the difference

between the co-op movement and some of our banks and other financial institutions. Needless to say, we are pleased in Atlantic Canada, because we are the type of communities where people count, where they make a difference. We are not just a number or a statistic, as happens in some of the larger communities. The co-operative movement is typical of an Atlantic Canadian organization.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): We are going to try another point of order here.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

BILL C-17

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I would like to move:

> That, notwithstanding any previous proceedings of this House, Bill C-17, an act to amend the Criminal Code and Customs Tariff in consequence thereof, be deemed read a second time and referred to Legislative Committee H, on division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Members have heard the terms of the motion. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Funk (p. 1305).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Moncton.

An hon. member: I think it is a great speech.

Mr. Rideout: Well, it had all kinds of potential until now.

I think the one interesting thing with Co-op Atlantic is that it has just adopted a new mission statement for renewing the co-operative option. I think it bodes well for the co-operative movement in Atlantic Canada and throughout all of the country if other co-ops take the same imaginative approach.

I would like to read from their proposal for renewal. "The ultimate goal of the co-operatives that own Co-op Atlantic" says part of the proposal for renewal "is to extend co-operative values to all parts of the socioeconomic system through the creation of an interdependent network of co-operative enterprises whose operations gain their vitality and business strength through innovative application of co-operative values and principles".

That option for renewal is going to be most beneficial to the co-op movement and most beneficial to people in Atlantic Canada.

If the co-op movement in the west and across our country adopts the same option of renewal, not only will just the co-ops benefit, but all of Canada will benefit from that endeavour.

The nice thing about co-ops, as we all know, is that it is a bottom-up theory. We see all of these top-down, big government measures, big corporations that dictate exactly what is going to take place. We have seen it in the fishing industry where the big corporations come in and dictate what is going to take place and the little guy is left out of the process. The beauty of co-operatives is that it is bottom-up. It is the people who are affected who are involved and have the say. That is why we have seen some of the best co-ops function in our fishing industries, our farming co-operatives, as well as retail co-operatives. We all know the wonderful effects it has had in the area of credit unions.

We on this side of the House see very positive advantages to the motion that was put forward and the direction the motion suggests. Again, I look to Moncton and at the amounts of money that Liberal governments put into co-operative housing for seniors, for single parents, for the poor. These large sums of money show the commitment of Liberal governments of the past.

That commitment has not remained. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that you would agree with me and that you are as upset as I am by the fact that the government has instituted cut after cut after cut in the area of housing and particularly, co-operative housing in the most recent budget. I can see by the look on your face that you are as upset as I am that the government is taking these steps and doing these types of things, when we should be doing the reverse, putting more money into single family co-operative housing; more money into senior citizens co-operative housing.

I am sure that if you had your way, you would think the way we are, and that is to add and help and try to create something positive rather than tear down and remove

the excellent work that has been done by co-operatives across this country.

It is a pleasure to stand up and be supportive of what this motion intends. I hope the government will heed the direction this motion is suggesting and provide the support to co-operatives so they can do the job for the little guy and take care of the little fellow.

• (1740)

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, about three weeks ago, I was invited to be the guest speaker at an annual meeting of a co-operative. I was reminded of that when the hon. member who introduced the motion and the hon. member for Moncton mentioned that they were resource-based industries as they relate to co-operatives.

I was sitting in that meeting of the co-operative called the Fogo Island Co-operative. There were hundreds of people in the room to listen to the annual financial statement.

By the way, there are four or five major fish plants operated by this co-operative and two or three, depending on what kind of a year it is, smaller fish plants. In other words, we are talking about 1,000 regular workers, and another 1,000 people who catch fish to bring into this co-operative.

Everybody was waiting in this room for the financial statement. All we have heard in eastern Canada about the fishing industry is disaster after disaster after disaster. We have had governments, present and past, which have had to pour hundreds of millions of dollars into large private companies in Canada like Fisheries Products International and others.

National Sea Products Limited sometimes forgets that the federal government is about a 20 per cent shareholder in that fish business because of its financial involvement. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been placed in these very large privately owned companies on the stock market to revive them and to keep them alive so that people can continue to have their jobs.

There I was, three weeks ago, sitting down in a hall on an island in the Atlantic Ocean off the east coast of Canada listening to the financial statement of a co-operative. I learned from that financial statement that it did not lose any money. None. It made $1.5 million this past year while other companies are floundering, while the federal government is investing hundreds of millions of dollars in our large multinationals.

This co-operative made $1.5 million last year without financial assistance this year, last year, the year before or the year before that when all of the other companies—not all of them—all the big companies and all of the multinationals were being bailed out by the taxpayers of Canada to the tune of hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars.

Here is a co-operative that was competing against them. Not only did it compete, but it made money. It made a profit. I am in complete agreement with the words of the hon. member for Moncton in whose riding, as he pointed out, is the headquarters for Co-op Atlantic, a great organization which deals throughout the four Atlantic provinces, employs hundreds and hundreds of people and gives excellent produce in every single one of its stores in Newfoundland and throughout the maritimes.

I would promote it any day of the week because my mother belongs to that co-operative. I know about the excellent service that it provides.

The resource based industries deserve the presence of co-operatives and the encouragement of co-operatives as the hon. gentleman has put in this motion before the House today. If only the federal government would listen to his good advice.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There being no further members rising for debate the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1) the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, on May 28 I put a question to the Associate Minister of National Defence regarding the defence cuts

that have been talked about by that ministry, as well as those announced concerning cutting of equipment.

I am particularly concerned about the cutting of the numbers of the Armed Forces. These cuts apparently are going to go ahead at a time when we still do not have any clear defence policy, nor do we know what roles are going to be expected of our Canadian forces in the years to come. We know that the government is using the calmer period in Europe and the end of the cold war as a reason for downsizing the Canadian forces. However, the truth of the matter is that during past years we were told that we did not have enough military personnel to perform our roles and that we were always short-handed. Now that there is less responsibility in Europe, why not leave the forces as they are so that we will have enough personnel to do the job in the years to come.

We do not have a large armed force, but I want to put it on the record that when this government came to power it promised many things that would be done for the Canadian forces, among which was an increase in numbers to 90,000, to 100,000. That never did happen. In the election campaign of 1984 in a speech in Newcastle, New Brunswick, the Prime Minister stated he was going to increase the number of forces to 90,000. That promise was never kept.

There has always been a discussion in this House about equipment. The present government, which has been in power for more than six and a half years, has not come to grips with this and much of the equipment that it talks about today was either ordered or on stream or produced prior to its coming to office.

For example, the long-range patrol aircraft were already in the air before this government came to office. The CF-18 fighter aircraft contract was well down the road and was completed shortly after this government came to office, but many of the planes had already arrived at Canadian air force bases long before. It talked at great length about tanks but none have been produced since coming to power. The north warning system modernization program to replace the old DEW line was 90 per cent completed before it came to power.

In this regard equipment processes were ongoing, but this government has not kept up with re-equipping the forces. Now that the cold war is off, we still are going to need equipment regardless of the size of the force. I want to emphasize that the Canadian forces have done such a fantastic job in peacekeeping and in fracases such as the Persian Gulf war. I would point out that the ships used in the Persian Gulf were built many years ago by the previous Liberal administration. The government has not brought its new ships on stream—as a matter of fact they are over a year behind schedule. Why not leave the forces personnel intact and centre our policy around that. Tell us what the policies are going to be before deciding what will be cut in the Canadian forces. That is the rational way.

• (1750)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to offer a few comments and to respond to the speech by the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Mr. Speaker, today's fiscal and geostrategic realities have a major impact on defence, and that is why the Department of National Defence has embarked on a detailed study of the defence policy formulated in 1987.

The Minister of National Defence and the Associate Minister consider this review essential to Canada's defence operations. Both ministers are in favour of formulating a new policy that will provide for a plan that is realistic, effective and appropriate to the needs of the Canadian Forces.

Since a decision in this respect has yet to be submitted to cabinet, I am sure the hon. member will appreciate it is somewhat premature at this time to talk about closing Specific military bases. Furthermore, I may remind the hon. member that a review can affect any part of the defence program.

Mr. Speaker, the principles that govern Canada's defence policy have remaining virtually unchanged in recent years. We remain firmly committed to the principle of common defence and security; arms control and disarmament; and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Although the review started some time ago, the fact remains that as far as defence is concerned, this government has made more important decisions and has been

more active, both in Canada and abroad, than had been the case in recent years.

The hon. member will recall the exemplary service of Canadian Forces during the crisis in Oka and the Gulf war. Furthermore, I am sure the hon. member is aware of the peacekeeping role that Canada continues to play in various places throughout the world.

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, as members of this House know, the Fraser River is one of the most important tributaries in all of Canada. It has played an integral role in B.C.'s development and it is vital to our fisheries, our industry, our agriculture and our recreation.

Decades of abuse have left the Fraser River seriously injured. We are pumping raw sewage, toxic chemicals and practically every form of garbage available into its waters.

We need only look at the river to realize its precarious position. When you realize the high concentration of toxins in existence, you know that action is needed immediately.

We are fortunate that there are alternatives available to stop polluting the Fraser River. What is unfortunate is the fact that this government lacks the political will to effect these changes.

The government announced, with great fanfare, its commitment to clean up the Fraser. I would support it in this effort, I really would, except in reality it is trying to pull the wool over our collective eyes.

The government's green plan commits $100 million to clean up the Fraser. We are left with the impression that this money will be spent immediately to address the pollution problems in the river, but that is not the case. It will be spent over six years. Each year the Fraser will only have a fraction of this money allotted to the clean-up.

We have also been given no specifics, there are no goals and no timetables. We cannot evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

When will we actually see a plan to stop the flow of pollution into the Fraser River? No one knows. When will we see a plan to remove the toxins already there? No one knows.

The plot surrounding this announcement has thickened like the sludge you can see floating on the surface of the river, for the government is tossing out green plan platitudes with its right hand while its left hand pulls out of existing, necessary environmental promises and guides the dumping of toxic soil near the river mouth.

As the House knows, Richmond, B.C. will be the unfortunate recipient of toxic soil from the old Expo site in Vancouver. The public was not informed, even though it puts nearby farmland and the fisheries at risk.

In Question Period I asked the Minister of the Environment to show British Columbians that he is a friend of the environment. He should have halted the dumping of this toxic soil and announced an environmental assessment review plan in accordance with his own government's guidelines. It would have demonstrated his commitment to a new era of environmental leadership. He refused to do so.

Surely this government can see the folly in pledging to clean up a river and then in the next breath supporting a toxic dump on federal lands near its shores.

Can the minister guarantee that this dump will be stopped? Regrettably the government's guilt is compounded by its back-handed withdrawal of its obligation to the Debris Control Board. This agency is responsible for clearing the Fraser of its debris. It is so successful that it is able to recover enough soil to fill three football fields to a depth of one metre each year.

What has this government done to this long standing clean-up pledge? It has reneged on it. Not only did it fail to come through with half of its share on April 1, it has now announced it will be pulling out completely of the debris control plan within 10 months.

Can anyone make a radical leap of faith and explain away this blatant hypocrisy? Can anyone with an ounce of common sense figure out this government's action?

The government knows its green plan has been a big disappointment. It knows its all talk, no action leadership has seriously damaged its credibility and the credibility of its environmental plan.

We want to see the Fraser River cleaned up in British Columbia. We want to see a government that is truly committed to environmental protection for all parts of Canada.

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, first let me assure the hon. member that this government is concerned with issues affecting the environment. As the member is no doubt aware, various actions have been announced to ensure that appropriate steps are put in place to address these concerns.

Insofar as this issue is concerned, the soils that are planned to be removed from the Expo '86 site have been closely examined and analysed to determine if they are a threat to the environment.

The member may be aware also that local concerns resulted in the city of Richmond putting in place a by-law which has strict guidelines for the movement of soils. The Fraser River Harbour Commission is respecting this by-law and the movement of soil has stopped while the province and the city continue their discussion and analysis of the soil.

I would like to stress that the comments made by the member for New Westminster—Burnaby are most unfair and that she certainly realizes that this government has been the first federal government to commit so large an amount of money and to take so many important steps with concern to environmental issues.

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to object most strenuously to the answer put forward by the Acting Prime Minister in the responses last week to questions on the Al-Mashat affair.

Most specifically, the former Secretary of State for External Affairs has failed to meet his obligation as a minister in accepting ministerial responsibility. He has deliberately put on the record misstatements of facts and falsehoods that should not be allowed to stand. On several occasions in this House up to and including today the former Secretary of State for External affairs, the former Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, was given the chance to apologize to the people of Canada and in particular to a civil servant whom he maligned in the name of Raymond Chrétien.

We heard last week the minister refuse to take any personal responsibility for actions of his office, but we now know as a result of revelations in the Al-Mashat affair that his Chief of Staff had in his hand the memo which specifically laid out the the political difficulties inherent in the Al-Mashat case and they were ignored by the minister.

For the minister to finger a public servant, as he has done in this case, is reprehensible and given the future work of the former minister, since he is now charged with the constitutional dossier, it is important that he personally take this opportunity to clear the air and correct the record.

We heard him say in the House today that if Mr. Chrétien wants an apology he should ask him for it.

• (1800)

I would like to say to the minister that in fact the apology he owes is not only to a civil servant whom he has wrongfully fingered but also to the people of Canada. The false documentation and the false statements were put on the record here in the House, and they were also put on the record in the public domain for millions of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

The crux of the matter is this, Mr. Speaker: Can the minister be trusted by Canadians in constitutional affairs, when he can't even tell the truth in a matter as important as the Al-Mashat affair?

An hon. member: Will you say that outside?

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked whether I would say that outside. Of course I will say outside what I say inside, unlike the minister, who today repeatedly and adamantly refused to apologize to Raymond Chrétien and to all Canadians. He refused to apologize. He claimed that he had already talked about the matter, and he refused to provide any details, when he knows perfectly well that according to testimony about the Al-Mashat affair, he didn't even talk to Mr. Chrétien. How could Mr. Chrétien have apologized—as the minister claimed he did—when he didn't even talk to him since the beginning of this affair?

He claims this is only a matter concerning a public servant, a private matter between Mr. Clark and Mr. Chrétien, but it is not. He told Canadians here on the floor of the House that Mr. Chrétien had offered his apologies and that he was to blame in this matter.

However, Mr. Speaker, we now know that the fault lies with the Minister for External Affairs, and to re-establish his credibility in the important area of constitutional affairs, he must—

[*English*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs said in committee today: "I am not responsible for things we knew nothing about". In this case it is clear that ministers knew nothing about Mr. Al-Mashat before he arrived in Canada.

Second, ministers fulfilled their responsibility by ensuring that a full and complete investigation of the matter was carried out.

Third, ministers ensured that the procedure has been changed and the system has been improved. There is no guarantee that errors in judgment and mistakes will not happen again, but ministers have done their best to make improvements in procedures and systems.

[*Translation*]

Earlier on, I was asked why do I speak mostly English. I can carry on in French. I for one, Mr. Speaker, believe in the sovereignty of this House, and this House has decided to refer this question to a legislative committee. It is not the truth we are seeking, but merely the show. Otherwise, I think we should be sovereign enough, out of respect for the committee working on the matter, to wait for its report. About confidence, I have to say that I have every confidence in this minister. He also has the confidence of the government and over half of Canada.

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to follow up on the question I posed last week to the President of the Treasury Board in Question Period concerning the terrible damage that is being done in many domains of the Public Service by this government's continual bashing of the Public Service.

We had a leaked memo from the Department of National Health and Welfare that showed very clearly that by meeting the restraints in spending and personnel this government is imposing on the Public Service it is going to damage tremendously the delivery of health services in this country.

That almost amounts to a contempt of Parliament, when the government refuses to provide the resources that Parliament has determined should be delivered to the people of Canada. When people have seen decisions made in this House that certain services are in the public interest and are to be delivered, it is incumbent on the government to do the will of Parliament and to provide the resources to make sure that those services are delivered. The minister said: "Well, we are saving money—fiscal restraint". This is a political Preston Manning agenda of pandering to the worst elements in society who do not believe in government and do not believe in government delivering services to Canadians; who would be happy to see our medicare system gone; who would be happy to see our social services system gone and would be happy to see the unemployed left to fend for themselves.

I would like to talk about the $50 billion this country spends annually on health care. It is not really health care, it is sickness care. What I want to talk about is what the actions of this government are forcing to be cut out of services to Canadians that keep them healthy.

The actions of this government are forcing Health and Welfare to reduce health promotion, which at very little cost keeps people healthy, out of hospitals and not costing the taxpayers a lot of money.

Community advertising, community education about public health and disease prevention are going to keep Canadians healthy. With diseases like Alzheimers and AIDS gaining ascendancy and costing us billions of dollars every year, how dare this government say: "We do not want to promote the health of Canadians. We want them to get sicker and sicker so they will end up in hospital and cost taxpayers even more money".

Our medicare system is in danger of breaking apart because this government does not know how to start promoting the health of Canadians and now we see it cutting even more.

We see the discontinuation of the Consumer Products Safety Program, the discontinuation of the campaign against drinking and driving that alone has probably saved thousands of lives in this country since it was initiated.

Even more desperately, we see the elderly and the sick told that they are going to have to wait even longer for potentially life-saving drugs to be evaluated and approved by government. This government will not provide the people and the resources necessary for those new pharmaceuticals that can save lives, reduce pain and suffering, keep people alive and functioning and out of hospitals. This government does not think these kinds of services are important to Canadians.

We are going to see seniors waiting increased lengths of time for their pension cheques, families waiting for family allowances. We are already seeing the unemployed waiting up to six weeks or even longer for cheques to feed, clothe and house their families when they cannot have a job. There are going to be 3.5 million of those Canadians this year.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member has one minute left.

Mrs. Catterall: The government has delivered seven years of slashing people, slashing dollars and now it is even worse. As the Deputy Minister of Health and Welfare said: "For years now we have been doing more with less. Now we have to do less with less". It is the people of Canada who are suffering when the availability of services to the public are cut and when the people who deliver those services are cut; it is not the government, not the politicians and not us in this Chamber.

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, reductions or cuts to federal programs or services are always tough to make. But when you are faced with the staggering deficit in the country then you ought to get spending under control. That is what the federal government is doing.

I want to tell the hon. member that despite some reductions in services and programs, Canadians can still count on the Department of National Health and Welfare to look after their safety and health. It remains a top priority for this government and the department. We have a health care system in Canada that is second to none and we intend to keep it that way.

If you look at where the impact of the budget reductions will be, you will quickly see that they will occur across a broad range of areas within the department so that the impact will be as minimal as possible.

I want to assure all Canadians that high priority areas such as food and drugs, safety, family violence programs, AIDS initiatives and many others will not be affected.

I think any fair analysis of the actions taken by the Department of National Health and Welfare to implement the recent budget reductions would show that while there is some impact, over-all Canadians will continue to be well served.

The government has tackled the deficit. It has cut spending and attacked waste and inefficiency in the government's operations. As well, it has implemented structural reforms to improve the growth potential of the Canadian economy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The motion to adjourn the House has now been deemed to have been adopted.

Pursuant to Standing Order made on Monday, June 3, 1991, this House stands adjourned until Monday, June 10, 1991 at eleven o'clock pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 18.10 p.m.